University of Alberta

Constructing citizen participation: Public participation in the Age of the New Right

by

Christine Mary Florence MacFarlane

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration and Leadership

Department of *Educational Policy Studies*

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall, 2002

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Acquisitions et services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-81233-2

Canada

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

University of Alberta

Library Release Form

Name of Author: *Christine Mary Florence MacFarlane*

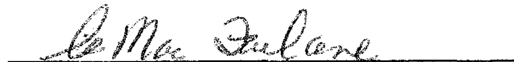
Title of Thesis: *Constructing citizen participation: Public participation in the Age of the New Right*

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Year this Degree Granted: *2002*

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as herein before provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.



112 Hawkfield Crs. NW
Calgary, Alberta
Canada T3G 1Z5

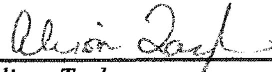
September 27, 2002

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Constructing Citizen Participation: Public Participation in the Age of the New Right* submitted by Christine Mary Florence MacFarlane in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration and Leadership



Dr. Alison Taylor
Committee chair

Dr. Margaret L. Haughey
Supervisor

Dr. Jerrold L. Kachur
Committee Member

Dr. Eamonn Callan
Committee Member

Dr. Janine M. Brodie
Committee Member

Dr. Susan E. Gibson
Committee Member

Dr. James J. Ryan
Committee Member

Sept 12, 2002

Date

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the function of citizen participation in the redesign of Alberta's Children's Services, which began in 1994. Interviews with five co-chairs of the redesign Steering Committees, on-site observations, and an analysis of related documentation provide the basis for this study. Findings indicate that although citizens have been empowered, it is empowerment at a cost. Citizen participation has been adopted as a technology to facilitate an attack on the welfare state rather than as an organizational value integral to policy development. Participation is characterized as mirroring technocratic decision-making processes, involving those least likely to be directly affected, focusing on administrative implementation of department policy, and downplaying critical reflection, questioning, and systemic analysis. Therefore participation functions as an inexpensive, voluntary, non-critical, administrative mechanism for the government's attack on the welfare state. Participation has been constructed to emulate good business strategies with the participant-citizens as the business managers of public funds. Differences between individuals and groups are depolitized and homogenized. Community voice has replaced citizen voice, while democratic representation has taken a backseat to government-appointed representation. The "integrated citizen" is the cornerstone of this participatory process. The paradoxical impact of citizen participation on women is discussed. Paradoxes of citizen participation are identified. Recommendations regarding further areas of research and ethical guidelines for the implementation of citizen participatory processes are outlined.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My sincere thanks to the co-chairs who participated in this research. I wish each of you every success in the fulfillment of your desire to enhance services for children through the facilitation of community voice and decision-making.

Thank you as well to my Supervisory Committee. Dr. Margaret Haughey provided encouragement, patience, and editing throughout the process. Dr. Jerrold Kachur stimulated my thinking on this topic, while Dr. Eamonn Callan's commitment to the examination of ethical practices was inspirational.

Most of all I would like to thank my husband Ed Possberg and my three children, Michael, Robert, and Jacqueline. Over the course of writing this document we have as a family experienced a number of significant events together. For this reason and because it could not have been written without your steadfast love, support, and patience I feel we have all earned this degree together. With all my love I dedicate this dissertation to you.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. THE CONTESTED NATURE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION.1

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY 3

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

THEORETICAL RATIONALE 4

PERSONAL CONTEXT 5

THE DISCOURSE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 9

DEFINING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 9
THE DEFINITION OF CITIZEN 9
THE DEFINITION OF PARTICIPATION 14
RESTRUCTURING AND LIBERAL DEMOCRACY 27
CORPORATISM 27
FEMINISM 29
COMMUNITARIANISM 31
THE NEW RIGHT 32
THE POPULARITY OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 35
THE NATURE OF THE CITIZENRY 36
THE NATURE OF THE BUREAUCRACY 39

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 43

THE VALIDITY OF STATE-INITIATED PARTICIPATION 44
IDEOLOGICAL DOMINANCE AND RESISTANCE 48

WOMEN AND THE STATE 52

FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP ON THE STATE 52
WOMEN, THE STATE AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION 53

CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY 57

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES 59

POSITIONING THE RESEARCH 59

CRITICAL THEORY 59
FEMINIST RESEARCH 61

THE RESEARCH PROCESS 62

SELECTION OF INTERVIEWEES 64
INTERVIEWS 65
DOCUMENTS 66
OBSERVATIONS 66

DATA ANALYSIS 67

TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY 70
TRANSFERABILITY OF RESULTS 71

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS 72

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY 72

CONCLUSION 73

CHAPTER 3. CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW: THE NEW RIGHT AND THE DISMANTLING OF THE WELFARE STATE 74

THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENTS 76
THE FIRST COMMITMENT: AFFORDABLE WELFARE 77
THE SECOND COMMITMENT: SOCIAL SERVICES AS A HUMAN RESOURCE PROBLEM 82
THE THIRD COMMITMENT: NEW PUBLIC MANAGERIALISM AND DEFICIT HYSTERIA 84
THE FOURTH COMMITMENT: THE "GOOD" CITIZEN 88

DISCUSSION 89

CHAPTER 4. THE METAPHORS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 93

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AS A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE 94
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AS THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES 100
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AS A MEANS TO GOOD BUSINESS PRACTICES 105
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AS ENGAGING IN A BATTLE 109
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AS STRATEGIC CO-OPTING 115
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AS A CHANGE IN WORLDVIEW 120
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AS A MEANS TO EMPOWERMENT 123
DISCUSSION 126

CHAPTER 5. CONSTRUCTING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 133

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING CONTROL 134

CLASSIFICATION 135
DEFINITIONAL STRATEGIES 136
VALUE JUDGMENTS 140
SIMPLIFIED LANGUAGE 141

INSTITUTIONAL/STRUCTURAL STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING CONTROL 142

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN 142
THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE DEPARTMENT AND CABINET 144
THE APPOINTING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEES AND BOARDS 146
DUAL ALLEGIANCES OF THE CHILDREN'S AUTHORITY EMPLOYEES 146
STRUCTURE OF THE MINISTRY PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL OF CO-CHAIRS 147
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SHARED SUPPORT SERVICE CENTRES 149
THE LACK OF TECHNOLOGICAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT 150
GOVERNANCE VERSUS OPERATIONS DELINEATION 152
THE CHALLENGE TO SUSTAIN MOMENTUM 154

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CONTROL 154

INDIVIDUAL IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION 155
CO-CHAIR'S MOTIVATION 155

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CO-CHAIR'S EXPERIENCE 156
DISCUSSION 156

CHAPTER 6. THE PROMISE, PERIL AND THE PARADOX OF PARTICIPATION 160

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS 161
THE CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW 161
THE METAPHORS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 161
CONSTRUCTING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 164
FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE 165
THE NEW RIGHT'S CONSTRUCTION OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 165
RESISTANCE AND DISILLUSIONMENT 170
WOMEN AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 171
THE PARADOXES OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 173
DECENTRALIZATION MEANS CENTRALIZATION 173
COMMUNITY SENSITIVITY RESULTS IN INCREASED INSENSITIVITY 174
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION CAN HINDER CITIZEN VOICE 175
THE MORE INVOLVED THE CITIZEN THE LESS THE CITIZEN IS INVOLVED 175
TREATING PEOPLE EQUITABLY REQUIRES UNEQUAL TREATMENT 176
CONCLUSION 179

CHAPTER 7. THE ETHICS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION 182
1. Citizen participation is considered an organizational value not just a technology. 183
2. Citizen participation is a dynamic element throughout all stages of the policy process. 186
3. Citizen participation is based upon on a "politics of integrity". 186
4. Citizen participation is supported by strategies to enhance the "efficient citizenship" of the community. 188
5. Citizen participation is based upon the principle of inclusiveness. 189
6. Citizen participation fosters full understanding before consensus is sought. 189
7. Citizen participation allows for the expression of both individual and community needs. 190
8. Citizen participation is both locally focused and globally sensitive. 192
9. Citizen participation promotes techno-democratic decision-making. 193
10. Citizen participation has equitable and adequate resources and supports for all participants. 195
11. Citizen participation is an engendered process. 196
RECOMMENDED FURTHER RESEARCH 197

BIBLIOGRAPHY 199

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Table of Figures

Figure 1. The inherent moral and structural tensions in society..........................27

Figure 2. Theoretical framework of the contested nature of citizen participation......35

Figure 3. The Metaphors of Citizen Participation..130

Figure 4. Participant Construction of Citizen Participation as Compared to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation..133

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER 1.
THE CONTESTED NATURE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

> Democracy is stirring. The economic turmoil and political revolts of the 70s and 80s, together with the globalization of world markets that constitutes today, have brought renewal as well as disruption (Sabel, 2001, p. 121).

This study explores the discourse and function of citizen participation in Alberta and its impact on women. Citizen participation is a paradoxically simple but also a deceptively complex and contested concept. Citizen participation appears to be a simple and familiar concept to most North Americans because it is embedded in the concept of a democracy. "Community participation in decision-making has traditionally been considered one of the pillars of democratic societies with benefits to be gained at the national, community, interpersonal and individuals levels" (Butler, Rissel and Khavarpour, 1999, p. 253). Further, Day (1997) concludes, "citizen participation in public affairs such as the planning process is quite often seen as a good in and of itself, and as part of the philosophical tradition. . . . It is viewed as a cornerstone of democracy" (p. 421).

Despite this apparent familiarity, closer scrutiny reveals the complexity inherent in the concept of citizen participation. Definitional and operational issues abound. The contestable terrain of citizen participation is mapped with such questions as: What constitutes citizen participation? Who is included in the definition of citizen? Who is excluded? Who decided? Based upon what criteria?

Notwithstanding the lack of clarity regarding these issues, politicians of various ideological positions, within municipal, provincial or state, and federal governments across North America have advocated for the utilization of citizen participation in health, social services, education, environmental, and justice planning. These politicians and bureaucrats have been both praised and criticized by academics, citizens, and public servants, who view these efforts as either the elixir or the Achilles' heel of progressive, effective, and democratic policy development.

This increased utilization of citizen participation has been correspondingly reflected in an increase in the volume of academic literature. Publications on citizen participation are extensive, as evidenced by Croft and Bereford's (1992) observation

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that "a bibliography of public participation in Britain in 1979 included nearly 1400 entries" (p. 1). Unfortunately, this increase in the usage and documentation of citizen participation has not led to a deeper understanding of the issues that surround it. Rather, there appear to be limitations in the definitions, design, authorship, and analysis of these studies, which hinders a meta-analysis of citizen participation. More importantly, this literature has not contributed to an understanding of the contested nature of citizen participation for two important reasons: the lack of citizens' perspectives in either the authorship or in the focus of research, and the lack of critical analysis.

The lack of citizen voice in the research literature occurs in on two areas, authorship and perceptions. In part, this paucity of citizen input reflects a preference in the literature to focus on a theoretical discussion rather than on an analysis of participation as it actually exists (Croft & Beresford, 1992; Langton, 1978). Croft & Beresford (1992) suggest that the lack of citizen authorship can be attributed to time limitations on the part of the volunteer citizens. In some cases the citizens involved may lack the confidence in their ability to express their experiences in research publications, resulting in local documentation being developed but not being available for general circulation and analysis. This lack of citizen voice limits the richness of analysis and learning that could be garnered if it were included.

As well, given the general hesitancy in the assimilation of a critical perspective by researchers in North America (Ritzer, 1992), the field of citizen participation has been limited by a dearth of critical analysis. Such analysis, according to Croft and Beresford (1992) would stimulate and "enhance the debate around exclusionary, oppressive, and discriminatory practices mirrored in typical participatory schemes" (p. 3) as well as, "the role of the state and market" (p. 3) influencing these processes.

A critical analysis of participation is not meant to label all participatory activities as oppressive but rather to understand the political nature of such activities and their potential for being both liberating and controlling. As Brodie (1996b) notes

> French philosopher Michel Foucault once suggested that social scientists begin their analysis with a basic assumption – namely, not "that everything is evil but rather that everything is dangerous". . . . Foucault was not advocating a philosophy of extreme paranoia. Instead, he was pointing out that the way we think about social problems is profoundly political. Power and knowledge are intimately related; within each historical period, they construct systems of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> domination and oppression, exclusion and silence, and perceptions of self and other. (p. 2)

Midgley, Hall, Hardiman, and Narine (1986) make a similar observation in relation to citizen participation. Although their research focuses on the participatory developments in the Third World their observations have relevancy for recent developments in North America and support the need for a critical analysis of citizen participation. They note that

> above all, the literature on the subject has not dealt adequately with the issue of the role of state in community participation. . . . It is naïve to argue that the state involvement in social development is superfluous and that local communities in the Third World can solve the serious problems of poverty and deprivation wholly through their own efforts. But it is equally naïve to assume that a cosy relationship between the centralized, bureaucratic state and the local community will emerge and that political elites, professionals and administrators will readily agree to the devolution of their authority to ordinary people. While community participation is a desirable goal, the extensive involvement of the state in social development complicates the issue and requires further analysis. (p. vii)

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the contested nature of citizen participation. The study examines the hegemonic position of the state in defining the discourse of citizen participation. Specifically, I am interested in exploring how the concept of citizen participation has functioned in a state-initiated process. As well, since social policy is not gender neutral (Bakker, 1996; Brodie, 1996a; Evans, 1996; Evans & Wekerle, 1997; Fraser, 1989; Gordon, 1990; Orloff, 1993) the impact this discourse has on the social construction of women is also considered.

The medium for this exploration is one of the numerous government-initiated planning processes involving citizens utilized by the Government of Alberta. Specifically, the redesign of Alberta's Children's Services that began in 1994 and was reported to involve over 6,000 Albertans, is the focus of the study.

Research Question

In this study I explore how the concept of citizen participation has functioned in a state-initiated process in Alberta. In order to address this question I examine the ideological dominance, resistance, and contradictions that exist within the social

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

structures, historical developments, and the power relationships that support them. The discourse of state-initiated citizen participation will reflect these relationships. The following sub-questions will be pursued:

1. What is the context that gave rise to direct citizen participation in a state-initiated social policy development process?
2. What is the discourse of citizen participation?
3. What are the contradictions and resistances to this discourse?
4. How is the discourse maintained?
5. Why has the development of citizen participation had an impact on women?
6. What impact does the discourse have on the social construction of women?

THEORETICAL RATIONALE

In this chapter I provide the theoretical rationale for this study. After reviewing the definitions of citizen and participation and the typological schemes for citizen participation I conclude that ideology, values, motivation, and the techniques employed contributed to the contested nature of citizen participation. Similarly, the current ideological challenge to liberal democracy, which I have depicted in a modification of Bell's (1976) model of the ideological and structural tension in a capitalist society, significantly impacts the nature and discourse of citizen participation. I also argue that the growth in state-initiated citizen participation is the state's response to a number of internal and external factors. I conclude that an examination of the ideological context that gave rise to citizen participation is an essential process in determining the function of citizen participation and the power relationships that underpin it.

I then review studies that critically analyze state-initiated citizen participation. I identify a number of themes and concerns regarding the difficulties in implementing citizen participation. I conclude that an examination of the participatory process employed, the nature of the task, the players and the organizational and community climate in which the process occurs shed light on the function of citizen participation. I then examine a number of studies that focus on the nature of resistance to the dominant discourse. I determine that resistance to a dominant ideology requires well-organized, trained and supported, resource-rich groups who can critically reflect upon

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the dominant discourse. Finally, I review the literature related to the paradoxical relationship of women, participation, and the state. I begin this chapter with a personal context that outlines the genesis of my interest in this topic and my commitment to citizen participation in enhancing social policy development especially for those individuals historically marginalized from the process.

Personal Context

Three significant experiences with citizen participation have influenced my interest, values, and the focus of this study. Each provided a unique experience and perspective since my role in each was different. Each contributed to my initial questioning of the contested nature of citizen participation.

My first experience with direct citizen participation in policy formation occurred just before I decided to apply to graduate school. The experience that contributed to my final decision to quit my job after seven years as an executive director of a social service agency and return to school left me both excited and wary.

I was excited because citizen participation, especially for disempowered groups like the disabled men and women and their families with whom I worked, seemed like a dream come true. For these people having a voice, at a table from which historically they had been excluded, was exhilarating for me. These people and those working with them were being asked to identify the values and the services they thought were important in their community. Based on these discussions, government budget allocations for service provision were to be made. This type of opportunity had not been available before this time.

At first, discussions were hesitant and the process seemed to be awkward and formal. Then, as we met more often with the threat of government budget cuts and looming timelines, the group seemed to come together and people started voicing their opinions more readily. In retrospect, I now realize that what I was experiencing was a clash of cultures, of values, and of worldviews. The possibilities and implications of this new way of doing business were liberating.

My wariness was rooted in my underlying mistrust of those in official positions of power. It seemed that from time to time the committee was being asked to do things that might be considered busy-work, rather than addressing what appeared to be more important issues. As well, with a change of a senior government

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

administrator, less and less information was being given to the committee. Although there was official praise for the committee's efforts, as a committee member I started feeling that we were serving another purpose.

A form of "committee-member schizophrenia" developed. Although this is not a term found in Diagnostic Statistical Manual-IV, many who have been involved in such committees are aware of this syndrome. The afflicted develop a passionate "Pollyannish" belief in the need for this consultative and partnership process, while harboring a jaded and cynical suspicion that questioned whether anything would actually change. I decided that it was time to research citizen participation as a policy strategy.

The second experience, which proved to be a major contribution to the formation of the research question, was the opportunity to observe the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families' attempts to involve approximately 6,000 Albertans in a province- wide restructuring and redesign of Children and Family Services. This involvement of citizens was unique because of the magnitude and scope of the project and also because of the reported partnership between Albertans and the Provincial government. Typical participatory schemes reported in the literature tended to be consultative, time-limited, linear, and uni-directional. The Commissioner's goal was to create an ongoing partnership between the Government of Alberta and its citizens to plan progressive and effective strategies for the delivery of Children and Family Services.

As indicated in the November 1994 report, *Reshaping Child Welfare*, the Government of Alberta committed to "provide leadership in the process of creating a new approach to children's services" (Commissioner of Services for Children and Families, 1994, p. 9). A news release issued at the time of this report described the creation of the Commissioner's Office as an attempt to "coordinate community, government departments, and Alberta families" (Alberta Government, 1994, p. 27) and redesign Children's Services so "parents and extended families are more accountable and responsible" (p. 27). This announcement followed a number of reviews of Children's Services over the years, the most recent of which were two reviews conducted by the Children's Advocate and the Ombudsman's Office.

The newly appointed Commissioner consulted "more than 3,300 Albertans" (Commissioner of Services for Children and Families, 1994, p. 11), the results of which contributed to the development of two documents entitled *Finding a Better*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Way and *Focus on Children.* These documents became the basis for the creation of the redesign initiative. The number of individuals involved, the multitude of issues, the levels and diversity of government departments participating, all contributed to the ambitious and somewhat daunting nature of the mandate of the Commissioner's office.

In order to address this task, the Commissioner created seventeen regions with an eighteenth added after the review was well under way. These initial seventeen regions roughly corresponded to the Regional Health Authorities' boundaries, while the eighteen represented Metis throughout Alberta. Each of these regions is responsible for facilitating the planning of services for children in its region. Steering Committees were established through a process of volunteer application and government selection. Steering Committee members were selected, by the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families' staff and community volunteers, based on the following criteria: residing in the region, not a government employee, and, not employed by an organization contracted by Alberta Children's Services. Within their regions, Steering Committees struck a number of working and focus groups to facilitate community planning.

These observations provided me with a rich learning experience. I observed community groups in their struggles to be understood, and to understand. I heard the fears, concerns, and anticipation of service recipients, public and private service providers, public administrators, and political officials. I witnessed the ebbs and flows of the energy of those involved. I listened and observed. I read the documentation. I watched a theatre troupe of young street kids graphically tell their story and witnessed a politician's surprise that these children and their plight existed in his community.

My third experience with the process of citizen participation was as Vice-chair of the Calgary Region Persons with Developmental Disabilities Board for two and one half years. These Regional Boards, established approximately at the same time as the Children's Authorities, were also voluntary nominated and appointed by the Minister of Social Services. Their role was similar to the Children's Services although their focus was on the resources and policies related to addressing the needs of adults with developmental disabilities. Their overall structure was different from the Children's Authorities, in that there was a Provincial Board, which consisted of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

representatives from the regional boards as well as additional appointed members. Regional Boards reported to the minister through this Provincial Board.

During the first year there was a fair amount of excitement and some anxiety regarding this new strategy for planning and involving community members. Considerable attention was paid to the development of governing structures and by-laws, and to the general education of the board members regarding the financial and operational aspects of the regional office. Regional board monthly meetings were open to the public. Usually three to five service providers took the opportunity to attend.

Things changed when the annual budget began to be negotiated. The province informed the regions that there would be a significant shortfall in funding and the regional boards were asked to determine where the funding cuts should be made. The board on which I was Vice-chair decided to have a community meeting to inform them of the shortfall and to seek their recommendations and support in deciding where to make the necessary budget cuts. This was not looked on favorably by the Minister, who met with me, the Chair of the Board, and the Executive Director to advise us that this type of activity was not community participation but rather an attempt to incite the community.

Around this time, it was also evident that the Provincial Board had decided for various reasons, to become more directive and controlling of the regional boards. Although there was some resistance to this style of leadership and a movement to realign the board process with more community input, I decided to terminate my involvement on the board.

This experience did not dampen my enthusiasm for community participation, but it did heighten my awareness of the importance of the skills and values of the players and of the types of structures necessary to facilitate the process. It also sensitized me to the fragile nature of citizen participation. The whim of a minister, the incompetence or mis-directedness of one key player or a number of players, and the mistrustfulness of a community can all reek havoc on its existence. Although it may still have the trappings of a participatory process, the essential value of listening to the people is lost and a new bureaucracy, albeit a kinder-faced bureaucracy, is created.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

THE DISCOURSE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In this section I provide a context for understanding the contested nature of citizen participation. I begin with an overview of the definitions of "citizen" and "participation" as well as an analysis of a number of typologies of citizen participation. These terms and schemes reflect beliefs and values about democratic and planning theory. I present a modification of Bell's (1976) model of the moral and structural tensions inherent in a liberal democratic society as a framework to explain other discourses that arise from challenges to this perspective of society. I also describe three factors that have contributed to the rise in the use of citizen participation. Finally, I describe the political nature of policy development (Mawhinney, 1993; Pal, 1997; Stone, 1988) which I argue provides the medium for the recodification of the state-citizen relationship. It is this attempt at recodification and the resistance and contradictions that surround it that contribute to the contestable nature of citizen participation.

Defining Citizen Participation

The definition of citizen and participation in relation to various democratic schemes, as well as, a number of typologies of participation will be considered.

THE DEFINITION OF CITIZEN

According to Caragata (1999) citizenship, whether legal, social, economic or all three, is the 'glue' that allows us to function as a society. Inherent in the definition is a sense of belonging, obligation, and consent to the larger group and to the governing body, although the degree of these relationships is open to interpretation depending on one's theoretical and political orientation (Pateman, 1979). Definitions of citizen and citizenship are both contestable terms. Variations in definitions reflect differences in democratic theory, political orientation, and the operationalization of this theory.

Some of the differences that exist in defining citizen and citizenship relate directly to the model of democracy assumed. For instance, in Athenian democracy, a direct form of democracy, the definition of citizen was limited to landowners, whereas in Renaissance republicanism, citizens were not defined by their particular status in the community but rather by the individual's willingness to become involved so that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"citizenship meant participation in public affairs" (Held, 1995, p. 7). In modern western democracies, the definition of citizen was limited to property-owning, individualistic, white males until the twentieth century when lobbying from feminist and civil rights activists created universal suffrage. Currently, in most modern democracies it is assumed you are a citizen of a country by your birth or by full immigration to that country.

The definition of citizen differs across the political spectrum, from liberal to the libertarian to the republican (Caragata, 1999). The liberal view of citizen is assumed in a pluralistic society, where individuals realize their moral obligation and consent to become active in meeting their collective rights to each other (Pateman, 1979). Although theorists differ in regard to what constitutes or signifies consent, "whether it is given through voting, for example, or through the acceptance of benefits, or through participation in liberal democratic institutions" (Pateman, 1979, p. 2), there is a belief that this consent is voluntary. Also consistent with the liberal view is a belief that "much of what plays out in society is not within the public scope and can be managed by high levels of social tolerance" (Caragata, 1999, p. 282).

Libertarians view citizens as acting privately to meet their own needs. The collective or public is seen as minimal and "is limited to that which we all agree to have provided in common" (Caragata, 1999, p. 282). Libertarians believe that diverse needs are met through private associations, the state, and the market place. Mutual support and connection as well as the adjudication of social order become secondary, unnecessary, and somewhat problematic for citizens within the libertarian framework.

In sharp contrast to both the liberal and libertarian positions, republicans view the common good as central in defining citizens and citizenship. Citizens are to be active members of their society. Republicans believe that citizens are to have "open access to and shape the public discourse" (Caragata, 1999, p. 282) on the direction of society through open debate and dialogue.

Finally, the idea that citizen and citizenship can be thought of as universal constructs is challenged by post-modern critics who argue that they must be considered in relation to the power relations that underpin them (Caragata, 1999). Shying away from a political theory, which itself may be oppressive, "radical feminist and postmodern theory emphasizes differences, demanding rights based on group claims and particular identities" (Armstrong & Connelly, 1999, p. 1). Citizenship and citizen are defined contextually and understood to involve contradictions in the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

relationship between the state and the citizen. Although there is an acknowledgment of the principles of justice and a shared commonality (Caragata, 1999; Harder, 1999) there is also a realization that the definition of the common good is controlled by the elite and does not reflect the needs and interests of those marginalized in society (Caragata, 1999).

In principle, a citizen in most modern democracies is entitled to a number of rights including: the civic rights of freedom of speech and equality in the interpretation of the law, the political rights to vote and to express your political views in meetings with others, and the socio-economic rights of economic welfare and economic social security, although this does not always occur. In practice, certain members of a community may not operationalize their rights (e.g., not voting) or may be excluded from full realization of the benefits of citizenship. This exclusion could be due to issues such as discriminatory practices, language barriers, the domination of social, economic and political ideologies that perpetuate oppression, age, poverty, and poor education.

Feminists have long recognized the dilemma that the construct, citizenship, holds for women. They view it as central in understanding the politics of policy development and the construction of difference that has been used to define, control, and oppress women. The construction of social, economic, psychological, and physical differences based on gender has made full citizenship and its ensuing rights and responsibilities an ideal more than a reality for women.

Pateman (1989) refers to the problem of difference as it applies to gendered citizenship as "Wollstonecraft's dilemma", referring to the eighteenth century philosopher who advocated "extending the liberal principles of freedom, equality and rationality to women through a process of education" (p. 26). Despite this suggested education, where women earn their personhood, Pateman notes that Wollstonecraft still viewed women as being lesser beings than men because of the differences between the two sexes and women's ethic of caring. Wollstonecraft believed that "most women will continue working within the home since child-rearing will remain their major responsibility" (Pateman, 1989, p. 27). Hobson (2000) interprets this dilemma of equality versus difference in modern terms in the following manner:

> In a framework where the ideal of citizenship is based upon a universalistic gender-neutral social world – which in our century is connected to paid work – women are lesser men. In a framework where women's special talents, needs, and capacities are

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> acknowledged as different from the citizenship based on the rights and duties attached to paid work, then women are lesser citizens, since there is a lack of respect for their contribution as mothers and carers. (p. xix)

The division between the private and the public or the social and the political has also limited the full realization of women's citizenship. This false dichotomy has been the battle cry of feminists because it is seen as the decisive factor in ensuring women are accepted as political actors and their issues, which evolve from the ethic of caring, are recognized. Cornell (1997) describes the importance of these battles and the dismal impact they have had on women securing their full rights as citizens. She writes:

> Battles were waged over maternity leave, child care and decent collective care for the aging. These battles were not just about social empowerment in the realm of necessity, they were political battles waged to secure the conditions necessary to ensure women's citizenship. Yes, these political battles were about shifting the line between the political and the social, and they emphasized that without the shift in that line, women could not be full citizens. . . . Unfortunately, the victories were meager, even when won, and in the past ten years we have seen many of these meager victories erased. The result is the notorious 'double burden' on women who enter the workforce, let alone the political arena. (p. 215)

This "double burden" has been also complicated by the dramatic impact poverty has had on women's lives. According to the *Child Poverty Profile,* (National Council of Welfare, 1998) the poverty rate for single-parent mothers is 52.9 percent compared to 10.7 percent for two-parent families. Forty percent of poor children live with single-parent mothers compared to 7.3 percent of non-poor children and women and children are the largest growing populations affected by homelessness (Plante, Morin, Bruneau, & Nadeau, 1999). Unfortunately, poverty is related to poor health and low educational attainment that further complicate the life circumstances of women and their families.

The burden of poverty has also had the negative affect of limiting women's involvement in political activities as well as limiting the acknowledgment of their issues. For example, in 1998 the Alberta Government announced a public consultation review regarding minimum wage and employment standards. This review involved a public questionnaire put on the Internet and advertisements in the local newspapers. The Calgary Status of Women Action Committee (1999) reported

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that based on the focus groups and interviews they conducted, although 70 percent of minimum wage earners in Alberta are women, these women were so politically disenfranchised that they did not and could not participate in the review.

Globalization and multinational corporations have also impacted the functional meaning of citizen. People's functional citizenship is not limited to the country or community in which they currently reside or work. Individuals may assume the rights and responsibilities of the state and may become involved in citizen participatory projects although not actually being a legal citizen of the area in which they reside. Correspondingly, citizens may not be available in their own communities to be involved in participatory activities.

The questions of who is the public and what community do they represent can be contentious issues in citizen participatory activities. Since the definition of community itself is a contested term, the definition of community member or citizen is also open to debate and interpretation. Williams, Suen, Brown, Bruhn, De Blaquiere, and Rzasa (2001) identify a number of weaknesses often found in citizen participatory activities, when the issue of identifying the citizen is addressed. These weakness are identified as engaging a small, easily accessible but not necessarily representative group, equating activists with the public, under-representation of various sectors of the public, and a lack of balance between individualistic and pluralistic representation.

These weaknesses have special significance in considering the definition of citizen in regard to citizen participatory practices. Measures would need to be taken to facilitate the inclusion of oppressed and otherwise disadvantaged groups, such as people with disabilities, women, the economically disadvantaged, and various minority racial and cultural groups. As well, the process has to be designed in such a manner so that the participants are made to feel safe enough to express their opinions with others, some of whom may be professionals, government officials, and in some cases the service providers who work with the participants. Wharf and McKenzie (1998) note that

> it is important to recognize that service users do not participate for some practical reasons: they are busy people; usually they do not receive a welcoming or personal invitation to participate and for them, the meetings are boring and held in inconvenient locations at inconvenient times. In addition, they do not participate because they do not feel they have the right to do so – they feel like second-class citizens who have nothing to contribute. (p. 6)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

As well, the very nature of some participatory strategies also limits the definition of citizen. Strategies such as surveys, questionnaires and focus groups limit who will be able to participate because of the possible literacy and language barriers, accessibility issues, and ethnic differences in the willingness to discuss sensitive issues in a public forum. As well, strategies that rely on computer access eliminate a proportion of the population who do not have ready access to such technology. Wharf and McKenzie (1998) conclude that "the research on citizen participation is voluminous and unanimous in the conclusion that only the 'well off, the well spoken and the well educated' participate" (p. 6).

Therefore, although citizen involvement is implied in the definition of a democracy, in reality the involvement of citizens is usually limited to a minority of people in a limited number of decision issues. In participatory practices, whether state-initiated or grass-roots driven, the definition of citizen depends upon who is defining the eligibility of the participant, the strategies utilized to engage the citizen, the effort used to be inclusive in the process, and the ability and desire of the participant to become involved.

This study examines the contextual definition of citizenship. Given that the state, in a state-initiated process, defines the parameters of eligibility for the citizen participating, the inclusive and exclusive nature of this definition reveals the political ideology of the state and contributes to an understanding of the functional nature of citizen participation.

THE DEFINITION OF PARTICIPATION

As with the term citizen, the definition of participation is also a contestable term. "In its broadest sense, the idea of participation is part of the wider discussion about democracy that extends nearly 3000 years" (Croft and Beresford, 1992, p. 27). Democracy or "rule by the people" has taken many forms since its origins in ancient Athens (Held, 1987; Held, 1995; Held & Pollitt, 1986). Although there are different definitions and forms of a democracy "equality among citizens, liberty, respect for the law and justice—have been taken as integral to western political thinking" (Held, 1995, p. 5). Central to the definitions of a democracy is the concept of open discussion among the decision-makers, their opposition, and the public. The debate about ideas and plans is critical to the understanding of power in a democracy, that is,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that power is shared among the citizens and is not the possession of any individual or group. Held (1995) argues that

> a defensible account of the proper meaning of democracy must acknowledge the importance of a number of fundamental liberal and liberal democratic tenets. Among these are the centrality, in principle, of an "impersonal" structure of public power, of a constitution to help protect and safeguard rights, and of a diversity of power centres within and outside the state, including institutional fora to promote open discussion and deliberation among alternative political viewpoints and platforms. (p. 15)

Based on these principles, Held (1995) identifies three general categories of democracy, although in describing the third category he acknowledges that "some may doubt whether this is a form of democracy at all" (p. 5). The three categories of democracy are participatory, representative and a one-party model. Direct or participatory democracy is "a system of decision-making about public affairs in which citizens are directly involved" (p. 5). Liberal or representative democracy is "a system of rule embracing elected 'officers' who undertake to 'represent' the interests of views of citizens within delimited territories while upholding the 'rule of law'" (p. 5). The final category of democracy is "a variant of democracy based on a one-party model" (p. 5).

Definitions vary with regard to the degree and nature of citizen involvement, the desired outcome, the impetus of the participation, the duration, the distribution of power, and the strategy for involvement. This lack of clarity has provoked Day (1997) to observe, "the literature on citizen participation in planning seems to be an untidy one" (p. 422) and Sanoff (2000) to remark cynically that

> at times participation has been distorted to mean everything has to be checked with everyone before any decision is made. . . . a disease called participationitis. Participation has also come to mean attendance at ongoing public hearings and constant meetings or donating money to a popular campaign. (p. x)

Definitions of citizen participation have also tended to reflect a descriptive and prescriptive orientation. Based on a rational and logic model of policy development, rather than a political model which stresses the importance of influence, cooperation, loyalty, information, passion, and power (Stone, 1988), definitions have tended to view participation as a time-limited, linear process in which the citizen's role is reactionary, restricted, and passive. For example, citizen participation has been

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

defined as "purposeful activities in which people (citizens) take part in relation to political units (governments) of which they are legal residents" (Langton, 1978, p. 16). The World Bank (1994) defines participation as "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them" (cited in UNDP Guidebook on Participation, 2001, Interpreting Participation, 7th paragraph). Rowe and Frewer (2000) have defined it as "a group of procedures designed to consult, involve, and inform the public to allow those affected by a decision to have an input into the decision" (p. 6). These definitions do not speak to the dynamic and political nature of policy development and resource allocation. An exception to this type of definition would be Priscoli's (1978) suggestion that citizen participation must be thought of as more than just a technique, thereby expanding its analysis to consider the political processes and ideological underpinnings that surround it.

Approaches to defining participation can also be classified into those that represent participation as either a means or an end. Participation as a means refers to

> a process whereby local people cooperate or collaborate with externally introduced development programmes or projects. In this way participation becomes the means whereby such initiatives can be more effectively implemented. People's participation is sponsored by a (sic) external agency and it is seen as a technique to support the progress of the programme or project. (UNDP Guidebook on Participation, 2001, Interpreting Participation, 4th paragraph).

Studies that consider participation from a means perspective tend to define it as a technique such as citizen's juries, advisory boards, or surveys with little or no discussion of the underlining values, liberating and educating potential, and power differentials that exist in these techniques. Participation viewed as an end conceptualizes participation as a goal in and of itself. It has been defined as "the empowering of the people in terms of their acquiring the skills, knowledge and experience to take greater responsibility for their development" (UNDP Guidebook on Participation, 2001, Interpreting Participation, 5th paragraph). This type of definition leads to the development of indicators of citizen participation based on measures of self-development and community capacity (Morrissey, 2000).

Almost every study on citizen participation makes reference to Arnstein's (1969) classic framework, the Ladder of Citizen Participation. Arnstein developed

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

this typology to facilitate a "more enlightened dialogue" (p. 216) and to address the "exacerbated rhetoric and misleading euphemisms" (p. 1) that had become the discourse of citizen participation. She viewed citizen participation as a means to liberate marginalized citizens and defined it as

> a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. . . . In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society. (p. 216)

In this model, eight rungs of the ladder of participation are identified. These rungs are manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. These are further divided into three levels of participation: nonparticipation, degrees of tokenism, and degrees of citizen control. At the level of non-participation, manipulation and therapy are listed. At the second level, informing, consultation, and placation are identified. At this level the citizen is involved in a degree of tokenism since their input has no guarantee of influencing the outcome. The final level involves partnerships, delegated power, and citizen control. Each represents more involvement and power of the citizen.

Acknowledging the simplicity of the model, Arnstein notes "obviously, the eight-rung ladder is a simplification, but it helps to illustrate the point that so many have missed – that there are significant graduations of citizen participation" (p. 217). She suggests that the limitation of the model is that it "juxtaposes powerless citizens with the powerful in order to highlight the fundamental divisions between them. In actuality, neither the have-nots nor the powerholders are homogeneous blocs" (p. 217). She justifies the dichotomy inherent in the model by noting that although this homogeneity does not exist most people perceive it as a reality.

Building on Arnstein's work, Deshler and Sock developed another participation topology (1985, cited in Sanoff, 2000) which according to Sanoff moves the idea of participation beyond citizen power. This topology was first presented at the International League for Social Commitment in Adult Education, in Ljungskile, Sweden. Sanoff (2000) notes, "the purposes of participation have been more modestly defined to include information exchange, resolving conflicts, and supplementing design and planning." (p. 8) Sanoff's criticism of Arnstein's model as being limited in its ability to include advisory, conflict resolution, and other functions

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of participation, may be inappropriate given an Sanoff's own analysis of Deshler and Sock's model presents it as a replication of Arnstein's model.

Sanoff notes that the Deshler and Sock model identifies four categories of participation: domestication, assistencialism, cooperation, and empowerment. Each category encapsulates the rungs in the Arnstein ladder. Domestication corresponds to the manipulation, therapy, and informing rungs in the Arnstein model. As the name of the category suggests the powerful get the participants to listen and comply leaving them with no power and control. The assistencialism category corresponds to the consultation and placation rungs in the Arnstein model where the power remains in the hands of the elite. Participants may be informed or on occasion their opinion may be sought but they do not have any decision-making power. By contrast, at the cooperative level, which comprises the partnership and delegated power rungs of the Arnstein model, power and control are shared between the elite and the participants. The last category of power, empowerment, corresponds to Arnstein's citizen control rung. At this level the participants have full control and power. In an analysis of this model, Selener (1997) observes that "empowerment is achieved through conscientization, democratization, solidarity, and leadership. Participation for empowerment usually characterizes autonomous processes of mobilization for structural social and political changes" (p. 206).

Both Arnstein's and Deshler and Sock's models categorize participation based on the potential or actual outcome of the power redistribution between the elite and the non-powerful. In contrast, Innes and Booher (2000), suggest that the type of participation achieved is a reflection of the philosophical model of planning adopted. They identify four planning models: the technical/bureaucratic model, the political influence model, the social movement model, and the collaborative model. "Each model not only has a different concept of how planning should proceed and who should be involved in it, but also a different notion of what kinds of information are relevant and of what the role of the public or various interests should be" (Innes and Booher, 2000, p. 13).

The technical/bureaucratic model is based on the "rational technical model practiced de facto in bureaucracy, especially in bureaucracies which involve substantial technical information in what they do" (Innes and Booher, 2000, p. 14). The goal of this type of planning is to determine the best alternative based upon an analysis of the information collected within the parameters of predetermined goals

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and values. The authors note, "where there are diverse interests or where the interests are highly interdependent, creating multiple options and unpredictable complex scenarios, this planning model does not work well" (p. 14).

> For the technical planner, public participation is something that may be needed at the beginning of a process to determine goals and toward the end of the process to help make the final choice of a plan or strategy, usually only between marginally different choices. It is not something integral to their work because public involvement could water down the integrity and neutrality of their analyses. (p. 15)

The second model, the political influence or "pork barrel" approach, really has very little to do with public participation. Public participation is viewed as undesirable in this model because it interferes with the political and patronage process.

> In this model, the planner – often an agency head or elected official rather than a trained planner. . . chooses what goes into a plan on the basis of what different constituencies want. Typically in this model a plan is made up of projects, each of which is desired by a politically important player. (p. 15)

In the third model of planning, the social movement model, is based on the recognition of the interdependency of various groups of citizens who band together to influence the decision making process. Although the members of this group have diverse concerns, needs, and interests they do share a common vision for the future that they want represented in the planning process. According to Innes and Booher (2000),

> public participation in this model gets blurred with the movement itself. After all, the members of the movement reason, 'anyone who wants to can join us. We are grassroots and fighting the establishment. We are the citizens participating.' But the reality is, of course, that a social movement has to be limited in scope and diversity of participants because it cannot hold together if it is too diverse. (p. 18)

The fourth model of planning, the collaborative planning approach, is based on belief in the value of diversity and face-to-face dialogue. Full citizen participation is an integral aspect of this model of planning. It is this model of planning that Innes and Booher (2000) argue is the "only method of planning and public involvement that is flexible, responsive and adaptive enough to be effective in the uncertain and rapidly changing environment of the turn of the 21st century" (p. 14). The authors suggest that for this type of planning to occur the following conditions must be met:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> 1) the full range of interests must be involved; 2) the dialogue must be authentic in the sense that people must be able to speak sincerely and comprehensibly to each other; that what they say must be accurate and that they must speak as legitimate representatives of a stakeholder interests; 3) there must be both diversity and interdependence among collaborators. . . . 4) all issues must be on the table for discussion with nothing off limits – the status quo cannot be scared; 5) everyone in the discussion must be equally informed, equally listened to and thus empowered as members of the collaborative discussion; and 6) agreements are only reached when consensus is achieved among the vast majority of participants and only after substantial serious effort has been made to satisfy the interests of all players. (pp. 18-19)

Innes and Booher's (2000) categorization of participation based on planning models is not inconsistent with the model suggested by Arnstein. The former has ignored the gradations in citizen participation and has assumed that participation involves collaboration, dialogue, and empowerment. If the definition of participation is enhanced to involve gradations of participation, the rungs of Arnstein's ladder do correspond to each respective planning model employed.

For instance, planners aligning themselves with a technical/bureaucratic model, if required to involve citizens in planning, would do so in a manner that is either manipulative, therapeutic, informing, consultative on specific options, and maybe even placation. Given the current public pressure, some administrators have had to comply with public consultative practices. The longevity of these strategies may be questionable given that the motivation behind the implementation is jaded. As one senior administrator noted,

> The pendulum is swinging back on this--we peaked out on consultation in the Meech Lake process, now there is a trend back to "this is our job and let's get these things out" . . . people talk a lot about participation and certainly a lot of work goes into it, but it's considered more of a necessary hurdle that you have to go through, but does it make a difference at the end of the day? (Pal, 1997, pp. 52-53)

This administrator's comments echo the sentiments of the elite democratic school (Bell, 1976; Dahl, 1956; Kweit & Kweit, 1981; Sartori, 1973; Schumpeter, 1950) who view direct participation of citizens as a threat to the efficiency and effectiveness of government. These theorists believe that experts not citizens are the most informed to make decisions, that the bureaucratic model is most effective and efficient for decision-making, and democracy itself is a means to an end not an end in itself.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Planners who lean towards a political model would resort to manipulation, therapy, and informing, in the name of citizen participation. Those who view planning as a social movement would appreciate that power and control can be redistributed through consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and even citizen control. Finally, those who view planning from a collaborative model understand participation as partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. Innes and Booher's emphasis and appreciation of the motivation and beliefs of the initiating-body in citizen participation is an expansion to the Arnstein and the Deshler and Sock's model.

Innes and Booher also add another element in defining citizen participation that is not represented in the Arnstein and Deshler and Sock's models. The former acknowledges, in identifying the social movement model of planning, that have-nots are not just passive recipients of the elite's activities but rather they can be the challengers and social change agents of the power structure and resulting policies. This is similar to other participatory democracy theorists (Bachrach & Botwinick, 1992; Barber, 1984; Pateman, 1970, 1979) who support the potential active role of the citizen. Participatory democracy, which results in the active development of the citizenry, is valued as an end in itself. This perspective values public knowledge and wisdom and is skeptical of the bureaucracy and technocratic decision-making.

Another strategy for classifying participation is based on a consideration of the perceived individual versus structural relevancy of the issue in question. For instance, Rifkin (1986) has classified definitions of citizen participation in health care planning according to the definition of health adopted. Planners, who adopt the more limited medical definition of health as the absence of disease, view participation as citizens following the advice, direction, and goals of medical professionals, referred to as the expert model of intervention and participation.

In contrast, those planners who assume the World Health Organization's definition of health, which stresses the physical, social, and emotional well-being of the individual, place more emphasis on citizens becoming involved in health service delivery. Citizen's active involvement would constitute accessing the health care system, providing input into his or her own health planning, and providing feedback to improve the system. In this conception of health, participation of the client is viewed as essential since they are considered equal members in the problem solving and intervention planning process.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Finally, some planners gravitate to a community development approach to defining health. In this model the inclusion and participation of all members of a community in health promotion and wellness is valued and an understanding of the impact of the political, economic, and social environment on health is central to planning. From this perspective, citizen participation is central in all aspects and phases of planning and implementation of health services. The citizen assumes a role of partnership and advocacy.

Another element to defining participation is the cultural component. Cullingworth (1984) notes that there is a cultural base to the definition and operationalization of citizen participation. That is, there is an expectation and pattern that is unique to each culture that would impact how citizen participation is conceived. He observes that,

> public participation, however it is conceived in Canada, has many patterns and appears determined not only by education, income, and class but also by language, religion, and culture. In some countries, it seems quiet, ordered, and instructive; in others, it is vocal and perceptually hangs on the brink of anarchy. In some societies, it is far more evident than in others; in still others it apparently does not exist at all. All of this suggests that public participation is much more a product of a culture than of any given political system. The latter, however, may facilitate or impede public participation: a truly totalitarian regime can make it as widespread and effective as political philosophies have desired. (Cullingworth, 1984, p. 40)

Although adding the perspective of the cultural context to the definition of citizen participation is useful, Cullingworth's last point regarding the totalitarian regime may in fact reflect his belief that citizen participation is a technique and not necessarily a redistribution of power between the haves and the have-nots. This seems to be in contradiction to the other classification schemes.

Cullingworth's observation of the importance of the cultural aspect to defining participation does highlight another strategy in defining participation, that is, the social construction of participation. From this perspective, the beliefs held by the initiating agent, the participants, and the general community all affect how participation is defined and experienced. As well, consistent with this perspective are the acknowledgments that participation is contextual and a reflection of the power structure that support it. Therefore participation becomes a contestable and malleable construct.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The technique employed to engage the public could also have an effect on the definition of citizen participation. Yanklovich (1991) argues that some forms of participation, (e.g., referenda, and surveys), are unhelpful and illusionary, not because they interfere with government efficiencies, but rather because of their emphasis on the efficiency of opinion gathering rather than on the effectiveness of the strategy used. He suggests that these forms of participation tap into public opinion rather that public judgment. The former, Yanklovich argues, is reactionary, inconsistent, and underdeveloped while the latter is stable and thoughtful.

Innes and Booher (2000) note that traditional strategies, such as public opinion polls, focus groups, and surveys, used by governments for public participation are not actually participation. Consistent with Yanklovich, they argue that these methods make the participants objects of research rather than active participants. The methods are

> detached and scientific. . . . The information they provide is about current, though not necessarily well informed, opinion, much less opinion that will be stable as conditions evolve or as a policy gets implemented. These research methods lack hands-on reality of engaging members of the public directly with decision makers, even in the limited way that is possible through traditional participation. (Innes and Booher, 2000, p. 4)

These authors also point out that these strategies put people, whose first language is not English, at a disadvantage. The recent trend to make these surveys accessible through the Internet further disadvantages citizens who are living in poverty or who are the working poor and it "inevitably lacks the authenticity of dialogue that can come through in-person discussions" (Innes and Booher, 2000, p. 9).

Taken collectively, each of these classification schemes seems to have two common elements in defining participation: 1) the importance of the values, beliefs, and ideology of both those initiating and those participating in the process; and, 2) the degree of the redistribution of power and control that actually occurs. When the type of participation (e.g., survey, citizen's juries, community governance) is considered, a third element in defining participation arises. This is that participation only becomes a functional construct, despite the motivation, beliefs, and ideologies of those involved, if: a) the approach employed facilitates discussion and debate, which taps into stable and thoughtful opinion; and, b) if the approach employed is sensitive to the population in which participation is being sought.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Historically, the citizen participation literature has tended to be normative and has reflected a descriptive and prescriptive orientation. Based on a rational rather than a political model of policy development (Stone, 1988), studies have tended to view participation as a time-limited, linear process in which the citizen's role is reactionary, restricted, and passive. Exception to this orientation include Priscoli's (1978) suggestion that citizen participation must be thought of as more than just a technique, thereby, expanding its analysis to consider the philosophical and ideological underpinnings that exist. Studies rarely include the perspective of participants with the notable exception of Montgomerie (1994) who conducted an interpretive study of the administrator's perspective in conducting a consultative process.

In summary, participation as a concept is hotly contested. Who defines participation, their motivation, the perception of those involved, the planning framework it is situated in, the cultural context, the perceived and actual purpose, and the strategies utilized all mediate the definition of participation. Various classification schemes have been developed in an attempt to add clarity to the definition. These schemes, although helpful, are admittedly simplistic. Participation is treated as a uni-dimensional construct, within an historical and ideological vacuum. Emphasis is placed on the product of participation (e.g., redistribution of power), and not on the process (e.g., how this redistribution occurs). As well, these schemes have been developed based upon the perceptions of those observing the process rather than those who have had hands-on experiences.

Liberal Democracy and Participation

Liberal democracy, as defined by MacPherson (1977), refers to the democracy of a market capitalist society, and to "a society striving to ensure that all its members are equally free to realize their capabilities" (p. 1). The structural components of a liberal democracy, as identified by Held (1987), involve a "system of rule embracing elected 'officers' who undertake to 'represent' the interests and/or views of citizens within the framework of 'the rule of the law'" (p. 4). Liberal democracy is also the political ideology that has permeated all political parties in North America (Marchak, 1991).

Bell's (1976) model of ideological and structural tensions inherent in society is instructive in understanding the contested nature of citizen participation. This

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

model, depicted in Figure 1, attributes various values and structures to each of the three realms of society: the technical-economic, the political, and the cultural. In describing the technical-economic realm, Bell notes that the axial principles are efficiency, specialization, and accounting and concludes that the structure that most effectively supports these values is bureaucratic coordination, in which control and specialization can be fostered through rules and a hierarchical chain of command.

The political realm, which focuses on conflict resolution, is based on the principle of equality. Equality, as noted by Bell (1976) is a concern with one's rights that become over time interpreted as entitlements. According to Bell, "the axial structure of the polity is representation and, more recently, participation" (Bell, 1976, p. 320). The cultural realm is "one of self-expression and self-gratification" (Bell, 1976, p. 320). He described the values of the cultural realm as being anti-institutional and antinomian or rejecting of socially established morality, with an emphasis on the actualization of individual potential. The individual or self is the structure reflective of the cultural realm.

The tensions between these three realms of society arise from the contrast in values and structures that are viewed as necessary and natural to achieve the goals within each realm. For instance, the value of equality and the goals of participation and representation within the political realm are in sharp contrast to the goals of the technical-economic realm. Bell notes that the tensions between the bureaucracy and equality frame "the social conflicts of the day" (p. 320).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 1. The inherent moral and structural tensions in society.

Domain	Axial Principles	Axial Structures
Technical-Economic (capitalism)	economy/ efficiency/ specialization accountability	bureaucratic coordination (specialization, control, rules, hierarchy)
	vs	vs
Political (conflict resolution)	equality (legal rights/ entitlements/ social/economic	polity (representation and participation)
	vs	vs
Cultural (self-expression) (self-gratification)	• anti-institutional • antinomian • actualization of individual potential	self interpretive

---

Adapted from Bell, D. (1976). The end of ideology in the west. Reprinted in J. C. Alexander and S. Seidman (1990). Culture and society contemporary debates (pp. 290-297).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Restructuring and Liberal Democracy

Given the massive social, political, and economic restructuring which has occurred in most western democracies (Borgman, 1992; Brodie, 1995; Marchak, 1991) and the challenges to liberal democracy, it seems reasonable to assume that the societal tensions described by Bell may in fact be more complex than initially described, twenty years ago. Corporatism, feminism, communitarianism, and the New Right have each contributed to an increase in the moral and structural complexity described in Bell's model because of their challenge to liberal democracy. This complexity may result in an intra-dimensional, as well as, inter-dimensional tension, which in turn is reflected in the discourse of citizen participation.

CORPORATISM

According to Marchak (1981) corporatism differs from any other ideology before it with respect to its values and its definition of society. She describes it as being

> opposed to equality, widely distributed personal freedom or the protection of minorities. It values instead a hierarchial and authoritarian social structure. It describes the society that presently exists as one dominated by a ruling class as does the socialist ideology, but sees this class as legitimate rulers who are unfortunately hampered in their actions by democratic rules and procedures. (Marchak, 1981, p. x)

She notes that the democratic process and the liberal emphasis on equality are viewed by this new ideology as liabilities in accomplishing economic pursuits. The following statement by J. W. Younger, Secretary of the Steel Company of Canada, quoted by Marchak is indicative of this perspective:

> If what we really need is a free and responsible society corporate power is a desirable counter-force to the excessive power of government. Modern government is unresponsible [sic] to the taxpayer because of the way the franchise has been extended. It responds mostly to the demands of people with no stake in society. The corporation represents those who do have a stake in society – the stockholders. The fact that developing nations must tailor their policies to corporations is all to the good. It makes rather irresponsible governments more responsible. They have to compete for favours from the more responsible elements in society. The multinational

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> corporation is a great force for internationalism. (Marchak, 1981, p. 51)

The emphasis on the "stockholders" is the essence of corporatism. Although a market-driven perspective, there is, and has been, considerable support for the values expounded by the corporate sector, especially from religious groups who viewed this new right movement as the "vanguard of the new social order. . . a return to lost innocence and clear values" (Marchak, 1991, p. 1). Aspects of this ideology have also been adopted and slightly modified by most political parties and governments, usually surfacing under the "neo" label such as neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism.

In assessing the impact of restructuring and neo-liberalism on the women's movement, Brodie (1996b) provides an example of how the once liberal ideology that dominated North American political thinking has been modified by corporatism. She observes that Canadian governments are acting now as the

> midwives of globalization, transforming state apparatuses, development strategies, and regulations to respond to the "perceived exigencies" of a global economy (Cox, 1991, p. 337). In particular, assumptions and governing practices are being refashioned to achieve the illusive and abstract states of "flexibility" and "competitiveness." (Brodie, 1996b, p. 5)

Saul (1995) notes that corporatism is based on two notions: the "rejection of citizen-based democracy and the desire to react in a stable way to the Industrial Revolution" (p. 86). He observes that corporatism is creating a conformist society, one in which people view their primary obligation and loyalty to the corporation, to the bureaucracy, and to management. He suggests that

> the acceptance of corporatism causes us to deny and undermine the legitimacy of the individual as citizen in a democracy. The result of such a denial is a growing imbalance which leads to our adoration of self-interests and our denial of the public good. Corporatism is an ideology which claims rationality as its central quality. The overall effects on the individual are passivity and conformity in those areas which matter and non-conformism in those which don't. (p. 2)

This notion of loyalty to the corporation and to the bureaucracy conflicts with enhancing the democratic rights and responsibilities of all community members. Corporatist ideology values technocratic decision-making over democratic and techno-democratic processes. As well, the bureaucracy of the nation state would be viewed as secondary to that of the corporation. Those that share or are influenced by

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

corporatism would not support full participation of the community in social policy formation.

FEMINISM

Some feminists have also challenged the liberal democracy because of its notion of pluralistic power sharing, its denial of a class structure, the processes used for problem identification and its acceptance separation of the private and public domains.

Feminists, such as Ackelsberg (1988), criticize the liberal notion of pluralism because it tends to "homogenize and isolate people in the name of preserving and protecting individuality" (p. 302). Further, the pluralistic version of power is flawed because of the assumptions underlying it. According to Ackelsberg (1988) it is assumed that everyone comes together on an equal basis of power, their ability to participate is independent of their social and educational background, and those who do participate do so because politics and power interest them more than those who do not participate.

Research has indicated the inappropriateness of these assumptions. Women and minority groups do have a distinct disadvantage in competing in domains of power. Researchers (Lea, 1982; Junn, 1991; Olsen, 1982) note the importance of educational level and socioeconomic background in determining one's likelihood of being actively involved in politics and organizations. Lea (1982) found a direct relationship between schooling and socioeconomic status and political participation. As well, he notes that "males were more likely to participate because they have a greater stake in politics, and they act to protect and advance their interests, as well, they interact with others in politics therefore they develop the civic orientation that lead them to participate" (p. 195). The observation that males have more at stake in politics itself reflects a elitist perspective that further hampers the chances of more women becoming involved.

As well, feminists criticize the manner in which social problems and solutions have been conceptualized. The liberal, neo-liberal, and corporatist perspectives suggest that people come together for their "common good" which usually gets translated into economic efficiency. Social problems are viewed as either the result of a deviance from the social norms or due to disorganization and an individual issue. Social planning, when viewed from this perspective, does not involve a critique of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

system. Rather the focus is on short term vague stresses that produced the "defect" and the larger social issues such as inequity of resource allocation are brushed over (George & Wilding, 1985).

Dominelli (1995) describes the danger of viewing a problem separate from its social contexts, structural determinants, and one's personal experiences of it. Creative solutions are not sought and the bureaucratic procedures and technologies used to define and study it hinder progress. She notes that the major problem women have in working to address social problems is

> that of redefining the issues so that they transcend the individual, fragmented response to definition of the problem promoted by the media, the state and powerful others. Definitions constructed by the powerful are usually dominated by economic considerations rather than social needs and are plucked out of their social context to provide a neutral technocratic problem that can be addressed primarily by experts, not ordinary people. (p. 141)

Further, Brodie (1995) suggests that not only are these issues taken out of context and seen as needing "technocratic" solutions but this in turn, becomes a mechanism to silence those concerned with social equity. She observes that "'the ascendency of the market thus closes political spaces, demobilizing and excluding those very groups most likely to challenge the growing social inequalities that restructuring is creating" (p. 51).

Those who support the liberal, neo-liberal, or corporatist ideologies do not acknowledge a class system. They attribute inequities to individual differences or to imperfections in the system and to historical circumstances (Marchak, 1981). Social reality would suggest otherwise. For instance, a very small percentage of Canadians hold a very large percentage of the nation's wealth (Ross, Shillington & Lochhead, 1994). Marchak (1981) notes that studies completed in the 1960s and 1970s showed evidence of strong homogeneity within the upper class. That is, these individuals tended to be related by marriage, to be almost all of British origin, to have received their wealth from inheritances and investment profits and to hold positions mainly in financial, professional, and managerial areas. She observed that class divisions are no longer based on financial situations, rather they reflect racial, regional, and gender lines.

Ackelsberg (1988) suggests that the current split between what constitutes the public and private domains and individual and community domains mis-represent the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

experience of many women. A current and local example of this split is evidenced in the

Alberta Advisory Council on Women's issues in 1996, whose focus is the full and equal participation of women, surveyed 400 women to identify barriers to having women's input on change. The following five barriers were identified:

- the limited knowledge of women's issues by some women, by the public, and by the government;
- the limited knowledge regarding how to make their viewpoint known to decision-makers and politicians;
- the required time commitment given other family and community responsibilities;
- the fear of the consequences or redistribution for speaking out;
- a perception that government does not listen, particularly to women.

Feminist for the most part, would support citizen participation in policy development. What they would find objectionable would be a state-led process and the underlying assumptions that contribute to the inadequate representation of women and their issues.

COMMUNITARIANISM

In contrast to the liberal perspective that values an openness to different models of human fulfillment, communitarianism values a single model which puts "considerable emphasis on shared values of community and civic virtue that it claims the liberal perspective can't underwrite" (Delaney, 1994, p. vii). Summarizing the communitarianism perspective, Galvin (1994) notes that it is based on a concern for the disintegration of society. Communitarians are concerned with what they view as the breakdown in the moral responsibility of society, which they attribute to the lack of, agreed upon standards or principles. These standards can only be achieved when "deep communities are established and the "common good" (Delaney, 1994, p. vii) identified.

Communities, in the communitarian sense, not only have shared values, they also have "psychological attachments and developmental processes" (Rosenblum, 1994, p. 58). Mutual aid and respect would be the basis of the societal order, rather than relying on external interference of governments. As Moody (1994) notes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

communitarians "see progress in the movement from the rule of paternalism to the rule of law and finally to civic friendship" (p. 93). Derber, Schwartz, and Magrass (1990) observe that this increase in popular involvement of communities is a reflection of a "new culture of mutual helping based not on a dependence on experts, but rather on the power and dignity of people--power and dignity that only waits to be released by the proper circumstances" (p. 209). Community participation would be a central feature of the communitarian position.

THE NEW RIGHT

The New Right, promoted initially by Margaret Thatcher, is a combination of neo-liberal, economic and social conservative strategies. The former stresses fiscal restraint, limited government involvement, individualism, and open markets while the later promotes hierarchy, authoritarianism, and public-order state. Since its inception this ideology has gained popularity across North America.

In Alberta, the Conservative party as early as the early eighties began to embrace the principles of the New Right agenda. In a province that has had long-term social conservative roots with the Social Credit Party, who ruled Alberta for a generation, the New Right agenda was a comfortable fit. It is interesting to note that Finkel (1989) in summarizing the impact of the Social Credit party in Alberta observes,

> The early history of the Social Credit's success is instructive for those anywhere whose aim is to break a particular political mould. Social Credit, by combining charismatic leadership, many opportunities for grass-roots participation (however illusory these proved to be afterwards), and a radical rhetoric with appeal to all groups disposed by Depression, provided a certain model for lower-class unity against 'the interests'. (p. 215)

This social conservatism in Alberta has also been combined with a sense of economic insecurity that Tupper and Gibbins (1992) describe as originating from a desire for economic stability and economic diversification, which "remain preoccupations of Alberta's elite who fear unpredictable and uncontrollable economic and political forces" (p. xxi).

Given the ability of the New Right to accommodation the beliefs of the full political spectrum, it is difficult to determine the functional nature of citizen participation when it is initiated by a government that aligns itself with a New Right ideology. Some would argue that citizen participation is a mechanism for social

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

control, while social conservatives would argue it facilitates community empowerment.

Given the consideration of these different ideologies, Figure 2 outlines a modified version of Bell's model. The principles and structures that are represented in the technical-economic, political, and cultural domains of society, in this modified model, reflect the complexity that economic, social, and political restructuring has meant in our society.

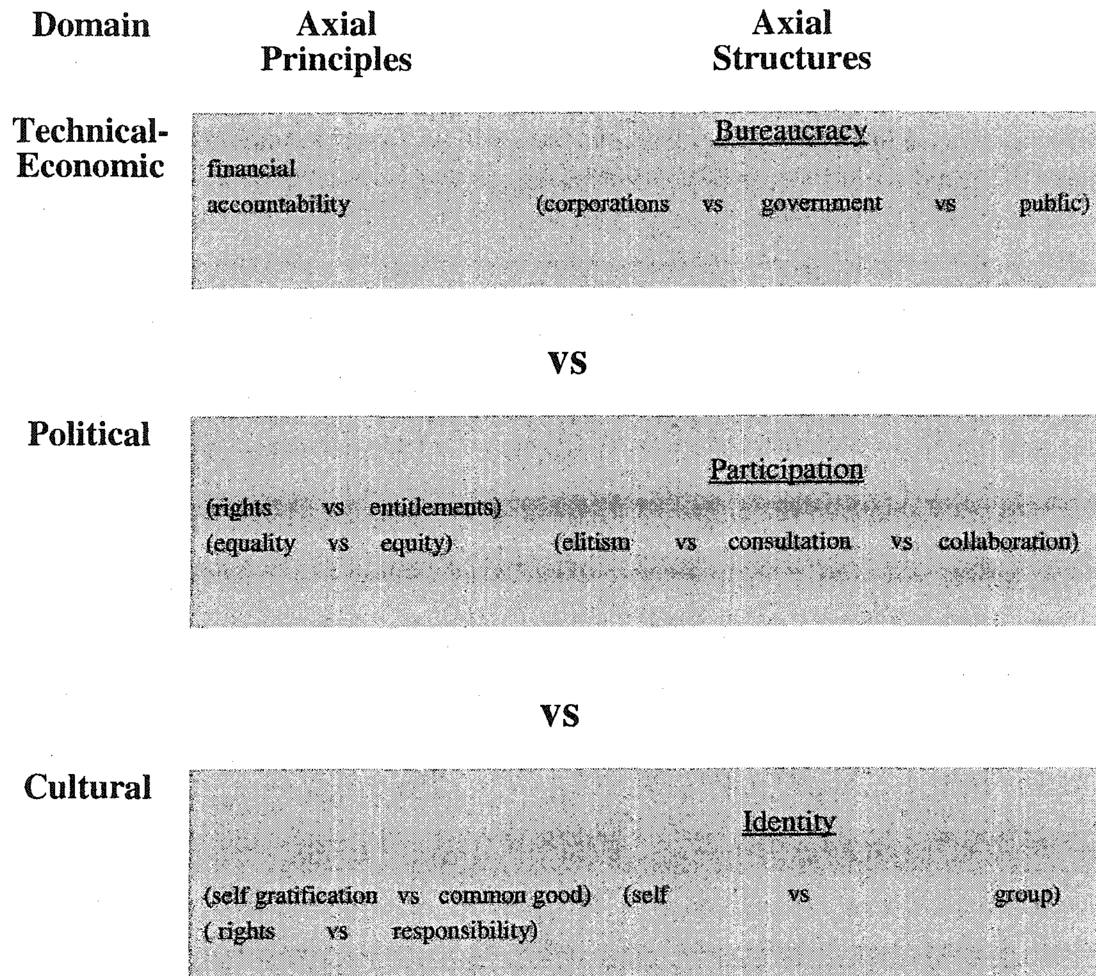
In this modified model, financial accountability remains the axial principle of the technical-economic domain, but there is also a tension that exists within the axial structure. The struggle involves a tension between various sites of the power in determining the direction and development of the economy in a capitalist state. The struggle exists between the elected officials, the government bureaucracy, the multi-national corporations, and the public.

Within the political domain, equity joins the axial principle of equality. At a structural level, the axial principle is still participation but the intra-dimensional tension focuses on the participant's eligibility, the format, and the content of the participation. The answer to each of these questions depends upon the ideological perspective from which they are viewed. The cultural domain also has an intra-dimensional tension. The axial principles reflect a conflict between individuality and a concern for the "common good". The culture structures would be the self versus the group.

This expanded model of inter- and intra-dimensional tension in society frames the issues, dilemmas, and contradictions that are reflected in state-initiated citizen participation. The struggle of these ideologies contributes to the contested nature of citizen participation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 2. Theoretical framework of the contested nature of citizen participation.



Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Popularity of Citizen Participation

The modern popularity of state-initiated citizen participation has waxed and waned (Braye, 2000; Langton, 1978; Maloff, Bilan, and Thurston, 2000). This section reviews these developments. As well, the renewed recent interest in citizen participation at the municipal, provincial and federal level is also outlined. I provide plausible explanations for its resurgence across North America which I believe, if examined in the context of this study, contribute to an understanding of the functional nature of citizen participation.

The origins of citizen participation can be traced to "the very beginning of the institutionalized city and regional planning process in the early twentieth century" (Day, 1997, p. 423). Its formal, legislatively mandated form in North America can be traced back to the War on Poverty and the Model Cities programs of the mid 1960s in the United States (Day, 1997; Montgomerie, 1994), when public interest was focused on improving conditions for underprivileged groups.

Although initiated by the federal government, the emphasis of the citizen participation during this period was not a sharing of power between government and citizens according to Day (1997), but rather an attempt at "improved communication between citizen groups and public officials"(p. 424). Each new administration put a slightly different emphasis on the purpose of the citizen participation. Day notes that

> during the Johnson administration, HUD pressured local governments to accommodate neighborhood groups. The new HUD team in the Nixon administration shifted the emphasis of the program away from a redistribution of power to structural reform in local government. (p. 424)

Recently, federal, provincial, and municipal governments in Canada, as in other democratized countries, have initiated a resurgence of citizen participation in policy development across a number of areas and departments. The rhetoric that surrounds this promotion of citizen participation by the state is embedded with values of openness and democracy. For example, the Federal Liberals recently have taken a strong rhetorical stance in favor of citizen participation. A Treasury Board Secretariat document notes,

> Canadians desire and demand more involvement in government decision-making. Parliamentary institutions provide for the democratic representation of all Canadians. Canada's democratic political traditions provide for the establishment of broad public policy

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> directions and priorities. **Accordingly, it is the policy of the government of Canada to pursue and to promote consultation with Canadians in the development of public policy and in the design of programs and services.** (bold in the original) (cited in Roy, 1998, p. 9).

In Alberta, the government has historically taken a residual view of the state (i.e., limited government, individual and community self-reliance, and a strong role for the private sector), that can be traced back to the Social Credit party. Being seen as responsive to public opinion and input also has been a long-standing direction the Government of Alberta, as is evident in the following statement made by the Regulatory Reform Office of the Executive Council. The statement declared: "It is now Government policy that all proposed regulations are to be circulated to appropriate interest groups, before the proposal is taken to cabinet, or a committee of Cabinet, for discussion and approval" (Alberta Executive Council, 1985, cited in Montgomerie, 1994, p. 6).

In the last several years under the leadership of a new Premier, this public consultation and involvement in public policy development has taken unprecedented proportions. Consistent with the platform of listening to the common folk, the current Government has consulted with the public on issues related to education, health, social services, and the environment.

This rise in the popularity, across North America, of citizen participation has been attributed to a number of factors. These factors can be divided into two general categories: factors that resonate from the nature of the citizenry and factors that related to nature of the government bureaucracy. All of these factors contribute to the contested nature of citizen participation.

THE NATURE OF THE CITIZENRY

Factors that originate with the citizenry include a demographic argument (Cullingworth, 1984), increased public education and skepticism resulting in pressure being exerted on governments (Croft and Beresford, 1992; Murgatroyd & McMillan, 1994; Midgley, Hall, Hardiman, & Narine, 1986; Weisbord, 1992), opportunities being available for those previously disenfranchised to have their voices included (Croft and Beresford, 1992; Fawcett, 1995; Pal 1997; Pateman, 1970), and citizens

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

wanting a restoration of representational balance (Cochrane, 1986; Cohen, 1978; Steelman, 2001).

Cullingworth (1984) attributes the popularity of citizen participation to the general activism of the sixties. He notes that "that activism has now been institutionalized" (p. 1). Cullingworth's reference to the political, economic, and social pressure the baby-boomers made during the political activism of the sixties may shed some light on why interest in citizen participation has increased recently. This birth cohort has had a notable political and social impact at each stage in their development. It is possible that one of the reasons for the rise in the popularity of citizen participation is that this dominant demographic group is now at a stage in their lives where they can again devote more time and resources in having a strong political voice.

It has also been argued that these governments are responding to the pressure placed on them by citizens who want to be more involved in policy development which has resulted in an increase in citizen participation. Citizens are more aware due to the increased education of the general public and increased media coverage (Murgatroyd & McMillan, 1994). As well, it is acknowledged that there is a general discontent and distrust of governments and skepticism of elected officials and in their ability to address increasing social problems (Fung & Wright, 2001; Weisbord, 1992) which results in increased pressure on the governments. For instance, Frank Graves, President, EKOS Research reported at a panel discussion hosted by the Institute on Governance, the results of a survey of 2042 Canadians in March 1998. The results indicate that:

- there is a modest improvement in the levels of trust towards the federal government in 1998 relative to 1994, though overall perceptions of ethical standards remain low;
- 45% of Canadians believe that the federal government consults badly with Canadians on national issues;
- there is a surprising degree of balance characterizing perceptions of who should and who does exercise power. Government is generally viewed as exercising an appropriate level of power, while the media and big business are perceived as unduly powerful;
- Canadians are willing to participate in engagement exercises, even if this requires a commitment of time or advanced preparation;
- existing political institutions and structures in Canada are viewed as not good enough, though Canadians would prefer them to be improved rather than replaced. (Institute on Governance, 2001, p. 1)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

During this same panel discussion David Zussman summarized the results of a search conference on citizen engagement organized by the Public Policy Forum in the fall of 1998. He also discussed a number of findings that confirm this lack of trust in governments, the need for more transparent forms of decision-making since traditional methods of consultation were ineffective, and the need for increased skill acquisition by administrators. According to Zussman the findings of the conference indicated:

- the skill sets required for citizen engagement are not widely held or, indeed, understood;
- there is a need to define the obligations of the "engaged" (e.g., stakeholders or citizens) to become sufficiently knowledgeable on issues of public policy;
- those who have been traditionally excluded or disenfranchised from the governmental decision-making process must be engaged (e.g., youth, aboriginals, rural Canadians);
- decision-making time frames are different for volunteer, business and governmental organizations. Within the public sector, there is a perception that citizen engagement lengthens the policy-making process;
- A greater distinction needs to be made between consultation and engagement. (Institute on Governance, 2001, p. 2)

These findings are consistent with the findings of others assessing public opinion towards government decision-making. Reacting to the increased size and insensitivity of government bureaucracies, citizens have also advocated for accountable services (Croft and Beresford, 1992; Midgley, Hall, Hardiman, & Narine, 1986) and an opportunity for those previously disenfranchised to have their voices included (Croft and Beresford, 1992; Pal 1997; Pateman, 1970). Overall, citizens are wanting a restoration of "representational balance in public institutions" (Cohen, 1995, p. 56) and the state, it is argued, is responding to this pressure by initiating citizen input in their policy development. Cochrane (1986) summarizes the pressure from the community as representing

> a desire to transcend the division between the state and civil society . . . to transcend the division between public and private spheres . . . to redefine politics as a process which stretches from the daily experience of ordinary life to wider decisions about resource allocation . . . and . . . to challenge notions that certain areas can be defined out of the political discussion and other areas of decision-making. (p. 52)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In summary, a number of factors that originate with the citizenry contributed to the rise of citizen participation. These include a demographic increase, an increase in public education and skepticism resulting in pressure being exerted on governments, opportunities being available for those previously disenfranchised to have their voices included and citizens wanting a restoration of representational balance. There were also factors that could be attributed to the nature of the government bureaucracy that affected the increased use of citizen participatory practices.

THE NATURE OF THE BUREAUCRACY

Although there are factors that originate with the citizenry which influenced the rise in the popularity of citizen participation and its contested nature there are also factors related to the government bureaucracy. Factors that related to the government bureaucracy include a desire by the governing political party to stimulate public loyalty (Pal, 1993), a desire by the political parties to reform government bureaucracy (Douglas, 1993; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Pollitt, 1993, 1998), the fulfillment of the government's goals of generating ideas, perspectives, improved communication, and values clarification (Heberlein, 1976; Montgomerie, 1994; Pierre, 1998; Schmidt, 1998; Haight & Ginger, 2000), and cost effectiveness (Cohen, 1995; Davis, 1985; Petts, 1995; Wharf & McKenzie, 1998).

According to Abbott and Caracheo (1988) the "ideal" or pure type of bureaucracy as conceived by Weber encompasses two major dimensions:

> The first, a structural dimension consists of elements that can be identified and defined operationally. Such concepts as rules, hierarchy, contract, and separation of ownership and management are illustrative. At the same time, there is an attribution of purpose or intent associated with each of these concepts. (p. 254)

The attribution of purpose can be summarized in three basic elements: "(a) rule by law (legal domination), (b) acceptance by the governed of the norms upon which the laws are based (legitimation), and (c) elimination of irrational elements from the actions of officials (rationality) " (Abbott & Caracheo, 1988, p. 245). Bureaucracies, while stressing efficiency, hierarchical authority, routine, and impersonality rely on technocratic decision-making processes. That is, the selection of the decision making is to "simply find the most efficient means for achieving any given purpose" (Ritzer, 1992, p. 144). Efficiency is determined by the expert use of technology.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The assumptions underlying this approach are what Stone (1988) refers to as the "rationality project". That is, there has been a tendency to view policy analysis and formation as a rational process. This assumes a linear, rational model of reasoning, one in which objectives are identified, courses of action are determined, long and short consequences are evaluated for each alternative, and a selection is made based on a maximization of benefits. "Society is viewed as a collection of autonomous, rational decision makers who have no community life" (Stone, 1988, p. 6). These individuals maximize their self-interest by trading with others and choosing courses of action that maximize their goal attainment. Policy-making is assumed to be similar to a production or assembly line within a market place. Bureaucracies rely on technocratic processes. Therefore the non-participation of citizens in a policy formation process is viewed not only as a natural and necessary element to good decision making, it is also viewed as "a testimony to its success in satisfying the interests of its polity" (Kweit & Kweit, 1981, p. 21).

In contrast to the technocratic processes used in a bureaucracy, one of the underlying principles of a democracy is that decision making is participatory and invites debate, dialogue, and diversity of opinion (Saul, 1995). This does not negate the involvement of technical decision-makers. In fact, Yankelovich (1991) argues that public opinion needs to be combined with the opinions of technical experts. He notes that the apparent public backlash or "anti-intellectual and anti-rational sentimentality" (p. 44) which, he suggests "endows the folk wisdom of the public with special mystical qualities" (p. 44) is counter-productive. Rather he suggests there should be a combined effort of community member and technical expert in problem solving.

According to Midgley, Hall, Hardiman, & Narine (1986), the goal of increased public participation is to empower the citizens. Participation "humanizes the bureaucracy, but strengthens the capacities of individuals and communities to mobilize and help themselves. In this way, dependence on the state is minimized and ordinary people rediscover their potential for co-operation and mutual endeavor.

Given this, these authors propose a topology of explanations of state responses to community participation. According to these authors the "state's attitude may be classified in terms of various criteria including its definition of what participation entails, its perception of the possibility of instability and the degree to which it is willing to devolve power to local political institutions" (pp. 38-39). Four ideal

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

typical modes are identified with an acknowledgment that numerous variations exist. These four modes are the anti-participatory mode, the manipulative mode, the incremental mode, and the participatory mode.

Each mode of participation stresses a different motivation on the part of the state along a continuum of empowering its citizens. The anti-participatory mode

> is congruent with Marxian and elite theories which hold that the state is not interested in the poor and that it supports neither community participation nor social development. Instead, the state acts on behalf of the ruling class, furthering their interests, the accumulation of wealth and the concentration of power. Efforts to mobilize the masses for participation will be seen as a threat and suppressed. (p. 39)

The manipulative mode, is adopted for political, social control, and cost reduction motives. This view is influenced by

> both the elitist and corporatist theory which emphasizes the capacity of the state to subvert and co-opt autonomous movements and to preserve its own power. Although genuine social benefits may accrue to the poor, they nevertheless remain dependent on the 'top-down' transfer of resources and fail to realize their potential for autonomous co-operative action. (pp. 39-40)

The third style, the incremental mode, according to these authors, is

> characterized by official support for community participation ideas but also by a laissez-faire or ambivalent approach to implementation that fails to support local activities properly or to ensure that participatory institutions function effectively. In this mode, state politics are usually vaguely formulated, poorly implemented and lacking in determination. . . . Incremental responses to community participation may also be an expression of a genuine political ambivalence about the viability of community based social development programmes. (p. 42)

The final mode in Midgley et al.'s topology is the participatory mode, in which the state approves and supports the effective involvement of community participants. They describe it as:

> Inspired by various social and political theories including populism, anarchism and pluralism, the participatory mode involves a real devolution of power. In addition to creating genuine community level political institutions, the state sponsors participatory activities through the training and deployment of community workers, the provision of material and other forms of assistance and the co-ordination of national planning. A concerted effort is made to enfranchise the poorest sections of the community and recognition and support is provided for voluntary associations of all kinds. Local decision-making bodies are

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> given specific rights and functions and real control over budgets. (p. 44)

Pal (1993) argues the use of citizen participation in the late sixties in Canada was a strategic self-directed plan formulated by the Liberal party to stimulate public loyalty to their party and to their ideal of federalism. Under the auspices of the Secretary of State, Citizenship Branch, the Citizens' Participation Directorate was established in 1968. Three programs were created: the Assistance to Communities, the Social Communications, and the Group for Understanding and Human Rights. Although the government's goal was to co-opt the associations who were receiving federal funding, it had the opposite effect. These groups, in, fact, became the government's most articulate opponents. Pal's (1993) assessment that "the state, pursuing an eminently statist strategy, had been ensnared by the fruits of its own efforts. . . . The roots of 'citizen participation' among groups and organizations themselves were now firmly established" (p. 123) is another reason cited for the increased use of citizen participation.

A desire to improve the internal workings of the state's bureaucracy may have also stimulated the resurgence of state-initiated citizen participation. This development, which was based on the work of Pollitt (1986) and later popularized in the writings of Osborne and Gaebler (1992) and Douglas (1993), resulted in the adoption of two strands of management ideology within government bureaucracies. The first, referred to as New Public Management promotes "pro-market, micro-economic rationality" (Pollitt, 1998, p. 49). The second, "the post-bureaucratic variant places more emphasis on preserving existing relationships between groups (including trade unions) and much less on the dualisms of principal and agent, funding and providing and 'steering and rowing'" (Pollitt, 1998, p. 49).

The integration of these practices stimulated governments to make policy advice and public policy more accessible and responsive to citizens' preferences (Pierre, 1998) in a belief that "participation is cost effective through cost avoidance" (Wharf & McKenzie, 1998, p. 127). Public administrators began to view citizen involvement as an avenue to enhance communication and relationships, while being a means of value clarification between the public and the elected officials (Montgomerie, 1994). Administrators identified citizen participation in policy development as a source of a wider variety of ideas, perspectives and suggestions, more so than what traditional policy advice can offer (Montgomerie, 1994; Pierre,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1998). These later motivations have resulted in citizen participation being used as a market research tool rather than as a participatory process. The "consumers" of government services are surveyed for their interest and preferences in a particular product. This information is then used to select and market the service.

The factors related to the nature of the government bureaucracy which contributed to the rise of citizen participation include: a desire to empower and/or control its citizens, a desire by the governing political party to stimulate public loyalty, a desire by the political parties to reform government bureaucracy, and a view by the bureaucracy that citizen participation could be used as a source of ideas, perspectives, improved communication, and values clarification. An argument is also made that the popularity in citizen participation is a reflection of a challenge to the ideology of liberal democracy.

In summary, the rise in the popularity, of citizen participation has been attributed to a number of factors. These factors include those related to the citizenry and the government bureaucracy. Each of these factors contributes to the contested nature of citizen participation. In the previous section, the democratic and political orientation of those involved, and their definition of citizen and participation were identified as important in contributing to contested nature of citizen participation. In this study the context that gave rise to citizen participation and the dominant discourse that surrounds citizen participation will be examined.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The following studies are illustrative of the types of issues surrounding citizen participation that used a critical theorist perspective. The analysis of power is a central theme of all of these studies. Each examines the potential contradictions that exist within the hegemonic position as well as the resistances that occur from those in marginalized positions. Each study demonstrates the complexities involved in participation and each avoids the temptation to resort to simplified conceptualization. There is also an appreciation of the historical, economic, political, and social contexts of citizen participation. Characteristic of the work of most critical theorists, they convey in their analysis an overwhelming sense of frustration concurrently and paradoxically with a sense of optimism.

These studies highlight the possible problems in a state-initiated citizen

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

participation process including the logistics of involvement, the adequacy of the strategies employed, the resultant culture clash, the nature of empowerment, the impact of prior beliefs and experiences, and the economic, social, cultural, and political cultural.

Studies that have examined the nature of resistance indicate that the availability of resources, training and support, coordination among groups, and the depth of the resistance all contribute to its success.

The Validity of State-Initiated Participation

There is a considerable amount of literature supporting the concept of citizen participation in policy analysis for a number of reasons including it improves information and ideas, lends credibility and transparency to the decision-making process, encourages community acceptance (Alelson, 2000; Beierle, 1999; Braye, 2000; Pal, 1997; Wharf & McKenzie, 1998). The question remains whether participation, initiated by the state, is social control or empowerment or both. The theoretical literature on citizen participation speaks to this issue and I have already outlined the significant impact ideology has on the implementation of citizen participation. The studies I have chosen here illustrate field-based state-initiated projects. These studies speak to the numerous difficulties that can arise when a technology is imposed on a culture that is counter-intuitive to the concept of citizen participation. Issues of citizen recruitment, ministerial and bureaucratic agendas, community beliefs about government, skills, training, and resources of all participants impact the participatory process. Although these studies do not answer the control/empowerment debate they do highlight the complexities inherent in the actualization of citizen participation in a state-initiated process.

Foley and Martin (2000) examined the New Labour government's initiative for greater community involvement. Their introduction of bottom-up initiatives was in sharp contrast to the previous Conservative government who had introduced the Urban Programme (UP). According to Foley and Martin the UP appeared to offer "genuine support for community-based projects" (p. 480) but over time there was reduced funding for these programs and a redirection towards economic and property-based schemes. In contrast, under the New Labour government, according to these researchers, there appears to be a real commitment to partnering between the public, private, and the voluntary/community sectors. They site the "New Deal for

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Communities", which aims to take a long-term approach to addressing the concerns of communities, as an example of this commitment. Communities become involved in identifying issues and developing proposals to address them. As well, the Best Value Pilots seek to modernize local governments by enabling people to hold councils accountable for improving the responsiveness, quality, and cost-effectiveness by mandatory community consultation and published targets and plans for annual improvements of services quality and effectiveness.

Despite what appears to be positive intentions, Foley and Martin highlight concerns in this state-initiated project which centre around issues related to the recruitment of participants and the clash of organizational cultures. These authors found that only one fifth of those that could have been involved actually were and of this number most preferred passive forms of involvement. Upon closer examination the authors found that some community members believed that there was no benefit in collaborating, possibly due to their prior experience with the Conservative government's initiatives, and that contrary to government's beliefs community aspirations were not as homogeneous as initially presented.

In a similar fashion, Butler (1999) found that few people actually participated when given the opportunity to be involved in a state-initiated consultation on health policies. She concluded that the cultural, economic, social, political, and historical context of Australia interfered with community participation in health action. Australia has a highly instrumental view of government, a poor understanding of political institutions, an acceptance of the need for "big government" and an apathy towards politics in general. Given these observations it would be important in any study of citizen participation to understand the context-complexity from which a state-initiated process arises.

The clash of cultures was also a concern expressed by Foley and Martin (2000) and others (Murgatroyd & McMillan, 1994; Sanderson, 1999). Foley and Martin found that ministerial demands for changes were at odds with the long-term processes needed for true community involvement. As well, there was concern expressed that regional differences and standards were difficult although the initiative was designed to promote local flexibility over national consistency. Government's need for centralized instrumental rationality in decision making was being challenged by decentralized communicative rationality. Sanderson (1999) argues that this shift is really at the heart of citizen participation and the challenge of modern day policy

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

analysis or what he refers to as the "policy science of tyranny." Showing openness, working towards consensus, being non-hierarchical and open to alternative interpretations are essential in citizen participation but contrary to the organizational culture of government bureaucracies. He argues that agenda setting, needs shaping, and control in decision making can all subvert citizen participation. As well, the power of professionals, marketization, consumerism, and managerialism, organizational practices and cultural, and capacities of citizens can remove power from citizens. Similar conclusions were found by others (Owen, 1998; Rutman, 1998).

Fung and Wright (2001) examined 5 state-initiated projects where local people were encouraged to be involved in influencing policy. Two of these projects were in Chicago, the Chicago local school management program and the Chicago neighborhood police program, one national initiative on endangered species and habitats in the States, a local budgeting project in Brazil, and finally a village governance project in India. Based on an analysis of these projects they developed a model of "Empowered Deliberative Democracy (EDD)." They note that these projects demonstrate that "they have the potential to be radically democratic in their reliance on the participation and capacities of ordinary people, deliberative because they institute reason-based decision-making, and empowered since they attempt to tie action to discussion" (p. 7). The authors suggest that these projects are characterized as being focused on specific tangible problems, which involve locals effected by the problems, and deliberation devoted to the solution of these problems. They also note that institutional design feature supported the principles of EDD. These features were: the devolution of authority; "the creation of formal linkages of responsibility, resource distribution, and communication that connect these units to each other and to superordinate, more centralized authorities" (p. 17); and the use and generation of state institutions "to support and guide these decentered problem solving efforts rather than leaving them as informal or voluntary affairs (p. 17). These researchers argue that although others would criticize the initiatives as elite decision making, detailed study of these projects would suggest otherwise. Both Fung's (2001) examination of resource allocation and resolution of social problems and Baiocchi's (2001) data on the Brazilian project's resource allocation would support a different conclusion. Baiocchi demonstrates that the distribution of the resources indicates that the dominant group was not directing it. Fung's data, which examined in detail the two

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chicago projects, suggests a dramatic reduction in murders, assaults, robbery, and aggravated assault over a four-year period (1994-98). As well, schools in Chicago were better at addressing the needs of more disadvantaged children over the period of 1987-97 than before the introduction of the school management councils. Although inconsistent with the literature, Fung found that low-income participated as much or more than high-income neighborhoods. But in each neighborhood, the most well off would be more likely to attend meetings than their neighbor. The greatest predictor of participation was the community crime-rate. Baiocchi (2001) notes that in the Brazilian budgetary process women were less likely to participate because of women's availability of time.

Although these projects represent some very positive accounts of citizen participation Fung and Wright note that they are not free of inequities in power. In fact, they suggest that "if the deliberative apparatuses becomes sites of genuine challenge to the power and privileges of the dominant classes and elites . . . the deliberative bodies would be dismantled" (p. 34). That these deliberative bodies have been empowered by a state-initiated process has been demonstrated but the critical question according to Henkel and Stirrat (2001) is "not so much 'how much' are people empowered but rather 'for what' are they empowered" (p.182).

Those opposed to the idea of a clash of cultures between bureaucratic and community decision-making may argue that the potential friction between these two groups is reduced by the fact that there is legislation accompanying state-initiated processes that would ensure participation occurs. Unfortunately this is not the case. Checkoway (1982) conducted a national survey of the use of public participation in health planning agencies that had been legislated six years previously to ensure involvement occurred. Although citizen participation was occurring, the results of the study, which included 154 respondents, indicate that only minimal standards for citizen involvement took place. Generally there was no transfer of power to consumers and no reduction in the participation rate and dominance of the service providers. Checkoway concluded that although health systems agencies have "improved awareness and activated some participation, there still are serious gaps between stated aims for participation and actual practice" (p. 731).

Similarly, Woodward (2000) examined the use of state-mandated citizen juries in Britain and concluded that although the juries had been established there was a tendency for administrative personnel to patronize juries and look for quick fixes.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The question arose from the participants whether another "tier of insiders" had been created. Similarly, Thomas (2001) notes that although community consultation on conservation plans is legislated that the degree, type, and quality of this consultation varied significantly to the point that in some cases the consultation involved talking to one person.

These studies highlight the possible problems in a state-initiated citizen participation process over and above the issues of definition of citizen and participation and other ideological struggles. The logistics of having community involvement, adequate participation strategies, the clash of community and bureaucratic cultures, the nature of empowerment, prior beliefs about and experiences with participation, and the economic, social, cultural, and political cultural each impact the nature of state-initiated citizen participation processes. Fung and Wright note the tenuous nature of these deliberative groups. The next section considers the nature of resistance in a state-initiated process.

Ideological Dominance and Resistance

A number of studies have examined the nature of resistance to the dominant ideology in a participatory process. As indicated in these studies there appears to be four variables that contribute to the success of the resistance. These variables are the availability of resources, training and support, coordination among groups, and the depth of the resistance.

Capper, Hanson, and Huilman (1994) examined the participation of community residents in an interagency collaboration project initiated by the school. Data collection involved observations of meetings and interviews with team members and community residents. The authors wanted to "unpack this dichotomy of critical versus poststructural perspectives -- empowerment versus the reinforcement of existing power relationships" (p. 335). They observed that a policy initiative can be both empowering and constraining for all participants involved, and concluded that "collaboration, as a policy, may not be necessarily a 'good' or 'bad' solution, but it can open avenues to power for all participants" (p. 346).

This study demonstrates what others (e.g., Lather, 1991) have identified as the complementary aspects of critical and poststructural perspectives. It is also provocative since it challenges the notion of ideological dominance and hegemony.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The authors conclude that "the community residents in the project had an opportunity to exercise greater, or more equal, control over their lives and the life of their community" (p. 346), in comparison to the professionals involved as a result of the collaboration. This conclusion is inconsistent with an understanding of the disproportionate power differential between the two groups.

In response to their more cynical critics, Capper, Hanson, and Huilman (1994) argue that the positional power of the agency team does not give them more influence over the residents in "terms of strategies of disciplinary power (surveillance) and normalization function of power" (p. 346). Rather, they suggest that "it is what we, as members of society, are socialized to believe that leads us to the assumption that the effects of agency surveillance and normalization are greater, or have more influence, than the effects of resident surveillance and normalization" (p. 346).

In contrast, Shields and LaRocque (1997) found in their examination of a consultative decision-making process involving six school districts, that consultation became an end rather than the means to an end. The end in this case was hegemonic control to maintain the status quo. These authors utilized Murphy's model of the components central to most change initiatives related to restructuring as their guide in a critical analysis of the consulting process. This model identifies four issues for examination: organization and governance, voice and choice, teacher empowerment and professionalism, and teaching for meaningful understanding. Although this model is not directly related to a state-initiated citizen participation process, it does have some transferable elements.

Shields and LaRocque (1997) examined the leadership and guidance offered to participants, the composition of the committee and the members' ability to influence the decision-making as evidenced by the diverse nature of their deliberations. They also analyzed the membership and the role of parent and union involvement. Finally, they measured the changes that emphasized the complexity of the issue of teaching and the paradoxes and contradictions in how the ministry and the school district approached and interpreted the literature. They concluded that the purpose of the consultative process was an "emphasis on control rather than on the creation of a forum in which various voices and ideas are heard, understood, and considered" (Shields and LaRocque. 1997, p. 1).

This finding is consistent with the observation made by Taylor (1995) in her study focusing on the changes that have occurred in Alberta schools. Specifically, she

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was interested in the "roles of business organizations and their allies in working to achieve hegemonic settlement in public education in Alberta" (Taylor, 1996, p. 1). Interviews with stakeholders, observations of meetings, and analysis of documentation led her to conclude that counter-hegemonic work was insufficient due to a lack of resources, social divisions amongst groups, and a lack of coordinating organizations. These observations were found in later studies (Foley & Martin, 2000; Fung, 2001; Fung & Wright, 2001)

The critical analysis of the influence business yields in social areas is a focus of Brodie (1995, 1996a; 1996b). Brodie observes that the hollowing out of the welfare state as a result of neo-liberalism has meant "different forms of domination while, at the same time, reshaping more familiar ones rooted in gender, race, and class" (Brodie, 1996a, p.126). She argues that public consultation as a government institution of the neo-liberal state serves to "silence informed voices, in a specific policy field by labeling them as 'special interest'. . .acts as an effective device for limiting the parameters of the debate and provides the illusion of democratic policy-making" (Brodie, 1996a, p. 140). In this regard she echoes the assessment made by Saul (1995) regarding public consultation and direct democracy. He denounces it as merely a means of keeping citizens distracted and feeling involved but without any real influence on critical issues. Similarly, Cochrane (1986) notes that any "symbolic victories" that communities might achieve in turn make it difficult to change and challenge other areas of decision-making. As well, citizens participate in immaterial issues while the larger systems control critical areas of decision-making. Further, the community process, he argues, is based on shared notions of locality "yet few of the political or economic forces and agencies that it confronts have any similar commitment to particular areas" (p. 53). He also notes that there is a "mis-match in decision-making locally and multi-nationally" (p. 53). The latter he argues is based on economic concerns.

Based on her analysis of the women's movement, Brodie (1995) identified the critical issue as the need to change "public expectations about entitlements, collective provision for social needs, and the appropriateness of the welfare state" (p. 54). One means of changing public expectation is through public consultation that aims to control the discourse so that it reflects the dominant ideological perspective.

All but one of these studies concluded that although the structures for consultation may be present, who participates, the role they play, and the parameters

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of the discourse are controlled by a dominant group. The one exception, Capper, Hanson, and Huilman's (1994) study, assumed that because community residents were more cognizant of the work of the team, teachers, and schools that they were therefore in an equal or greater position to professionals in influencing changes. This may be an overly generous and possibly erroneous conclusion given other's (Foley & Martin, 2000; Fung, 2001; Fung & Wright, 2001; Taylor,1996) observation that other groups had difficulty getting organized sufficiently to resist the dominant position. It should be noted that Capper, Hanson, and Huilman's conclusions were based on the feelings of the residents as opposed to an assessment of the actual changes that resulted from their input. Therefore they may have felt excited about being asked to be involved in the process but their input was never actually used.

O'Dovanan (2000), reviewing the state-initiated public consultation on the Women's Health Initiative in Ireland, takes a more sophisticated look at the issue of resistance. Aligning himself with the theory of the interactive state, that views people as having agency and knowledge and not just "ideological dupes"(p. 226), he suggests that "people are not blindly co-opted into the agendas of the state, but have the potential to recognize and resist regulation" (p. 226). This is similar to Feldberg's (2001) assessment of the role the National Network on Environments and Women's Health (NNEWH) in Canada. She believes that the NNEWH can ensure that the discussion is not polarized and that myths are dispelled by the inclusion of different perspectives and that groups such as the NNEWH can assume the role of "institution" that lobbies from the inside.

But O'Dovanan argues that the question is not whether resistance exists or not nor the amount of the resistance but rather it is the depth of the resistance that is critical in understanding whether there is potential for a shift in the hegemony of the dominant ideology. In the case of the Women's Health Initiative in Ireland the resistance did not challenge the basis understanding of health therefore the struggle took place within the parameters of the dominant ideology and nothing significant changed.

These studies highlight the challenge involved in resisting the dominant group or ideology in a participatory process. It requires well-organized, trained and supported, and resource-rich groups. It is also necessary for these groups to be able to critically reflect on the underlying ideology that is conveyed in the discourse surrounding the policy initiative. In this study I will examine the nature of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

resistance to the dominant discourse and the strategies used to limit the impact of the resistance.

WOMEN AND THE STATE

The relationship of women to the state and the historical consequences of this relationship for the social construction of women will be described. This relationship is complex and riddled with contradictions. Although women and their children have benefited from this relationship they also have suffered (Armstrong & Connelly, 1999). I begin this section with an overview of the history of feminist scholarship on the state, the rationale for its development, and the major theoretical positions. I review the relationship of women, participation, and the state.

Feminist Scholarship on the State

Evans and Wekerle (1997) note that the feminist literature, which has evolved over the last two decades, has challenged mainstream scholarship on the welfare state. Rather than concentrating only on the state-market relations, the state's role in regulating the market, and the importance of class, feminist literature has expanded this analysis to consider the role of women in society, in politics, and in public policy. Evans and Wekerle (1997) suggest that there are at least five reasons why a special focus should be given to the relationship of women to the welfare state. These reasons include:

> First, policies, services, and the benefits of the welfare state incorporate significant, though implicit assumptions about gender roles. . . . Second, the welfare state provides an important, though declining, source of employment for women. . . . Third, women are not only at the front lines of delivering welfare services, they also are their chief consumers, although the services they seek and receive are often on behalf of others. . . . Fourth, the services and policies of the welfare state do not simply reproduce the problematic assumptions about gender relations that are held in broader society, they also actively shape gender relations. . . . Finally, the welfare state has the potential to generate political resources for women by creating new solidarities, alliances, and organizations. (p. 4)

Fudge (1996) in reviewing feminist theorizing about the state notes that there is a "tendency to either to praise the welfare state for its liberating potential or to condemn it for reinforcing male dominance" (p. 162). Brodie (1996a) notes that this

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

theorizing has ended in a "conceptual cul-de-sac" (p. 10). For example, liberal feminists argue that the state could be a "progressive and sovereign institution that, once 'purged' of its sexism, is capable of legislating women's equality" (Brodie, 1996a, p. 10). Others (Wilson, 1977; Abramowitz, 1988; and Ursel, 1992) suggest that massive restructuring would need to occur for this to be realized. Radical and socialist feminists, who argue that the state is a centre of social control and patriarchy, have been criticized for their inability to explain why this control is present and why sometimes the state acts in favor of women (Brodie, 1996a).

Although the early writings in feminist literature tended to present women as the passive victims of a powerful state (Evans and Wekerle, 1997; Brodie, 1996a), recent analysis (Evans and Wekerle, 1997; Orloff, 1993; Piven, 1990) emphasizes "the political nature of the struggles to secure social provision and argues that welfare states, in addition to their regulatory aspects, also include emancipatory elements with potential to alter power relations" (Evans and Wekerle, 1997, p. 10). Brodie (1996a) notes that this position has also been criticized because it fails to include the "immense regulatory capacities of the welfare state" (p. 12). The social constructionist school views "societal institutions, including those within the state system, as social constructs that reflect the constraints of particular social structures and historical developments" (Brodie, 1996a, pp. 12-13). For instance, the introduction of state-initiated citizen participation reflects beliefs, values, and power structures have impacted the construction of women. Given this, one of the questions examined in this study concerns the nature of women's meaning with the introduction of citizen participation in social policy development.

Women, the State and Political Participation

A review of women's role in relation to the state and political participation indicates that a complex and paradoxical situation. While women benefit from some state intervention they also suffer from the implementation of state policies. As well, while women's role in the community is usually implied or assumed as essential in the operationalization of state policy, it is at the same time unrecognized and undervalued. This complex relationship is related to a number of factors including the historical stereotyping of women's role in society as dysfunctional, the undervaluing of private participation, the hesitancy of women to be involved, and the effectiveness

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of efforts to depolitize women's involvement. This relationship has dramatically impacted the perceived role of women.

Pateman (1989) argues that in modern times women have been viewed as a "source of disorder in the state" (p. 18). This "disorder" is attributed to their morality and their social sphere, the home, which, it has been suggested, leads them to exert a disruptive force on social and political life. In support of her observation Pateman quotes three influential voices of early modernity:

> Rousseau proclaims that "never has a people perished from an excess of wine; all perish from the disorder of women". . . . Freud . . . argues in chapter 4 of Civilization and Its Discontents that women are 'hostile to' and "in opposition to" civilization. In a similar vein, Hegel writes that the community "creates its enemy for itself within its own gates" in "womankind in general". Women are "the everlasting irony in the life of the community", and when "women hold the helm of government, the state is at once in jeopardy." (Pateman, 1989, p. 17)

Pateman also notes that although women have been granted citizenship it is still unlikely that women will be seen as fit for office since it is generally believed that they cannot develop a sense of justice.

Although women were instrumental in the development of social welfare policy (Sapiro, 1990), they have both benefited and suffered from the policies of the welfare state. These policies have tended to be gender-blind (Gordon, 1990) and based on the "antidependency ideology" [that] "penalizes those who care for the inevitable dependent . . . who are, of course, women " (Gordon, 1990, p. 12). Sapiro argues that women have been defined as dependent and not as moral agents, having little or no autonomy from their husbands or fathers and little or no choice as a moral agent "*because* others depend upon their dependency" (p. 39). Further she states that because women are defined through social policy as "individuals who place themselves as second" (p. 51), "many social policies that affect women are not, in fact, aimed primarily *at* them but rather, in many sense, *through* them" (p.39). The assumption that women would be the major caregivers is built into all welfare states (Neysmith, 1997).

Government policies have impacted women as workers. According to Luxton and Reiter (1997) attacks by the political right on social programs negatively affect women as workers and as service recipients. Cutbacks in social programs mean less paid work for the caring of dependent members of our society. Union mobilization and lobbying have played a major role in protecting the rights of women.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Unfortunately, the move to more part time employment and the deprofessionalization of women's work (Aronson & Neysmith, 1999; White, 1999) reflects the belief that the work of caring for others should be voluntary because of its noneconomic value in society. This belief has lead to declines in the gains these unions have made over the years.

As service recipients of the welfare state, woman can have a difficult time receiving services. Either they don't receive the services they need, or not in an adequate form or quantity. In other situations women have to leave their work outside of the home and care for those who would have previously received assistance from the government. Or in some situations, women have had to increase their already stretched responsibilities to get the assistance they need. For example, women are maintaining their work outside of the home while caring for some loved one in their home or they having to add to their in-home responsibilities by becoming employed outside of the home. For instance, in Alberta a woman is now deemed employable after her child is six months old. (Evans, 1997).

Bullock (1990) argues that "women's work as care-givers in the community expedites the fiscal and administrative priorities of the state" (p. 65). Similarly, Brodie (1996a) notes that this offloading to women by the state has resulted in women becoming the shock absorbers with dire consequences. She notes that women are curtailing their consumption and increasing their workloads, living in poverty, and experiencing losses in equal rights gains and employment equity. In an early article, Brodie (1995) observes that the definition of women is being redefined to reduce its legitimacy as a political force or valid perspective in policy analysis. She writes:

> Increasingly, the social category, "woman," which found unity, however misleading, in the welfare state and second-wave feminist discourse, is actively being deconstructed. Women, it is argued, do not have similar political interests. At the same time, individual women are being redefined as members of specially disadvantaged groups which require "targeted" social programs to address their special needs/shortcomings so that they too can become ordinary 'degendered' citizens. (p. 73)

Harder's (1999) examination of the "politics of family" in Alberta during Don Getty's term and the early years of Ralph Klein's leadership as Premier is instructive of how women's legitimacy is constructed in Alberta. She notes that the Alberta government, in 1990, initiated a campaign to raise the profile of the family in Alberta's public policy and social life. This initiative was supported by the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

reconstruction of the Alberta Women's Bureau as the Women's Secretariat, the establishment of the Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues, both in the mid-eighties, and later in 1990 with the development of the Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families.

Harder suggests that the development of the first two groups was an attempt by the Getty government to institutionalize the oppositional discourse that was developing in response to the cuts to education, health, and social services. This strategy was effective in neutralizing the feminist criticisms of government. The development of the Premier's Council reflected conservative views of women's roles in society and the negative consequences of their advancement as evidenced by Premier Getty's statement in the legislature:

> Our initiative is to strengthen the family, to provide reasons why the family is stronger, why mother will stay in the house with the family. . . . I get frustrated when most of the initiatives seem to be taking children out of the home or moving parents out of the home. (Harder, 1999, p. 193)

She also notes that according to Getty, government spending had not solved family violence rather there was a need to return to the "foundation of the family itself" (p. 194). The views reflected in these types of statements, not only limit the potential for the emancipation of women and contribute to the belief that women are responsible for the social difficulties in society but they also signal a further construction of women as a low-cost alternative to government intervention and service provision.

In contrast, the Klein government "moved with stealth to remove outward signs of the necessity of the family for neo-liberal policies and to displace the struggle between feminist and 'pro-family' claims-makers from the public forum of the state" (Harder, 1999, p. 198) so as to depoliticize the issues raised. This strategy Harder argues is consistent with a neo-liberal state "to avoid all issues that may incite competing claims
regarding substance of the collective good" (p. 199) which is a mute point for a government that believes in a minimalist notion of the state. The neo-liberal's assumption that government's role is to design policies that facilitate the market is also based on the assumption that women, as part of a nuclear family, are available, willing, and skilled in providing the unpaid labor that was once provided by the government.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In contrast, Christian-Ruffman's (1990) examination of government-initiated employment strategies in Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island concluded that the relation of the state to women in a participatory process is filled with contradictions. She advocates for an appreciation of the structural and philosophical limitations of the state while embracing the opportunities that this new form of power these participatory processes give to women.

In summary, women have been defined throughout modernity as both a liability and an asset in achieving the social policy directions of the government. Women have been viewed as a threat to good government, immoral, nonautonomous and dependent, as well as being viewed as necessary and instrumental for the care of others in society. Women's issues have been viewed as separate from the public domain and public good, while women's political activity has been labeled as nonpolitical. As workers, women and their work have been defined as secondary to a vibrant economy and community and therefore they have suffered from the attacks on the welfare state and social service provision. In Alberta the definition of woman has been both depolitized and neutralized in an attempt to control the opposition to government social, educational, and health policies. Unions have played a major role in the protection of women's rights in Alberta. The move to part time employment and deprofessionalization of women's work further jeopardizes women's rights, roles, and status in society. Women have long looked to the state to protect these rights and offer assistance and support.

Given this review and more specifically the recent developments in Alberta, as reported by Harder (1999), this study will examine the impact the discourse of a state-initiated citizen participation processes has on the social construction of women.

CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY

In this chapter I provided the theoretical rationale for this study. After reviewing the definitions of citizen and participation and the typological schemes for citizen participation I concluded that ideology, values, motivation, and the techniques employed contributed to the contested nature of citizen participation. Similarly, the current ideological challenge to liberal democracy, which I have depicted in a modification of Bell's (1976) model of the ideological and structural tension in a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

capitalist society, significantly impacts the nature and discourse of citizen participation. I also argued that the growth in state-initiated citizen participation is state's response to a number of internal and external factors. I concluded that an examination of the ideological context,
which gave rise to citizen participation is an essential process in determining the function of citizen participation and the power relationships that underpin it.

I also reviewed studies that critically analyze state-initiated citizen participation. I identified a number of themes and concerns regarding the difficulties in implementing citizen participation. I concluded that an examination of the participatory process employed, the nature of the task, the players and the organizational and community climate in which the process occurs shed light on the function of citizen participation. I then examined a number of studies that focus on the nature of resistance to the dominant discourse. I determined that resistance to a dominant ideology requires well-organized, trained and supported, resource-rich groups who can critically reflect upon the dominant discourse. Finally, I reviewed the literature related to the paradoxical relationship of women, participation, and the state. I began this chapter with a personal context that outlines the genesis of my interest in this topic and my commitment to citizen participation in enhancing social policy development especially for those individuals historically marginalized from the process.

Given this review of the relevant literature, this study will now examine the function of citizen participation when it is initiated by the state, within a particular political ideology and context. I use a number of sources including the often forgotten perspective of the participants themselves and identify the dominant discourse, the counter-discourse, and consider these findings in relation to the constructed role of women.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER 2.
METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

> The attempt to produce value-neutral social science is increasingly being abandoned as at best unrealizable, and at worst self-deceptive, and is being replaced by social sciences based on explicit ideologies. (Hesse, 1980, p. 247, cited in Lather, 1986a, p. 257)

> The overt ideological goal of feminist research is to correct both the *invisibility* and the *distortion* of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position. (Lather, 1986b, p. 68)

The methodological issues that arise in conducting a critical analysis of the contested nature of citizen participation and the actions taken to address these issues are outlined. I clarify the research perspective that frames this study, describe the feminist critical theoretical perspective, and outline the research process, which included observations, interviews, and a review of documentation. Issues related to the trustworthiness of the study, the dependability of the results, and transferability of the data are discussed including the ethical considerations in completing this study and a justification for the research design.

POSITIONING THE RESEARCH

I am a feminist and a critical theorist. A description of my position as a critical theorist and a feminist is outlined as it affects the research methodology and data interpretation. This section is not meant to be exhaustive description of these two terms but rather provide an understanding of the perspective in which this study is situated.

I begin with a historical overview of the critical theory and the underlying assumptions and central components of a critical theory. Feminist theory and its methodological implications are considered. I articulate my alignment with the social constructionist strand of feminism.

Critical Theory

The origins of Critical Theory can be traced to the Frankfurt School in Germany in the early 1920s, when a group of social scientists "proposed that an

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

alternative conception of social science was required, one that could grasp the nature of society as a historical totality, rather than as an aggregate of mechanical determinants or abstract functions" (Morrow, 1994, p. 14). When Nazism became a threat in Germany a number of prominent critical theorists, moved to the United States. They fostered a school of Critical Theory in California.

Critical Theory has its roots in Marx's work "which was first shaped by a critical analysis of philosophical ideas and later by critiques of the nature of the capitalist system. The critical school constitutes a critique both of society and of various systems of knowledge" (Ritzer, 1992, p. 142).

Critical theorists have been influenced by Weberian theory, "as reflected in their focus on rationality as the dominant development within the modern world" (Ritzer, 1992, p. 144). Rationality has been characterized by Weber as being either formal rationality which relies on technocratic thinking or substantive rationality, which is the "assessment of means in terms of the ultimate human values of justice, peace, and happiness" (Ritzer, 1992, p. 144). Critical theorists identify the former as having the objective "to serve the forces of domination, not to emancipate people from domination" (Ritzer, 1992, p. 144).

Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) outline the major assumptions of the orientation. The general theme underlying these assumptions is the relationship between ideology, power and domination. These authors note that a critical theorist accepts:

> that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription; that the relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption; that language is central to the formation of subjectivity (conscious and unconscious awareness); that certain groups in any society are privileged over others and, although the reasons for this privileging may vary widely, the oppression that characterizes contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable; that oppression has many faces and that focusing on only one at the expense of others (e.g., class oppression versus racism) often elides the interconnections among them; and, finally, that mainstream research practices are generally, although most often unwittingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race, and gender oppression. (pp. 139-140)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In a more succinct and prescriptive manner, Bohman (1996) summarizes the key criteria of critical theory. He notes that from a critical theorist's perspective it is inadequate for a theory to be merely descriptive, a critical theory must be to articulate where oppression is occurring, by whom and to whom, and identify strategies for rectifying the situation. He observes that

> according to Max Horkheimer's well-known definition, a theory is critical only if it meets three criteria: it must be explanatory, practical, and normative, all at the same time. That is, it must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify actors to change it, and provide clear norms, criticism and practical goals for the future. Horkheimer holds that these distinguish "critical" theory from those "traditional" theories which only seek to mirror reality as it is. (p. 190)

Critical theorists' analysis and critique of the issues of rationality, culture, knowledge, and ideology are all based in an appreciation of the role of power, control and domination. These issues are also of concern to feminism.

Feminist Research

Although feminist writing can be traced back almost 400 years in Western societies, the feminist perspective has had difficulty being incorporated into mainstream sociological theory (Ritzer, 1992). Ritzer (1992) suggests that the reasons for this lack of acceptance may be related to "deep antifeminist prejudices, suspicion of the scientific credentials of a theory so closely associated with political activism, and caution born of half recognition of the profoundly radical implications of feminist theory for sociological theory and method" (p. 82).

While there are many different strands of feminist theory, a common theme permeates them. This theme is the sensitivity to the "centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness, skills, and institutions as well as the distribution of power and privilege" (Lather, 1991, p. 71). Further, a feminism perspective involves an appreciation of the contextual, subjective, and therefore contested nature of voice and discourse. That is, the feminist understands that "whatever the object of our gaze, it is contested, temporal, and emergent" (Lather, 1991, p. 111).

My position as a feminist is as a social-constructionist (Brodie, 1996a). This framework acknowledges the role that social relations have in the formation and domination of women. In the area of policy studies, this framework acknowledges the role of the state in the formation and perpetuation of power relations and policies

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that affect women, as well recognizing that women are "historical products of public policy and other cultural forms" (Brodie, 1996a, p. 13).

Being a feminist and doing feminist research does not limit my choice of methodology because feminism is a perspective not a method (Reinharz, 1992). What it does mean is that as a feminist researcher I will be particularly sensitive to power differentials and how they affect those who have historically been marginalized.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In order to understand the contested nature of citizen participation in policy development, I focused on a state-initiated citizen participatory project for the redesign of Children's Services in Alberta.

The Redesign of Children Services

The following summarizes the redesign planning process:

- In 1993 with the release of a scathing report by the Children's Advocate, Bernard Walter, criticizing the government and its community players the government decided to redesign Children's Services. There had been numerous reports of this nature for the twenty-five years prior to Walter's report.
- The appointment of a Commissioner of Services for Children and Families, Ray Lasnick, was made in 1993 and a subsequent province-wide consultation, that was reported to involve over 3000 Albertans, was completed.
- In 1994, the minister establishes the Office of the Commissioner of Children. This is a unit within the Department of Alberta Family and Children's Services. They consist of seconded and borrowed personnel from other departments. This unit was charged with the responsibility of establishing and assisting the formation of the Steering Committees and later the Authorities.
- In 1994, after the release of the Commissioner's report which recommended sweeping changes to children's services with community

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

involvement, seventeen Steering Committees were appointed by the Minister. These committees of Minister-appointed community members were formed to guide the redesign. Each Steering Committee's geographical boundaries corresponded to the Health Authorities boundaries. An eighteenth Steering Committee, representing the Metis was developed after the second year of the project.

- The purpose of these Steering Committees was to consult with the community, identify community needs, and develop a service plan for addressing these needs.
- The Department's role was to develop policy, provide resources, and set provincial direction.
- Once the community plan was completed the Steering Committees were disbanded and eighteen regional Authorities were established. Calgary was the first Authority to be established. Although the duration of the Steering Committees varied from region to region, it was approximately two and one half years before they had completed their planning process.
- Steering Committee and regional Authorities members were selected based on the following criteria: residing in the region, not being a government employee, and not being employed by an organization contracted by Alberta Children's Services.
- Within their regions, Steering Committees struck a number of working and focus groups to facilitate community planning. A reported 6,000 people were involved.
- Once the Authorities were struck they reported to the Minister through the Associate Minister.
- In 1999 the Authorities reported directly to the Minister.
- From 1993 to 2000 there were four ministers of Children's Services and one associate minister, two cabinet shuffles, and two department realignments.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Office of the Commissioner of Services

The Office of the Commissioner of Services oversaw the establishment of the Steering Committees and the regional Authorities for Children and Families. The Commissioner's goal was to create an ongoing partnership between the Government of Alberta and its citizens to plan progressive and effective strategies for the delivery of Children's Services. The Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families was located in Edmonton and each region had a regional director and two community facilitators who were all employees of the Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families.

With the permission of the Commissioner of Services for Children and Families, I completed approximately 180 hours of observation. Observations occurred at two sites: 1) in the Commissioner's central office in Edmonton and 2) in one of the eighteen Steering Committees. These observations included general planning meetings, ministerial briefings, inter-departmental planning sessions, and inter-regional meetings of various groups. In addition, I had access to documents and had informal discussions with many of those people involved in the planning process.

I also interviewed five co-chairs of these Steering Committees who were also involved in the newly appointed regional Authorities. These observations facilitated my understanding of the process and informed my interpretation of the interviews.

Selection of Interviewees

Each Steering Committees had a non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal co-chair. Co-chair representation was almost equally divided between males and females, as was the committee membership. For this reason, three male and two female co-chairs were interviewed. Of these five co-chairs, two were Aboriginal, one male and one female, and two were from rural Alberta, two representing large urban settings and one represented a mid-size urban setting. In order to protect the anonymity of the participants no further demographic information is provided.

Each co-chair was contacted by phone and asked if they would agree to be interviewed. Without exception, each of the co-chairs was enthusiastic about the possibility. One co-chair later explained to me that having the opportunity to reflect upon their experience was viewed as a real privilege for the co-chairs. Until the time

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of the interviews they were so busy with the actual business of citizen participation that they hadn't spent much time reflecting upon or articulating what their own thoughts were on the process.

Interviews

Each of the five co-chairs was interviewed on two occasions with approximately four months between each of the two interviews. On both occasions the interviews lasted approximately two hours with each of the co-chairs.

Each interview had a semi-structured format, that is, interviewees were asked a general open-ended question and probing was used to clarify or pursue articulated points. This format allowed for a number of areas to be covered but also facilitated the possibility of being open and responsive to issues that arose during the interview. The interviews occurred in a location selected by each co-chair and were approximately two hours in duration. Each interview was recorded so that it could be transcribed at a later date.

The focus of the first interview was on their understanding of the context, rationale, and process of the citizen participatory process in which they participated. Interviewees were asked: When and how they heard about the idea of the redesign of Children's Services using the Steering Committees and Authorities? Why did they believe it was developed? What was the intent of the process? How the selection process occurred? How the issue of legitimacy was dealt with? What were the major issues that the Steering Committee had to deal with? What were the Committee's triumphs and defeats? And what was the outcome of the process?

The second interview had two foci. First, interviewees were asked what had developed in the preceding months that had enhanced their understanding of citizen participation and what was their understanding now. Second, interviewees were asked to clarify points that they had made in the previous interview.

On both occasions the taped interviews were transcribed and copies of the interviews were sent to the interviewees for their verification. Transcripts were coded and stored in a locked cabinet in my home office.

Overall the co-chairs were extremely generous with their time and their thoughts. I was struck with the ease with which each of the co-chairs spoke and the candid nature of their comments. This being said, there also was some political

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

astuteness or caution demonstrated by two of the co-chairs. One co-chair asked when I hoped to complete the study because this co-chair did not want anything that might be reported to interfere with a negotiation that was being considered at the time. This co-chair would not tell what the negotiation involved. This same co-chair spoke to a second co-chair after I had interviewed the first co-chair but before I had interviewed the second. The first phoned the second to see if this co-chair had been interviewed, since I did not reveal whom I was interviewing. The first co-chair inquired if the second co-chair had any concerns about the study interfering with the work that the co-chairs were doing. When I interviewed the second co-chair, this co-chair informed me that the two co-chairs had talked and had determined that the study, given its timelines, would not interfere with their work. I did not get the impression that the other three co-chairs had attempted to speak to their colleagues about the study.

Documents

As part of my doctoral program I completed a total of 180 hours of field placement in the central office of the Children's Commissioner's Office at the Edmonton and at one of the regional offices. During this time I was permitted to read a number of documents including background documents, minutes of meetings, planning documents, drafts of the proposed funding plan, the standardization proposal, funding requests for early intervention funds. As well, one Steering Committee co-chair, who I did not interview, approached me and gave me her journal to read. In it she had documented her experiences during the early formation of the Steering Committee.

Copies of some of these documents were given to me upon request while others, due to their volume were given to me to read and make notes. The purpose of acquiring and reading this information was to provide me with a better understanding of the background and magnitude of the project, the issues that were being addressed, and the manner in which these issues were being handled.

Observations

I completed approximately 180 hours of observation of some of the key individuals, groups, and processes in this state-initiated procedure. These observations

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

occurred at the Edmonton central office of the Commissioner of Children's Services and at a local regional office.

At the main office I attended planning meetings which involved various government departments; training sessions for staff; policy meetings which included government personnel, Steering Committee members, and on occasion a minister; provincial planning sessions which included all the co-chairs, their regional staff, and the Commissioner of Children's services personnel.

At the regional office I had the opportunity to attend the monthly meetings and sub-committee meetings of one Steering Committee over the course of four months and I spent time with the staff of this Steering Committee.

Throughout these observations I kept field notes on my observations. These notes, which were stored in my locked filing cabinet, were used to inform both the questions I asked the co-chairs and the analysis of their responses.

The third experience related to my own involvement in a policy initiative. During the data collection phase of this research I was the Vice-chair of a parallel citizen participation process also initiated by the Alberta Government. This citizens' board, which was appointed by the Minister of Social Services, was responsible under legislation for the planning and allocation of resources for the Calgary Region Services for Person with Developmental Disabilities. I held this position for approximately two years. This experience has also informed my analysis of the interviews.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of any qualitative data, including discourse analysis, is an art more than a science. Some researchers have suggested it is "more like bike riding or chicken sexing, which is not easy to render or describe in an explicit or codified manner" (Potter and Wetherall, 1994, p. 55). For this reason, the strategies I used to analyze the data are outlined in some detail in this section. The theoretical structures as well as the functional guidelines that were used to analyze the data are described.

The transcribed tapes of the two interviews with each of the five co-chairs were used as the data for the study. As well, some of the Alberta Premier's speeches during the period of the Redesign, documentation of the discussion of the Redesign of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the Children's Services in the Legislature, and press releases were examined to provide a context for the discourse.

The analysis followed the structure suggested by Lather (1991). She recommends that the data be analyzed on three levels: the realistic, the critical, and the self-reflective. Each level of analysis contributes to a richer understanding of the power structures that maintain the dominant discourse and the implications of the discourse.

The first level she refers to as the "realistic tale" (p. 111). The realistic tale is an analysis of the beliefs, assumptions, and opinions interviewees hold, in this case those held in regard to the participatory process. This analysis involved a synthesis of the interviews to identify reoccurring themes and patterns and also to identify inconsistencies in these patterns.

The second level of analysis Lather describes as the "critical tale" (p. 111). This involves an "ideological-critique" (Fay, 1987, p. 31), which "demonstrates the ways in which the self-understandings of a group of people are false … incoherent … or both… [and] explains how the members of this group came to have these self-misunderstandings, and how they are maintained" (Fay, 1987, p. 31). The discourse and the structures that support the beliefs of the interviewees are examined in this study.

The third level of analysis, the "self-reflective tale" (Lather, 1991, p. 111), involves an analysis of how the "researcher's perspectives were altered by the logic of the data" (Lather, 1986, p. 271). This "tale" involves the following description of the process use to analyze and interpret the data.

Although Lather's analytic structure provides a useful theoretical framework for the analysis of the data, the structure does not provide the researcher with a practical or functional strategy to complete the level one or realistic analysis. For this guidance I relied on the very informative and instructive Tonkiss (1998). Tonkiss notes that because discourse analysis is "largely 'data-driven' it is difficult to formalize any standard approach to it" (p. 250). He equates it to riding a bike. "A process that one picks up by doing it, and perfects by practicing it, and which is difficult to describe in a formal way" (p. 253). Despite this reservation, Tonkiss provides his reader with the following procedural guidance:

- Organize the data by qualitatively coding the data into " key categories of interests, themes and terms" (p. 254) and then consider "What ideas and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

representations cluster around them? What associations are being established? Are particular meanings being mobilized? Is a certain reading implied by the organization of the text?"(p. 255).

- Look for variation in the text. "Differences within an account point us to the work that is being done to reconcile conflicting ideas, to cope with contradictions or uncertainty, or to counter alternatives" (p. 255). As well, "looking for consistency within and between texts can also provide a useful analytic tool. . . . the repetition of key words, phrases and images reveals most clearly what the speaker or author is trying to put across in their discourse" (p. 257).
- Read for emphasis and detail. Pay attention to three part lists, that are used to develop a rationalization because their purpose is to present a "crescendo" effect making it difficult to question or oppose the conclusion presented. Also watch for "vague but difficult to challenge formulations" (p. 257).
- Attend to silences or what is not being said.

All of these strategies were used to analysis the Co-chairs' interviews. The result of this analysis is provided in Chapter 4, The Metaphors of Citizen Participation.

Lather's suggested second level of analysis, the critical level, which explains how the members of this group came to have these understandings, is presented in Chapter 3, The Contextual Overview: The New Right and the Dismantling of the Welfare state and in Chapter 5, Composing Citizen Participation. These two chapters provide an explanation for the context in which the dominant discourse of citizen participation arose and the various factors that increase the likelihood of being maintained.

Chapter 3, the Contextual Overview outlines the political and economic ideology that underpins the discourse. This analysis involves on an examination of the historical roots of Alberta's political scene. An examination of the Alberta Premier's speeches during the period of the Redesign, documentation of the discussion of the Redesign of the Children's Services in the Legislature, press releases, and a review of the relevant literature are also utilized in this analysis.

The rhetorical, structural/institutional, and individual factors that contribute to the maintenance of the dominant discourse are identified in Chapter 5. The analysis

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in Chapter Five was informed by Kachur's (1999) analysis of rhetorical strategies and by Mawhinney's (1993) interpretative framework for understanding the politics of political change. Kachur's work identified a number of rhetorical strategies used by the Alberta Government to maintain hegemony in consensus-building forums in the 1990s. This study examines the rhetorical strategies used in the discourse of citizen participation in the redesign of Children's Services to determine how hegemony of the government's position on citizen participation was maintained. Mawhinney outlines a systems-based model for the analysis of policy development processes that involves elements of contingency, chance, and interpretation. She notes that "policy change involves a dynamic interplay of ideas, institutional structures and political processes that are embedded in an historical-political processes, which emerge from the ecology of interactions with policy communities and policy networks" (p. ii). The combination of the rhetorical and institutional processes provides a richer analysis of the strategies utilized to maintain the dominant discourse in the citizen participatory process.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The issue of validity takes on a slightly different perspective than has been suggested for other qualitative research designs when a critical theory framework is employed. Critical inquiry seeks to identify "counter patterns as well as convergence" (Lather, 1991, p. 67) so that the strategy of triangulation of data is incongruent with the goal of the research. Rather, the criterion for the internal validity, or trustworthiness, becomes the credibility of the portrayals of the constructed reality (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994; Tonkiss, 1998). Credibility is awarded if the constructions are plausible to those who constructed them, although even then there may be disagreement.

The co-chairs checked the internal validity of the interpretation. The transcripts were given to each of the interviewees after the taped interviews were transcribed. The co-chairs did not comment on the transcripts. Drafts of Chapters 3, 4, and 5 were also sent to each of the co-chairs asking them to comment on the plausibility of the interpretation. I asked them to comment within the following six weeks or suggested to them that their lack of comment would mean that I would assume that they felt the interpretations were plausible. One co-chair e-mailed me

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

within the six weeks. His comment was that he did not entirely agree with the interpretation but he was comfortable if we both agreed to disagree. I did not hear from the other co-chairs, so I have made the assumption that they also agreed that the interpretations were plausible.

Dependability of Findings

The extended period, approximately six months, in which the observations occurred, the duration of time between the two interviews, and the fact that the interviewees had copies of the transcripts and results-related chapters for verification all enhance the dependability of the findings. As well, during the data collection period I journaled and reflected upon my own position and interpretation.

A peer review was also completed. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 were given to three individuals to determine whether they felt the interpretations were plausible. One individual had worked for the Department of Alberta Family and Social Services for over thirty years and has been retired for twenty years. Currently this person is lecturing at a post-secondary institution and publishing extensively. The second person is also employed at a post-secondary institution and conducts community-based research in citizen participation in voluntary organizations. The third person is a fellow student in the Educational Policy doctoral program at the University of Alberta.

Each peer was supportive of the plausibility of the interpretations in the study. The first peer was in strong agreement with the interpretations, feeling that it reflected some of her own experiences within the Department of Alberta Family and Social Services. The second peer felt that the results were plausible and that the study was important. The third peer was also supportive.

Transferability of Results

Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) equate the issue of transferability of the results of a critical inquiry to being similar to the Piagetian concept of assimilation. The reader assimilates those aspects of the study with "their own experiences, their intuitive understandings of the phenomena, and the findings of other similar studies to derive their own applicability of the results" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p. 152). I

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

have attempted to produce a readable document with sufficient description so that the transferability of the results can occur.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992) research codes of ethics address an individual's rights to dignity, privacy, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm. Ensuring that the participants have informed consent facilitates these rights being honored. The elements of informed consent are outlined by Rudestam and Newton (1992, pp. 200-202). Informed consent was sought from the co-chairs interviewed. As well, during the observation period all participants were informed that I was doing research on the process and was there to observe. The consent forms for the observations and interviews were signed and maintained on file. As well, the interviews were transcribed, coded, and stored in a manner that protected the privacy of the informants and their anonymity has been maintained in reporting the results.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study is timely and important. The propensity of all levels of government to engage in policy development using citizen input, combined with the general lack of critical analysis of the underlying issues associated with citizen participation (Croft & Bereford, 1992) suggests that research in this area is warranted. The postpositivist orientation of this study is consistent with a major trend in policy development. According to Deleon (1994), this trend is meant to reflect an appreciation of the political nature of policy development, an acknowledgment that an economic analysis is only one of many perspectives that needs to be considered, and a return to the blending of social values into the process.

We are at a crossroads politically, socially, and economically (Borgman, 1992; Eisler, 1987; Marchak, 1991). The challenges and choices facing social policy planning groups have long-term consequences on the lives of those citizens either directly or indirectly involved in such participatory projects. This study contributes to the understanding of the possibilities and perils involved in citizen participation in policy development.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CONCLUSION

I addressed various methodological issues in conducting this critical analysis of the function of citizen participation. My research perspective as a feminist critical theorist was outlined. As well, the research process, which included observations, interviews, and a review of the documentation, and justified the choice of the research design, the dependability of the results and the transferability of the data was outlined.

The analysis of the data is provided in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. Each of these chapters corresponds to one of the research questions. Chapter 3 addresses the question: What is the context that gave rise to direct citizen participation in a state-initiated social policy development process? Chapter 4 deals with the questions: What is the dominant discourse surrounding citizen participation? What contradictions and resistance to the dominant discourse exist? Chapter 5 outlines how the dominant discourse is maintained.

The implications of this discourse are outlined in the two concluding chapters. Chapter 6 considers the impact the discourse of citizen participation has on women. Guiding principles and values for the ethical implementation of citizen participation and its normative evaluation are outlined in Chapter 7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER 3.
CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW: THE NEW RIGHT AND THE DISMANTLING OF THE WELFARE STATE

> It is essential to put participation in its historical and political context.
> Otherwise its ambiguities and contradictions are likely
> to remain unexplored and unresolved.
> (Crofts and Beresford, 1992, p. 27)

> Welfare policies are not just appendices to a given political-economic
> regime, they are integral to the regime itself.
> (Esping-Andersen, 1987, p. 8)

The context for the research question and the methodology for researching this question were outlined in the first two chapters. The contextual overview for the utilization of a citizen participatory approach in the redesign of Children's Services in Alberta is the focus of this chapter. As noted by George and Miller (1994), "ideas do not take hold in a socio-economic vacuum: social and economic conditions must be such as to lend credence to new ideas before they are widely accepted, taken on board by governments and generally replace previous orthodoxies" (p. 8), so an examination of the context informs a critical analysis of citizen participation.

I argue that the political and economic context for the redesign of Children's Services in Alberta is framed in the New Right agenda, an agenda that has influenced most western democracies and their political parties (Carroll & Shaw, 2001; Marchuk, 1991). This agenda is characterized by two distinct strands: "a liberal tendency which argues the case for a freer, more open, and more competitive economy, and a conservative tendency which is more interested in restoring social and political authority throughout society" (Pierson, 1998, pp. 38-39). The "economic liberals, or neo-liberals, promote ideas about the free market, individualism, and minimal state and play a dominant role in the alliance; social conservatives play a secondary role and tend to promote hierarchy, authoritarianism, and public-order state" (Kachur, 1999, p. 60).

According to Pierson (1998) both strands of the New Right are hostile to the welfare state intervention and therefore "transforming welfare is now at the top of almost every politician's agenda" (Pierson, 1998, p. 1). This hostility is rooted in the belief that the welfare state is awash with problems. Pierson (1998) summarizes the New Right position by identifying four key concerns regarding the Welfare state:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> (1) its administrative and bureaucratic methods of allocation are inferior to those of the market, (2) it is morally objectionable (for both the sponsors and the recipients of state welfare), (3) it denies the consumers of welfare services any real choice and (4) despite the enormous resources devoted to it, it has failed either to eliminate poverty or to eradicate unjust inequalities of opportunity. (p. 39)

The Alberta government has embraced the New Right agenda since the 1990s (Kachur, 1999). This ideology has been referred to as the "Alberta Advantage"; a term which according to Harrison (1999) is used intentionally because of the association that can be made with David Ricardo's concept of "comparative advantage." "Ricardo, an influential nineteenth-century British economist, coined the term in arguing for the benefits of free trade (another very old article of faith in Alberta)" (Harrison, 1999, p. 35).

"The Progressive Conservative government's desire to favor economic development over social development has long historical roots. It is part of a much older trend begun by the Progressive Conservative government of Premier Peter Lougheed" (Smith, 1992, p. 243). During this time "spending on social programs, especially, was curtailed although these cuts were often masked by inflation" (Smith, 1992, p. 258). Since the 1970s "the achievement of economic stability and economic diversification remain preoccupations of Alberta's elites who fear unpredictable and uncontrollable economic and political forces" (Tupper & Gibbins, 1992, p. xxi). The Progressive Conservatives have dominated Alberta politics since 1971.

In 1991, the new Progressive Conservative government pledged that the "government would stick to creating a positive investment climate, mainly through less regulation and lower taxes" (Lisac, 1995, p. 47). According to Klein and Montgomery (2001) major policy changes occurred in 1993, including dramatic cuts to benefits, a contracting of eligibility which reduced the number of individuals who qualified for services, and a scrutinizing of new and existing welfare recipients. As indicated in the 1993 Lieutenant Governor's Speech from the Throne the government also promised to "get out of rather than into the lives of Albertans" (Cooper, 1996, p. 73). The government then proceeded to make massive cuts in the funding to the Departments of Social Services, Education and Health, while privatizing other government services including registries and liquor stores.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The discourse that preceded and surrounded the move to the state-initiated citizen participation in policy development in Children's Services in Alberta was one grounded in the New Right ideology and its attack on the Welfare state. The 1993 Lieutenant Governor's speech to the Throne is used as the framework to describe this discourse and context. In the next chapter the citizen participation discourse from the perspective of the co-chairs of the Children's Commissioner's Steering Committees is described.

The various strategies (i.e., rhetorical, institutional, and individual) used to build consensus and public acceptance of the dominant discourse on citizen participation are discussed in Chapter 6. These strategies were meant to offset public anxiety and resistance since the public was "deeply concerned about the real, enormous costs of this erosion that are being overlooked in the haste with which governments are seeking to offload or unload responsibility for social services" (Crane, 1994, p. 3).

The Government's Commitments

The 1993 Lieutenant Governor's Speech to the Throne, quoted by Cooper (1996) provides a useful framework for discussing the socio-economic discourse preceding and surrounding the move to state-initiated citizen participation. This speech outlined the government's four inter-related commitments that would direct their activities.

> My government's first commitment is to balance our provincial budget within four years and to take the steps necessary to ensure that my government will live within its means. The second commitment is to create an environment that will allow the private sector to create 110,000 new jobs for Albertans over the next four years. Our third commitment is to reorganize, deregulate, and streamline government to reflect Albertans' desire for a government as frugal and creative as they have to be in these times of fiscal challenge. And this government's fourth commitment is to listen to the people it is privileged to serve, to consult with them, and to be open, compassionate, and fair as possible in reflecting their wishes, their hopes, and their dreams. (Cooper, 1996, pp. 73, 76)

The four government commitments were to: the affordable welfare state, viewing social services as a human resource problem, embracing the new public

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

managerialism and deficit hysteria, and the recodification of the new "good" citizen. These four commitments are discussed.

THE FIRST COMMITMENT: AFFORDABLE WELFARE

The first of four commitments articulated by the Lieutenant Governor will be considered. This commitment "to balance our provincial budget within four years and to take the steps necessary to ensure that my government will live within its means," outlines the government's desire to provide services based on the resources it has rather then on the needs that exists. This is one of the central and essential principles of the new "affordable welfare state" as pioneered by Margaret Thather. Acceptance of the other principles of the New Right is dependent upon acceptance of this principle. George and Miller's (1994) description of the "affordable welfare state" is provided initially in this section. This is followed with examples of how this new state is promoted and framed in the documentation and rhetoric of the redesign of the Children's Services. Some of the assumptions that are implied by this rhetoric are outlined.

According to George and Miller (1994) the affordable welfare state is different from anything that has previously existed. Universality is replaced with an emphasis on targeted state intervention, privatization and voluntary provision of social supports are promoted, and managerialism and marketization are seen as both a means and an end to ensure its affordability. They suggest that,

> first, the volume of the public expenditure must be closely determined by current rates of economic growth, as resources rather than needs are the overriding determinant of public expenditure . . . Second, direct taxation rates were to be as low as possible . . . Third, the affordable welfare state implied a greater acceptance of private and voluntary provision both as supplements and as substitutes of state provision . . . Fourth, public services should be managed in ways that they provide maximum value for money. . . Fifth, the consumers of the services should have maximum feasible participation and choice. The power of the bureaucrats and of the professionals should be curbed as far as possible. (p. 17)

The fact that in this new state social services and welfare expenditures must not be greater than income generated from economic growth is a dramatic departure from what has historically been the case. With the adoption of post-war Keynesian

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

welfare state, social and welfare services have been considered a universal right of Canadians. In the new affordable welfare state this right to services is being challenged and the relationship of the government to its citizens, particularly those in need, is being redefined. The government's role has changed from provider and protector to the financial gatekeeper and evaluator of neediness. The services that were once provided by the government are now viewed as the responsibility of the private sector. The rationale being that if the general public feels there is a need for a particular service then the public in turn will find the resources to finance it. Correspondingly, if the private funds are not generated for a service it is assumed that the services were not desired or needed by the public. Individuals who were once considered clients are now labeled consumers, reflecting the emphasis for a more business mentality in social services. As well, the consumer's life circumstances are viewed as the result of individual factors and not related to systemic issues (e.g., rising unemployment rates, institutional discrimination). The discourse of the affordable welfare state speaks to the government doing less while being more business-like and financially efficient. Responsibilities that were once the purview of government are now shifted onto others.

We can see evidence of this discourse in the documentation surrounding the redesign of Children's Services. For instance, *Reshaping Child Welfare* (Alberta Family and Social Services, 1993), a government action plan for child welfare reform, emphasized the desire of the government to take less responsibility for the welfare of children. The families of the children at risk and their communities, it was argued by the government, should first and foremost assume this responsibility. When their efforts have failed, both voluntary and private provisions were identified as the preferable alternatives. Government intervention was framed as the last resort rather than as a right. For example, one of the stated goals of the redesign of Child Welfare states:

> we expect parents to be accountable for the care of their children and that they, their extended families and their communities assume primary responsibility for children. In the past, the government has assumed too much of this responsibility and has drifted away from appropriate supports. (p. 5)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The implied assumptions of this goal and of similar messages delivered by the government around the redesign of Children's Services are that:

1) parents have not been previously accountable for their children
2) the care of children is a private as opposed to a public matter
3) historically, governments have meddled in the lives of families
4) government "meddling" has been because parents have not assumed the responsibility that is theirs; the government is not to blame, families are
5) extended families and communities need to assume the responsibility when families have been amiss in following through, and
6) government's new "appropriate supports" are significantly less than the intervention that has been provided previously.

The first three assumptions, not only blame the victim (i.e., families in need), for their situation, but also seem to ignore the dramatic changes and trends that have occurred in family composition and functioning patterns across North America since the early 1970s. Trends that have included the increase in marriage /family dissolution rates, the rise and fall of the remarriage rate, the increase in one-parent families, and the traditional dependence on women in employment (George and Miller, 1994). Social policy analysts have argued that the acknowledgment of these trends is essential in social policy planning (Brodie, 1995; Callahan and Wharf, 1993; Pal, 1997). They have also concluded that "it would be better for all concerned – parents, children and society in general – if government accepted these family changes and tried to deal with them constructively rather than to attempt the futile task of reversing them" (George and Miller, 1994, p. 56).

Instead, in Alberta the government appears to have devolved its responsibilities onto "families", which ultimately means "women" (George and Miller, 1994). The impact of less government services for women, according to Brodie (1996a), has meant increased poverty, increased workload and reduced economic consumption, erosion of equal rights, and less equity in employment. The reformulation of women's role in society is consistent with the social conservative agenda within the New Right ideology.

The latter two assumptions that underlie this goal of Child Welfare reform (i.e., families and communities assuming the responsibility, and less government intervention), foretell both the use of citizen participation in policy development and reductions in government spending. These two assumptions are consistent with the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

government's concern with their over-involvement in the lives of Albertans and with the neo-liberal aspect of the New Right agenda that advocates less government involvement and promotes free market and individualism.

The application of the free market in social services would be facilitated through the privatization of Children's Services. The Public Service Union and the Foster Parents Association of Alberta believed that this move towards privatization was the unstated goal of the redesign of Children's Services. Since private service providers' salaries are approximately 40% less than government employees this move would be a considerable cost saving and also provide, in theory, the consumer choice that is missing in government-run services.

Lisac (1995) notes another interesting implication of the provincial government's desire to privatize traditional government-run services. He notes "the move toward privatization reversed the government's relationship with thousands of people. The government was getting rid of employees and replacing them with thousands of other people who seemed independent but owed their livelihood to the government" (p. 127).

Once privatized, services would have to attract clients through marketization of their services. Cooper (1996), an advocate of this approach, observes

> the ethical appeal of user fees is clear: "What", asks Osborne and Gaebler, "is fairer than a system in which those who benefit from a service and can afford to pay for it do so, while those who don't benefit don't have to pay?" (p. 72)

What Cooper and others, who promote this line of reasoning, do not acknowledge are those individuals who need the service cannot pay. This line of reasoning also moves the idea of social services from a collective responsibility to an individualistic model based on flexibility and competitiveness (Brodie, 1995; Pal 1999) and from a right as a Canadian to a business transaction.

The business nature of social services is also reflected in the requirement that service providers have outcome measures. In fact, an agency's continued funding would be conditional on the outcomes and results they achieved. All of this was done within the discourse that the government, like everyone else, had been a victim of the welfare state and its flawed principles. As Cooper (1996) notes

> The significance of the Klein Government's achievement is that they actually put into practice the heretofore merely criticisms of the welfare state. Beginning with the 1993 budget, the Government of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Alberta has undertaken to reduce the intrusion of the welfare state in the lives of citizens. (Cooper, 1996, p. 10)

Further justification of the government's policies was based on principles that were difficult to refute. Cooper, a self-proclaimed supporter of the "Klein achievement," referring to the policy of free markets, deregulation and reduction of government-provided solutions identified them as "policies of those who believe in individual liberty and responsibility, in the virtue of individual choice and self-respect" (1996, p. 66). The implication is that only those with little or no self-respect would disagree with these policies. Lisac (1995) observes of the Alberta Government that

> they were setting up a system in which Albertans were presumed to speak with one voice and anyone who said "I protest" was dismissed as a special pleader. People who liked the government complained about "whinners" and said "it was time for everyone to join the team or get out of the way". (p. 142)

Cooper (1996) provides another explanation of those who protested. "What have, at least arguably, been good intentions have led the disadvantaged into the traps of welfare and poverty" (p. 67). The argument is, those who disagree are in this trap of dependency that has been created by the welfare state, a further justification for moving to the "affordable welfare state".

Public protest did not seem to have a large enough impact to encourage wavering from the dismantling of social services. As McGill (1979) points out "those served by social welfare programs are not powerful enough on the community level to prevail in the competition among strong and skillful interest groups" (p. 191). Others (Lisac, 1995; Taylor, 1996) also observe that public protest was inadequate and ineffective. Lisac (1995) notes that "without leadership, without a program, without a comprehensive alternative to offer, none of the protest mattered much" (p. 214). Protest also became very difficult because "living within one's means" made good "common sense."

Another example of how the affordable welfare state discourse was utilized in the redesign of Children's Services surrounds the focus on aboriginal families and children. In 1996 Michael Cardinal, Minister of Alberta Family and Social Services, announced in the legislature during Question Period that one of the major thrusts of the reforms to the welfare system was to address the needs of aboriginal children. In describing the important of this direction Mr. Cardinal said,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> the other area of course is the unfortunate part of the whole history of child welfare in Alberta and it's not only Alberta; it's across Canada that 50 percent of the children in care are of aboriginal ancestry, Mr. Speaker. We are providing the finances necessary and the supports necessary for aboriginal people for once for once to be able to administer and deliver services for their children. (Hansard, 1996, April)

Highlighting the over-representation of Aboriginal children in Child Welfare Services is an important first step to identifying systemic issues and discrimination in Child Welfare and society generally, a finding of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, but this acknowledgment did not occur in the Alberta Legislature. Rather aboriginal people were identified as a targeted population who require funds to administer and deliver their own services to the majority of children currently taxing Children's Services. As well, in the proposed regional funding model, developed by the Children's Commissioner's Office, the number of aboriginal families in a region was used as one of the funding criteria. In 1998 Alberta and Family Services earmarked a considerable amount of research, professional training, and intervention funding for children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Although all three of these initiatives are positive, this targeting facilitates the possibility of aboriginal families being identified and viewed as the problem in social services spending in the future.

The Alberta Governments' commitment to the "affordable welfare state", examples of how this new state is promoted, and the assumptions implied by this rhetoric have been outlined. This new form of the welfare state redefines the relationship between the government and potential Children's Service recipients. There is an emphasis on family responsibility and an acknowledgment that less government intervention and more business practice in the delivery of social services is desirable. I consider next the second commitment, social services as a human resource problem.

THE SECOND COMMITMENT: SOCIAL SERVICES AS A HUMAN RESOURCE PROBLEM

The government's first commitment was to the affordable welfare state. Here I discuss their second commitment, to create an environment that will allow the private sector to create 110,000 new jobs for Albertans over the next four years.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although few would argue with the need for more employment opportunities, the underlying message given in this commitment has negative implications for those in need of social services. Social issues are presented as a human resource problem and of an individual nature. The structural nature of the issues and the collective responsibility necessary for their resolution becomes overshadowed. The role government plays in addressing issues of poverty and unemployment is reframed as well in this commitment. Government has been identified as having a minimalist role in direct intervention; it is viewed as the facilitator not the provider of services. The private sector becomes the responsible agent in addressing unemployment through a partnership with government who ensures the right economic climate through lowered business taxes and business loans. Minimal government, private sector orientation, and a strong economy are all tenets of the New Right agenda.

Premier Klein's televised address provides an illustration of how the economic liberal and the social conservative strands of the New Right agenda are woven together.

> For employable Albertans on welfare, money is not enough. Welfare may help them pay the bills this month, but if it keeps up over time, it can create dependency. So we're shifting from a *passive* system that just hands out money to an *active* one that gives people the tools and the training they need to make it on their own. (Government of Alberta, 1994, p. 10)

The initial phase "employable Albertans on welfare" seems to be presented as an oxymoron, that is, if you are employable how could/would you use welfare? The implication is that there are those who are using and abusing the system. While the audience is still thinking about this well nurtured myth of social assistance recipients, they catch the next phase "money is not enough," which implies that we've throw too much money at this problem already and we, the government, don't have enough money as it is. It's then acknowledged that the welfare money is only being used to "help them pay the bills." This implies that these welfare recipients are poor money managers. There is no acknowledgment that the funds they receive through social allowance payments is twenty-five percent below the poverty line, which is inadequate to cover basic food and shelter costs. In the printed speech the words "passive" and "active" are italicized presumably for emphasis during the televised presentation. Although they are referring to the system of intervention the message

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

also becomes that the recipients are the "passive" elements and they need to become more "active" or they will not be able to be "making it on their own." Independence and self-sufficiency are two major values of social conservatism. The father figure, Premier Ralph Klein delivers all of this (Kachur, 1999).

THE THIRD COMMITMENT: NEW PUBLIC MANAGERIALISM AND DEFICIT HYSTERIA

The government's third commitment was "to reorganize, deregulate, and streamline government to reflect Albertans' desire for a government as frugal and creative as they have to be in these times of fiscal challenge." This third statement, which complements the first two commitments, (i.e., the affordable welfare state, social services as a human resource problem), reflects the growing international concern with government bureaucracy and civil servants by politicians and citizens. This concern is based on two myths (Aucoin, 1995). The first myth is the "depiction of politicians in ways that undermine public confidence in representative democracy. They are viewed as driven not by the public interest in governance, but primarily by their own personal survival in office" (Aucoin, 1995, pp. 6-7). For example, in Alberta, the strategies of "cutting the size of cabinet by almost 40% and the salaries of cabinet and MLAs by 5% (and) eliminating the MLA pension plan" (Government of Alberta, 1994, p. 2), were meant to reassure the public of the motivation of the government.

The second myth describes the civil servants as manipulating politicians. An example of this myth being perpetuated in Alberta is evident in a quote from Ralph Klein when he was Mayor of Calgary. Klein commented that, "politicians have become an arm of bureaucracy and I want to reverse that" (Ralph Klein in 1980 as quoted by Lisac, 1995, p. 23). Politicians had become generally disenchanted with the apparent inflexibility and increasing power of the civil servants while the general public had become dissatisfied with the government's inability to adequately address social problems. Aucoin (1995) notes that the theoretical critiques of bureaucracy over the last two decades could be summarized as follows:

> They criticize public service bureaucracies for not being responsive to those they are meant to serve, namely citizens, their failure to delivery quality public services. Rule-bound bureaucracy means that bureaucrats, as agents of the state, relate to citizens as subjects, rather

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> than as clients or customers. Rule-bound bureaucracy also means that bureaucrats, again as agents of the state, manage government operations as the administration of laws rather than as services to effect desired outcomes. (Aucoin, 1995, p. 171)

One of the results of these criticisms has been the rise in managerialism in the public sector. Managerialism, as coined and defined by Pollitt,

> rests upon the assumption that better management (rather that better policies, new technologies, or different kinds of constitutional arrangements) offers our societies the best chance of material progress. It also assumes that "management" is a distinct and separate activity, and one that plays the crucial integrative role in bringing together plans, people, and technology to achieve desired results. (Pollitt, 1998, p. 47)

> The assumptions that underlie managerialism thinking in the public sector are:
>
> a that existing public sector organizations are outmoded and in need of reform
> b that a body of proven management ideas and techniques is available to guide the reform process
> c that it is self-evident that efficiency will flow from the application of such techniques and that greater efficiency and flexibility are desirable in themselves
> d that it is progressive to redefine the citizens who interact with public sector organizations as consumers or customers. (Pollitt, 1998, p. 56)

The following excerpt from a televised address made by Premier Ralph Klein demonstrates managerialist thinking and some of the above assumptions. In the speech entitled, *Building on the Alberta Advantage: Reaching the Destination Together,* delivered on January 17, 1994, Premier Klein said,

> You told us to stamp out waste by streamlining and reorganizing government. We took measures like:
>
> - Eliminating $130 million in government waste and duplication;
> - Cutting the size of cabinet by almost 40% and the salaries of cabinet and MLAs by 5%; . . .
> - Reducing the civil service by close to 2,700 positions . . .
> - Speeding up business under the dome of the Legislature
> - Reviewing all our existing regulations to eliminate the paper blizzard by dropping things that don't work, and fixing the ones that could work better;
> - Privatizing non-essential services . . .
> - And requiring every government department and agency to justify its existence; to produce a three-year-year business plan setting out its

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> objectives and spending reduction targets; and to deliver quarterly reports on our progress to Albertans. Finally, you told us to be a government for the people. . . a government that cares about you, listens to you and consults with you to make sure that your priorities are the government's priorities – not the other way around. (Government of Alberta, 1994, p. 2)

It is clear in this speech that less government, less power in the civil service, and more freedom and direction by the citizens are viewed as priorities for solving the difficulties the government was facing and citizens were feeling. "Changes in public management are not merely changes to administrative processes and practices; they are also changes to governance itself" (Aucoin, 1995, p. 3). It is also clear in this speech that the problem lies with the bureaucratic machinery of the government, the civil servants, and their inability to use progressive management strategies.

These progressive strategies have been outlined in Douglas' *Unfinished Business* (1993) and Osborne and Gaebler's *Reinventing Government* (1993). Both these texts, which influenced the Alberta government (Cooper, 1996), as they did other governments worldwide (Pal, 1997), are examples of "apparently successful instances of public sector management reform" (Pollitt, 1998, p. 63). While Douglas outlined a "cautionary tale" (Cooper, 1996, p. 73), Osborne and Gaebler became recognized as a reference for delivering government services (Pal, 1997). *Reinventing Government* outlined the following strategies for progressive public management:

> Most entrepreneurial governments promote competition between service providers. They empower citizens by pushing control out of the bureaucracy, into the community. They measure the performance of their agencies, focusing not on inputs but on incomes. They are driven by their goals--their missions--not by their rules and regulations. They redefine their clients as consumers and offer them choices--between schools, between training programs, between housing options. They prevent problems before they emerge, rather than simply offering services afterward. They put their energies into earning money, not simply spending it. They decentralize authority, embracing participatory management. They prefer market mechanisms to bureaucratic mechanisms. And they focus not simply on providing public services, but on catalyzing all sectors--public, private, and voluntary--into action to solve their community's problems. (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992, pp.19-20)

The 1993 Lieutenant Governor's Speech from the Throne echoed these thoughts. "'We all know', said the Lieutenant Governor, 'that more money is not the answer. Albertans pay enough for these programs already. To maintain high quality

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

services without debt, 'the government has to be imaginative" (Cooper, 1996, p. 76). "Not throwing more money at the problem" became the battle cry of the Conservative government. Albertans were inundated with information that stressed Alberta's fiscal crisis because of the previous Conservative government's strategy of over-spending.

> "When our new administration took over a year and a half ago . . . we saw uncontrolled spending", claimed Premier Klein in June, 1994. The Klein government has worked hard to rewrite history, portraying the Getty government as extravagant spenders who drove Alberta to the brink of financial ruin. (Taft, 1997, p. 25)

But there was a large discrepancy between the information presented by Premier Klein, his MLAs and their spokespeople and the numbers generated by economists who analyzed the data on government spending.

> According to their analyses, Alberta's level of support for public programs had already fallen 15% in the late 1980s and early 1990s, adjusting for population growth and inflation. This placed Alberta below the Canadian average two years before the Klein government's cuts even began. (Taft, 1997, p. 27)

This trend has continued as indicated by the cuts to public service in Alberta and the decrease in funding in education and social services,

> In 1996, Alberta provided the lowest level of public service in Canada. The Alberta government spends at least 15 percent less per person than the lowest spending 'have not' province and more like 20 to 25 percent less than the balanced budget provinces overall when provincial expenditures are placed in more fully comparative terms. This level of expenditure cannot be explained by a low fiscal capacity. Quite the contrary: Alberta's tax and other revenue bases are the largest of any province, yet Alberta's per capita taxes are still the lowest in the country. (Peters, 2000. p. 95)

> Sadly, the results of this analysis suggest that, despite glowing pronouncements and adept public relations, the notion of re-investment is mostly hyperbole: per-student funding levels for public education (in constant dollars) continue to decrease. (Neu, 2000, p. 75)

> Over the course of our four-year plan, we'll reduce our spending on social services by $327 million, or 18.3% in total. We'll be spending $1.46 billion, down from $1.79 billion. (Government of Alberta, 1994, p. 10)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Alberta government was implementing, according to Cooper (1996), the logic of Osborne and Gaebler's ten principles for reinventing government which "indicated that the goal of public policy is not simply to balance budgets but to restructure government using the budgetary process as leverage" (Cooper, 1996, p. 73). The budgetary process is used to direct people's attention to the fact that it is imperative for the government to make the changes being proposed. The government's apparent financial ruin provided the justification for the Premier to "go fast, hit hard and don't blink" (Peters, 2000, p. 95). This "deficit hysteria is being used to justify serious cuts in our social programs" (McQuaiq, 1993, p. 40).

THE FOURTH COMMITMENT: THE "GOOD" CITIZEN

The first three commitments (i.e., the affordable welfare state, social services as a human resource problem, the new managerialism and deficit hysteria) have been discussed in the previous three sections. The government's fourth commitment, "to listen to the people it is privileged to serve, to consult with them, and to be open, compassionate, and fair as possible in reflecting their wishes, their hopes, and their dreams," provides a good example of the discourse of the "good citizen" (Brodie, 1995). The "good citizen" does not place demands on their government. Rather, as implied in this fourth commitment, they may have "their wishes, their hopes, and their dreams" but they do not have needs. Individuals, it is implied, would only hold expectations for need fulfillment by the government if they had become dependent and not self-reliant. As reflected in a government news release the belief perpetuated was that there was an "overdependence of some people on government" (Alberta Government, 1993, p. 3).

> The new good citizen is one that recognizes the limits and liabilities of state provision and embraces her or his obligation to work longer and harder in order to become more self-reliant . . . there is little tolerance for making "special claims" on the basis of difference or systemic discrimination. (Brodie, 1995, p. 57)

The redefinition of citizenship has occurred at a national and provincial level. In the 1970s and 1980s citizenship was defined in social terms (The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, 1996). Active pursuit of the equalizing of opportunity for its citizens was a central role of government (Brodie,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1995). The tax system, social programs, rights legislation were all used to accomplish this goal.

Recently citizenship is being defined in economic rather than social terms. In the neo-liberal state, Brodie (1995) reminds us that we have moved from believing the notion that there is a collective responsibility for individuals. Instead we are told that government and citizens have to be reformed to achieve flexibility and competitiveness. For instance, the dismantling of the social safety net discourse reflects values such as dependency, self respect, rational choice, poverty trap, no pride. For instance, Cooper (1996) notes "handouts lock those who are already vulnerable to social and economic pressures into permanent dependency. What have, at least arguably, been good intentions have led the disadvantaged into the traps of welfare and poverty"(p. 67). According to Brodie "changing public expectations about entitlements, collective provision for social needs, and the appropriateness of the welfare state has been a critical victory for neoliberalism" (1995, p. 54). This victory satisfies the economic liberal and social conservative strands of the New Right agenda.

DISCUSSION

The four commitments of the Alberta government as discussed in this chapter are a commitment to the affordable welfare state, viewing social services as a human resource problem, the new managerialism and the deficit hysteria, and the recodification of the "good" citizen. The discourse that surrounds the social welfare state is embedded in the belief that the current conceptualization and operationalization of the welfare state is in crisis and that dramatic measures are needed to transform the situation.

The crisis discourse in relation to the welfare state is not a new phenomenon. Almost fifteen years ago, Rein, Esping-Andersen, and Rainwater (1987), in their comparative study of welfare states, emphasized that "the perception of a welfare state crisis has been a recurrent theme over the entire century of modern social policy development" (p. vii). As well, Pierson (1998), 11 years later notes that

> the welfare state, which was once a defining cause for social democrats and, by turns, a source of despair and indifference for those on the right, is now the object of almost universal demands for urgent and profound change. (p. 1)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Criticism of the welfare state historically has come from a number of sources. Economists criticize it as being incompatible with "economic vitality," while liberals view it as the "anti-body" in capitalism (Rein, Esping-Andersen, and Rainwater, 1987, p. 4). Criticism from feminists, anti-racists, and Marxists focus on the potential for the welfare state to be used as a measure of social control and exclusion (Pierson, 1998). The environmental and ecological critique identifies " the welfare state with the political programme of traditional social democracy, and sees both as inevitably implicated in the logic of advanced capitalism" (Pierson, 1998, p. 89) which ultimately is destructive to the environment. Social conservatives attribute the crisis to "the problems of overloaded government, eroded authority, and excessive citizen participation caused by a 'revolution in rising entitlements' and a weakening of the market as a disciplinary force" (Rein, Esping-Andersen, and Rainwater, 1987, p. 4). As a number of researchers have observed (Squires, 1990; Rein, Esping-Andersen, and Rainwater, 1987; Pierson, 1998) these attacks have tended to be centered on the common theme of contradictions and incompatibilities. Concerns focused on issues of when, how much, and in what manner it is appropriate for the government to respond to the needs of its citizens.

This current attack, engineered by the New Right, is unique. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that the focus of the criticism is the ideological principles on which the welfare state is based, and therefore the very existence of the welfare state. These principles, based upon the post-war Keynesian welfare state,

> asserted the primacy of the public good over the "invisible hand" of the market and generated expectations that the state was responsible for meeting the basic social needs of its citizens. Moreover, an assumption was commonly made that it was the responsibility of the state to cushion national economies against disruptive international conditions. (Brodie, 1996a, p. v)

The New Right ideology challenges these beliefs and seeks to reconstruct the state (Aucoin, 1995, Brodie, 1996a, Pal, 1997), the citizen (Brodie, 1995), and the "social" (Squires, 1990).

Historically, the Keynesian state assumed the role of anticipating and actively addressing the social needs of its citizenry, through a redistribution of wealth and opportunity. These needs were considered social rights and entitlements. This new construction of the state means reduced government, more competition in service provision, less service, and more reliance for support from one's family and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

community. Governments, citizens are told, have become over-indulgent and interfering, while citizens have become demanding and irresponsible.

As previously mentioned the construction of the "good citizen" has also occurred. Citizens are expected to work harder and expect less from their governments. The New Right's definition of the good or worthy citizen reflects the powerful relationship between the market and the state.

According to Squires (1990), the supporters of the New Right agenda "have their sights set upon a political movement, upon the social structures, institutions and discourses of collectivism. The 'social' is being actively reconstituted and reconstructed, and with it, society also" (p. 7). What constitutes the well being of society and the government's role in addressing societal needs is being transformed. What was once citizens' social rights are being transposed into their economic rights. Citizens have been transposed into consumers and government and not-for-profit services are now business.

Reduced government services has multiple implications for women's lives and the social construction of women. Historically, women have turned to the state for support in redressing a range of grievances (Eisentein, 1985). With reduced government services and intervention, women have lost this recourse. As well, since women occupy a substantial proportion of the jobs in traditional government services, (i.e., health, education, and social services), reduced government potentially means un- or under-employment for women (Brodie, 1996a).

The New Right's definition of citizenship increases the divide between the public and the private and therefore further contributes to the oppression and domination of women. The division reflects the close relationship between the state and the market and the social conservative's authoritative, paternalistic, and moralistic stance towards women. One example is the state's insistence that the family, as good corporate citizens, be held responsible for the welfare of children. This stance is based on the false assumptions that women are presently not acting responsibly for their children, that all families are nuclear, that families have adequate resources, and that women are economically dependent upon men. Neysmith (1997) notes "policies which are presented as innovative because they place a priority on family-based care are not woman-friendly" (pp. 236-237). These policies ignore the work presently done by women in maintaining families and households while also maintaining employment outside the home.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is within this context that citizen participation has been constructed. Paradoxically, the New Right ideology views citizen participation as the cause and the solution to the political, economic, and social problems of the day. In the next chapter seven metaphors reflecting constrictions of citizen participation by the five co-chairs of the Steering Committees in the redesign of Children's Services are discussed.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER 4.
THE METAPHORS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

> 'Participation' is one of those contentious words like 'community' and 'care' which can seem to mean everything and nothing. There is little agreement about its definition. (Croft & Beresford, 1992, p. 20)

The socio-economic discourse preceding and surrounding the move to state-initiated citizen participation showed how the New Right Agenda dominated this discourse. Balancing the budget, creating an attractive environment for the private sector, streamlining government, and listening to the people are all goals of the New Right Agenda which has appeal for economic liberals, or neo-liberals, and social conservatives.

Here I describe seven metaphors of citizen participation. The metaphors are based on the interviews with the co-chairs. These metaphors depict citizen participation as a spiritual experience, as the emperor's new clothes, as a means to good business practices, as engaging in a battle, as strategic co-opting, as a change in worldview, and as a means to empowerment. These metaphors are both complementary and contradictory to each other.

I examine the merging metaphors for a number of reasons. First, metaphors allow for a complex, controversial, or unfamiliar concept such as citizen participation to be described and assimilated. In the case of this government-initiated citizen participation project, it was my observation that participants relied significantly on metaphors to describe the process and their desired outcomes. The reasons for this reliance on metaphors by participants are complex and numerous. A participant at a planning meeting on standards and funding models described it this way: "we need to develop a new language for the way we talk about this work and until we do we must rely on metaphors to describe and discuss it."

Second, metaphors, as with other forms of discourse, represent "conditions of possibilities that provide us with the resources for constructing a limited array of social realities, and make other possibilities less available to us"(Miller, 1997, p. 33). The seven metaphors reveal the "limited array of social realities" that these co-chairs have constructed around citizen participation and also the "other possibilities" that have become less available to them because of these constructions.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Third, although these metaphors reveal the complexity that exists when multiple and contradictory constructions occur within the social context or within the individual's meta-participation they also reveal an attempt to simplify and/or divert attention away from these complexities. Therefore metaphors reduce the sophistication of the understanding that may be necessary.

Finally, the metaphors contribute to a disclosure of the power structures that promote the social construction of citizen participation. They reveal the ideological struggles that surround the dismantling of the welfare state and the role of citizen participation in these struggles.

The seven metaphors of citizen participation are a spiritual experience, as the emperor's new clothes, as a means to good business practices, as engaging in a battle, as strategic co-opting, as a change in worldviews, and as a means to empowerment. The impact of the co-chairs' adoption of these metaphors is significant.

Citizen Participation as a Spiritual Experience

Citizen participation as a spiritual experience is the first metaphor. The theme of spirituality is historically embedded in the participatory development literature. Henkel and Stirrat's (2001) investigation into the genealogy of participation reveals that "participation, in its early modern usage, meant primarily the participation of man in the infinite grace of God" (p. 173) which was a central theme in the Reformation movement. They argue that the moral imperative that characterizes participatory initiatives in modern history can be traced to the expectations of the Protestant Reformation. They note,

> the Protestant Reformation not only made the direct participation of the believer possible, but placed a moral imperative on participation. To be a good Christian required participation: in reading the scriptures, in participating in the liturgy, in governing the Church. Salvation was to be attained through individuals actively participating in the duties of the community. (p. 174)

Participation as a spiritual experience or obligation is evident in modern development and management literature. As well, given the importance of trust among all the participants within a participatory process, it is not surprising that this metaphor should arise. What is a bit surprising is the magnitude with which this

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

metaphor permeated the discussion of citizen participation and the reaction given to non-believers. In this section I reflect on each of these points.

Each of the co-chairs interviewed was asked the following question: " Why do you think the Children's Steering Committees were developed?" One individual's initial response of "I never asked why" seems to capture a particular position promoted during the initial phases of the public participation process. The position requires unconditional faith and trust in the process and its eventual impact on Children's Services. Participation was accepted as a morally superior vehicle for the reform of Children's Services and trust was it's fluid. As one co-chair described it, "trust is not a single syllable, the whole thing revolves around it."

Those who questioned the motivation and commitment behind the development of these Authorities and the possible negative impact on Children's Services, such as community-based social service agencies, the Foster Parents Association of Alberta, and government employees, were accused of having ulterior and morally weak motives. These motivations included being more worried about losing their jobs and their power than improving services for children. Although it was never verbalized, there was a perception that government-employed social workers in Children's Services were concerned about lost wages. These workers argued that their concern was always focused on the welfare of children. They noted that Child Welfare, before the establishment of the Children's Authorities, was a mandated service based on a Legislated Act. Their concern was that if services were privatized in community-based agencies then services might be denied to those in need because of capped budgets.

At a May 5, 1997 meeting of the Council of Co-chairs, government employees leading the restructuring labeled these concerns as more emotional than logical. This characterization of the social workers reflects a popular stereotype regarding women's decision-making strategy and becomes difficult to refute since it is based upon a belief system rather than factual information. So on one hand, the social workers are identified as carpetbaggers and on the other, they are viewed as uninformed bleeding hearts. Their concerns were dismissed.

Another strategy for dismissing those who critiqued the process was to identify these individuals as jaded and narrow-minded. One interviewee describes this phenomenon in the following manner: "some people in the community don't trust anything that smacks of government . . . some didn't believe, just another fad." As

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

one government facilitator described it to me, people who come into the field of social work are, by nature, suspicious of administration. Further, they are trained in a culture of protection, which is dramatically different than a culture of participation and emancipation, on which the participatory project was reportedly based. Their views were dismissed again, this time for what was viewed as their professional arrogance and orientation.

Not only were these "non-believers" silenced but on a few occasions when those citizens participating in the restructuring voiced their misgivings they received a similar reaction. For instance, when a number of representatives of several Steering Committees raised some doubt as to department's commitment, a senior official told me it was time for them "to buck up" and show some faith in the process.

I had a similar experience in interviewing one of the co-chairs. The interviewee became very upset with me when I asked why community members were necessary in this process of change. After I tried to reassure the co-chair, the interviewee acknowledged that he was tired of trying to convert people, especially professionals, in the system.

Although faith, hope, trust, belief, and conversion are words and concepts usually associated with a spiritual and/or religious experience and not generally referred to in the literature on policy development these words seemed to be part of the citizen participation discourse. One co-chair likened public participation to "the principle of believing in God or not believing in God, I'd sooner die believing in God, it's a lot easier." The position being that believing is a lot easier and less risky than non-believing. The questions then become: A lot easier for whom? Less risky than what? And at what cost is this faith, trust, and hope given over?

This acceptance of citizen participation as a spiritual experience is not dissimilar to the current management literature on change and leadership. The following quotes taken from popular and current management texts speak to the same issues of faith and trust.

- "There is a simpler way to organize human endeavor. It requires a new way of being in the world. It requires being in the world without fear. Being in the world with play and creativity. Seeking after what's possible. Being willing to learn and to be surprised" (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, p. 5)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

- "Thus, the task is not so much to see what no one yet has seen, but to think what nobody yet has thought about that which everybody sees" (Schopenhauer, cited in Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, p. i)

- "Trust – or lack of it – is the root of success or failure in relationships and the bottom-line results of business, industry, education, and government" (Covey, 1991, p. 31)

- "By integrating the seven principles of connecting into your life it becomes possible to construct a new roadmap to the future in this era of unprecedented change: see the potential and possibilities in everyone; offer mutual support; extend equality to all people; bring about the circumstances in which everyone can win; recognize that whatever you focus on expands; eliminate judgements, and; trust and love one another" (Land and Jarman, 1992, p. 191)

Related to the perception that participation has a spiritual quality and obligation, is the related belief, that community members, "the converted", have a mystical quality to them, as do their communities. This belief was also promoted during the initial stages of the process. As one co-chair remarked, "We don't need experts, we need facilitators and listeners and decision-makers at the governance level." This perspective sees community members, because of their membership in the community, as being able to identify the current and long-term needs of their community. Their judgment is considered sound and free of bias. It is assumed that these community members do not need and would only be jaded by professionals.

The omnipotence of community was further reinforced with the second most quoted expression associated with the initial three years of the initiative, that is "it takes a whole village to raise a child." This inspirational phase, attributed to an African proverb, was used to remind participants that community members need to become re-involved in the lives of children and families who at risk. The subliminal message implied in this statement is that "it doesn't take a government to raise a child".

This inspirational phase herald one of the goals of the citizen participatory process of awakening community spirit and communal caring. Each of the co-chairs interviewed either referred to the "village" motto or to the awaking of community responsibility, and with the exception of one individual, described it as an important

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

aspect of their role and an important outcome of the redesign of Children's Services. For instance, two co-chairs described this concept in the following manner:

> It takes a whole village to raise a child but there is another part to that adage and every child is my child. So that's the weakness; if every child is not seen as my child then I can opt out or opt in as I so choose and that doesn't do it. As an employer I have to be concerned with all the kids, all the families in the region, for financial reasons, for social reasons, for a good solid healthy community reason, for good workers. If they don't understand that they aren't going to be good workers so we all suffer, we all suffer as a consequence of not having this responsibility in total.

> There's not one person that I've ever heard say that they dislike the saying that "it takes a whole village to raise a child." So I truly believe that people want that environment. To live in that type of a secure surrounding, that they know at the end of the day that their neighbors would look out for them. There's that feeling, the small town feeling of where all the kids are being watched by everybody and everybody's looking out for you and the community is healthier and if the community is healthier, the kids are healthier.

The co-chairs do not question whether this "small town feeling" is still possible given the dramatic social and economic transformations that have occurred in North America. There appears to an acceptance that social order can be restored and social problems reduced if community responsibility is reawakened. More importantly that the economic conditions of the community can be improved if "every child is my child." This belief reflects a marriage between nostalgic welfarism (Brodie, 1995) and social conservatism, both of which yearn for the apparent social order of yesteryear.

One co-chair did not embrace this goal as a part of the reform of Children's Services because the co-chair felt that it was not achievable. The co-chair felt that the government had "closed the window of opportunity . . . people and the government can only accept turmoil for so long." This change in the role of the Authorities will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Certain "social realities" are accepted with this metaphor of participation as a spiritual experience. These include the perceived "givens" that: Children's Services needs to be redesigned; the citizen participation model, as designed and initiated by government, is a responsible, important, and effective method of restructuring Children's Services; the partnership should be defined by the government who is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

leading the process; the definition of community is arbitrary depending on the current political will; the reawaking of the community spirit to embrace children and families at risk is a legitimate and realistic goal; and opposition to the process needs to be meet with quick and powerful force.

Acceptance of citizen participation as a spiritual experience also means the exclusion of "other possibilities" including the understanding that the most valued decision-making processes in a democracy are those that invite debate, dialogue, and diversity of opinion (Saul, 1995). Ideally, any aspect of the participatory process should be open to scrutiny and dialogue. This would include a variety of topics such as a consideration as to why there is the political will at this particular time to utilize a citizen participatory process to redesign Children's Services. As well, if citizens are truly equal partners in the process than they jointly decide, with the government initiators, what topics need to be discussed rather than having some topics, e.g., the motivation behind the initiative, determined as off limits. Any political initiative, especially one of the magnitude of the Children's Initiative, has a multitude of agendas being addressed in its creation. Partners should be encouraged to consider and discuss these in order to facilitate the development of trust among the parties and the development of realistic expectations.

As well, the reliance on community members as the sole decision-makers to the exclusion of professionals assumes what some have referred to as an "anti-intellectual and anti-rational sentimentality" (Yankelovich, 1991, p. 44), which "endows the folk wisdom of the public with the special mystical qualities" (p. 44). Yankelovich suggests that this view is counter-productive. What can happen in this model, given the complex nature of community development and long-range planning, is that citizens begin to appear incompetent and open to criticism from their communities, bureaucrats, and politicians. Yankelovich suggests a techno-democratic decision-making model as more viable. This model represents the combined effort of community members and technical experts.

As with all the metaphors to be considered here, the metaphor of citizen participation as a spiritual experience has some strengths and weakness. It does convey clearly the importance of relationship building and the need to trust the process as it unfolds which is true of any change endeavor. It does hint at some higher and stronger power directing the process. As well, it indicates that those who are weaker will be rewarded for their hard work and good deeds. However,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

participation as a spiritual experience because of the implied inherent power differential, limits the possibility of the process developing into a relationship based on mutual respect, acceptance, and power sharing among all of those involved.

Citizen Participation as the Emperor's New Clothes

The second metaphor that arose out of the co-chairs' description of their experiences with citizen participation is citizen participation as the emperor's new clothes. This metaphor is taken from the children's nursery story, the climax of which is described here by Lewis (1982).

> When the Emperor heard the child, he knew it was true. Embarrassed, he ran all the way back to his castle, but by then the dishonest men were gone. The money was gone. And the Emperor was left with a suit of clothes that never existed in the first place. (p. 31)

Three of the co-chairs made reference to the fear that existed in the community that government-initiated citizen participation was nothing more than the "emperor's new clothes." This fear is related to the previously mentioned metaphor of the spiritual nature of citizen participation and its emphasis on trust and believing. This fear is based in the reality that government funds are being reduced in social services, health, and education. This section outlines the co-chairs' views on why the funding is being reduced. The five co-chairs did not all identify with this metaphor but they were all aware of its existence.

The difference between the two metaphors exists in the assumption behind each. In the spiritual metaphor, trust is based on a false negative assumption, that is, it is better to believe than to find out that it was actually true and not believed. In the emperor's clothes metaphor the emphasis is on mistrust which is based on the belief in the possibility of a false positive assumption. That is, it is foolish to believe that government-initiated citizen participation is anything other than a means to download services, reduce funding to Children's Services, and ultimately dismantle the Welfare state.

What are the roots of this mistrust? Despite rhetoric to the contrary, as noted in the previous chapter, this fear is based on the hard line the Alberta government has taken on eliminating the deficit and reinventing government. Cooper (1996),

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

describing the Klein achievement, reports that Klein's "common sense revolution" was successful because

> they actually put into practice the heretofore merely verbal criticisms of the welfare state. Beginning with the 1993 budget, the Government of Alberta has undertaken to reduce the intrusion of the welfare state in the lives of citizens. The banner under which this action has been taken is labeled "fiscal responsibility". (p. 10)

The impact of the implementation of the dismantling of Welfare state in Alberta has had a dramatic negative consequence for public programs.

> Alberta's level of support for public programs had already fallen 15% in the late 1980s and early 1990s, adjusting for population growth and inflation. This placed Alberta below the Canadian average two years before the Klein government's cuts even began. (Taft, 1997, p. 27)

At the same time, support for the private sector continues to be a mandate of the Progressive Conservative governments of Alberta. According to Taft, "Alberta's financial troubles from 1986 to 1993, which the Klein government set out to repair, can be largely attributed to massive subsidies to the private sector and sharply falling resource revenues" (pp. 2-3). Although the Welfare state has been criticized as being inefficient, ineffective, and uneconomic, these same criticisms could be lodged against the continued subsidization of the private sector. As Taft notes, "Alberta has developed the most heavily subsidized private sector in Canada" (p. 108). He describes this situation as follows,

> Subsidies to the private sector during this time have cost the Alberta taxpayer billions more than the province has collected in corporate taxes. Even today, with a booming economy and one of Canada's largest concentrations of big corporations, the net contribution of corporate income taxes to the Alberta Treasury covers less than two percent of total expenditures. (p. 3)

The fear that is expressed in this metaphor of the emperor's new clothes is that the Provincial government will download responsibility to communities but will also use these Authorities to camouflage continued cuts in funding to social service programs. The Provincial government will then label these Authorities, similar to some school boards and health Authorities in Alberta, as inefficient and ineffective when they complain of inadequate funding to meet community needs. In effect, the Provincial government continues to favor economic development over social development while appearing to be sensitive to community input.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This strategy is consistent with Brodie's (1995) observation that "the success of a new order often depends on its ability to incorporate criticism of the old order, even if the outcomes are qualitatively different" (p. 56). In this case, criticism of the old order consisted of acknowledging and voicing the general dissatisfaction with the lack of responsiveness and effectiveness of government services. The desired outcome is a correction to this situation with the involvement of community members in decision making regarding resource allocation. Instead, the outcome is devolution and dismantling of services while appearing to be responsive.

Although this was a common fear in the community, two of the three co-chairs were able to rationalize any shortfalls in funding or the appearance of downloading by the Provincial government. In the following excerpt the co-chair feels that although downloading may be occurring, the government had no choice given the increased demands on social services and health care in the future.

> The cynical side is that it is a lot easier to download onto others, and then let them struggle, and if they can't do it, either we will tell you how this is, how its going to be and we'll do it for you. . . . I really wouldn't want to be in charge of setting policy for the next fifty years with the huge increase of seniors that are going to hit the health care system. So one way to do that is to download and say guys get prepared to look after your self; to me it means get prepared to look after your families, get prepared to look after your seniors.

This co-chair further suggested that in fact the downloading of responsibilities and the suggestion that people must be responsible for themselves and their own loved ones is actually a good thing since "we have gotten really spoilt,"

> I see an element of real hope in that because we in Alberta, we around the world, have gotten really spoilt. We are always walking around with our hands up to the government and that doesn't build community, that doesn't build the responsibility of looking after everything and saying to government from a realistic kind of basis, not just gimme, gimme, gimme.

This co-chair's comments echo the sentiment of one of the founding documents of the restructuring of Children's Services, *Reshaping Child Welfare*. This document outlines the Minister of Family and Social Services' plan for the future direction of services to children. The document notes "we expect parents to be accountable for the care of their children" (Government of Alberta, 1993, p. 5). Alberta is identified as a leader in Children's Services but

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> all over North America, governments are seeking new directions for child welfare. They are finding that the old ways of providing services takes responsibility away from families and involves expensive services that are not focused on results. Alberta is no exception. (Government of Alberta, 1993, p. 5)

When this co-chair was asked whether our society can return to the ways of the rural west of yesteryear, the co-chair replied,

> As government is unable to provide those services that we've gotten so used to, that also turned out to be such a curse, we're going to be forced to look after ourselves more. If we could put in place a model of an inter-generational community, where some of the seniors, are seen by the community as grandparents to the kids in that community. If we could develop an attitude that isn't it great that grandpa Brown up here spends this time with the kids because they want to be around him. He tells them stories and families with teenagers are around because they want to be part of it. . . . I don't want us to go into recession. I don't want the government to maliciously say, "Well, you guys will learn to do this by yourselves. We're just going to cut all the funding." I don't want that. But I think if we're forced to look after ourselves, we will.

This co-chair sees two alternatives to the presenting problems, the social conservative and communitarian alternative of re-creating the positive features of a small community in large municipal settings in Alberta, or if that does not occur, the second alternative becomes one of economic disaster and inflation. There seems to be no acceptance of some of the socioeconomic realities of families in North America or the current low rate of citizen involvement in their communities (Putman, 2000). As well, there seems be an absence of questioning regarding the reduction of government services to people in need while there is an increase in government corporate support.

The second co-chair rationalized under-funding from the ministry in the first year of operation by suggesting that the minister needs to be convinced that "wasteful old habits are not being implemented." The co-chair's statement of rationale is based upon two of the criticisms of the Welfare state, that it is unproductive and ineffective. The co-chair states,

> if I were the department leading or leading part of the change then I would want to be darn sure that every possible alternative has been properly looked at . . . that they are not just picking up the habits of their forefathers that they actually understand their own issue.

Both of the co-chairs' comments and the recommendation from *Reshaping Our Future* reflect what Brodie (1995) identifies as the "changing public expectations

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

about entitlements, collective provision for social needs, and the appropriateness of the welfare state (which) has been a critical victory for neoliberalism"(p. 54). She notes that the good citizen is one that

> recognizes the limits and liabilities of the state provision and embraces her or his obligation to work longer and harder in order to become more self-reliant . . . There is little tolerance for making 'special' claims on the basis of difference or systemic discrimination. (p. 57)

Acceptance of the metaphor of citizen participation as the emperor's new clothes implies the acceptance of the "givens" that: the process of citizen participation has been flawed from the start, the process is a reconfiguration of the power between the government and the citizenry, and although the rhetoric speaks to a transfer of power to the general public from the government, no real transfer will occur.

It is interesting to note that although three of the co-chairs mentioned this fear in the community, all three were passionate about the need for community input into social policy development and were committed to their role in the Authorities. Of these three co-chairs, only one co-chair appeared to really believe that the process was honourable. The second co-chair appeared to be hoping to be proven right, that in fact the emperor had no clothes on, so that his/her distrust of politicians and others could be justified. The third co-chair appeared to be hedging bets in two camps so as not to be proven wrong whatever the situation.

Rejection of this metaphor requires one to justify why the Provincial Government has historically and currently made shortfalls in funding in social services and what role citizen participation has in facilitating this. As indicated in two of the co-chairs' comments, they have justified the current situation as part of their overall critique of how social services has been run and how citizens have become over-reliant on government. Their criticisms are consistent with the New Right's criticisms of the welfare state. Also consistent with the New Right's criticism of the welfare state is the concept that government-run services need to become more business-like in their operations. This is expressed in the third metaphor.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Citizen Participation as a Means to Good Business Practices

Citizen participation has been described as a spiritual experience and the emperor's new clothes. Here I discuss a third metaphor, citizen participation as a means for good business practice. Co-chairs reported that participation allowed them to introduce business practices into social policy planning, something they felt was sorely missing previously. Outlined below are the co-chairs rationales for seeing the need for more business-like strategies implemented.

Three co-chairs made reference to the importance of citizen participation as an opportunity to bring good business practices to social policy decision making. As one co-chair said, "the motivation doesn't matter, the process has started and it's large enough that it can't be stopped. . . . they have opened the door . . . we don't have to let go of this opportunity." The opportunity the co-chair is referring to is being able to address the perceived ineffectiveness and inefficiency of Children's Services. The following quotes taken from three of the co-chairs describe the inefficiency they perceived in the Department of Social Services:

> I bought the argument that the government had spent something like four billion dollars in the last twenty years on throwing money at child and family problems and there had been no real change. Sure thousands of kids and families had been helped one way or another but in terms of making a difference in any of the indicators of wellness in society there wasn't a dent in any of them. . . . The Department of Social Services for the last thirty years has been throwing more money at the problem and whether that works or not, that has been the solution.

> What really is changing is the business end of it, the support for those people. We've got to get very efficient so that we can provide the maximum support for the people who are doing the practice of social work.

> Well, this redesign is part of making the best use of taxpayers' money, providing a service that satisfies, that is responsible to taxpayers, listens to community, and ends up doing a better job of development of families and children than was done to me, without criticism of the past.

Co-chairs described introducing business processes that have had positive effects on Children's Services. The language used to describe these processes is embedded in business terminology. Terms such as "stakeholder," "benchmarks and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

performance measures," "business plans," "operations plans" and "rationalizing services" have become part of the discourse of community consultation and reflect Pierson's (1998) observation that we are moving "from the welfare state to the competition state" (p. 65).

Co-chairs reported that the introduction of terms such as customer and business practices into social policy planning and their reliance on a business orientation has meant a change in the culture of Children's Services. Children's Services has moved from "a culture of being afraid to a culture that encourages taking risks." According to the co-chairs, part of this change in culture has meant that decisions that previously would have been avoided are now being made. Decisions according to these co-chairs were not being made for a number of reasons. These reasons included a reluctance to make a decision for a region "without thinking of the ramifications for the whole province" or "people didn't bother taking initiatives because the ones who had some good ideas knew how difficult it was to get an answer."

The business orientation was perceived as being aligned with change and results. As one co-chair explained, the reason that co-chairs with a business background could make a positive impact on Children's Services was because they were "not from a social services background or a bureaucratic industry, we're used to change, we're used to outcomes, our successes are based on outcomes." The implication being that social services and social services personnel were neither comfortable with change nor concerned with the outcomes of their work.

This emphasis on measurable outcomes is part of social planning discourse at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. It reflects a change in expectations on service providers to identify what they are going to achieve rather than reporting what they are going to do. The change in emphasis is being driven nationally and locally by the mythology of spiraling social service costs and the need to get the "best bang for the taxpayers' buck."

The co-chairs also suggested that the emphasis on a business orientation to social services has also meant a new sense of openness within the department and with the media. As one co-chair described it there was in the department, prior to the onset of citizens participating, a "gag order, a ministerial gag order, you don't dare speak of anything." The motivation behind this openness with the media seems to centre on defending the department personnel. A co-chair described it this way:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> We want good relations with the media and we want them to talk about us fairly, honestly; if we made mistakes we shouldn't be spared. We want the story to be heard and we want the community to know that social workers aren't bad people and here's some of the good things they do and here's some of the challenges they work under.

There was a notable exception to this new sense of openness within the department. Individuals, in particular, managers, who disagreed with the idea of community consultation were expected to either leave the department or be silent. As one co-chair noted,

> I was very vocal about that. "Listen" I said, "management I expect to be on board. You had the option back when this first came out, as managers to be on board or take an option of leaving the department. That was far more than any of the staff had, so I expect managers to be on board." I don't want to spend any of my time, resources, trying to convince managers it's a good thing. I don't want to do that and my expectation from senior management level, the Deputy Minister level and the government level is that they are to support and ensure that people at the management level are either on side or out.

When this co-chair was asked what the managers' concerns were and why they were hesitate to come on board the co-chair's response was:

> I didn't spend any time on that. I didn't spend much time or my energies on how the department was run in the past. You would hear things. Managers weren't picked for their leadership styles. They were picked for other reasons. . . . You know it wasn't well managed. So therefore you had inherent problems with the management.

The assumption being made by this co-chair was that the objections of the Child Welfare managers to the citizen participatory model were due to their own fear that their professional incompetence would be identified and their managerial status would be threatened. Once again, this is consistent with the criticisms of the Welfare state that it is unproductive since it encourages the rapid growth of unproductive public bureaucracy.

There was no desire or effort on the part of this co-chair to explore if the managers' concerns were related to other issues such as the quality of service provision or the protection of children. The government had decided that citizen participation in social policy development was going to take place and according to this co-chair it was inappropriate and inefficient to spend time and resources as a community deciding whether this was a good or bad decision.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although the co-chairs have viewed the acceptance of this metaphor very positively, there are dangers of thinking of citizen participation in social policy development as a means to bring good business practices to social services. Taft (1997) notes that the rules for a market economy do not work for policy development in health care. He argues that the normal freedoms of consumers do not apply well for a number of reasons:

> consumers and buyers are not equals, there is not enough sellers to ensure competition, people can not easily control their demand for services, it is difficult to be a well-informed consumer, and competition in health care is unlike competition with other products. (p. 98)

Similarly, Pierson (1998) notes that despite the rhetoric for the development of competitive markets for social services, in fact the only transformation of services has been from the state to women in the community. These women in turn have become the shock absorbers of privatization (Brodie, 1996a). Pierson observes that

> although there has been a significant privatization of welfare effort over the past twenty years, this has more commonly been transferred to women in families rather than to markets and. . . there has been no wholesale transfer of state welfare provision into the private sector. (p. 157)

It is interesting to note as well, that the same criticisms that are alleged against social services (e.g., unproductiveness and inefficiency, by those citizens stressing good business practices) are the same criticisms that are alleged by the critics of citizen participation. Wharf and McKenzie (1998) note that the "critics of community governance and, indeed of most forms of participatory democracy often claim that these structures waste time and energy. They argue they represent yet another layer of government in our already complicated government system" (p. 122). These authors cite the example of the development of a New Directions policy for health care in Britain as an example of this position. The Royal Commission recommended that funding and the delivery of health services be placed under regional control and elected community boards. After three years of attempts, the New Directions policy was not implemented because of criticism that it would create an expensive and bureaucratic form of governance. "Today, no harsher words can be used to destroy a proposal than 'expensive and bureaucratic'"(Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p. 122).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Citizen participation as good business practices is a strong metaphor for a number of the co-chairs interviewed. They view it as a unique contribution that citizens can bring to social policy development because of their unbiased and business-oriented background. The fourth metaphor, citizen participation as doing battle, which is outlined in the following section, is related to the metaphor of good business practices.

Citizen Participation as Engaging in a Battle

This section considers citizen participation as engaging in battle. This metaphor is one that was embraced by all the co-chairs I interviewed. The following description outlines their views on why this battle was important and who and what the battle was over.

A theme of citizen participation as engaging in a "battle" is incorporated as a natural aspect of community consultation according to the views of the co-chairs. This theme is in direct contradiction to the rhetoric of community consultation, especially as described in the Alberta model, which is touted as a partnership and collaboration between all parties. Rarely is this battle reported by the co-chairs, to be with ministers and their policies, but rather with two other groups: the union and bureaucrats. Based on the interviews with the co-chairs and the various meetings and conversations observed, the dismantling of both these groups appears to be one of the major agendas underpinning this initiative, one that the co-chairs felt community members supported. As one co-chair told me,

> We're not here to union bash and we're not here to union break but we want to get away from a them and us because our vision doesn't speak to that and I don't believe our community wants us in that position. . . . That we can have that flexibility, that they can be innovative, that they can be creative because what stops them sometimes, from a frontline perspective, of being that way sometimes, is their own collective agreement.

This co-chair's statement has three interesting elements to it. Each element is demonstrative of how the union was perceived. As well, in totality the three elements justify, for this co-chair and others, the necessity of the "battle" with the union. First, the statement begins with a "stake inoculation" (Potter & Wetherall, 1997), and in this case is represented with the interviewee's statement "we're not here to union bash."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Its purpose is to provide credibility to the remainder of the statement since the co-chair has disqualified the other possible explanation for the views stated and the activities suggested. The other possible view would be that this co-chair and others have accepted the argument that unions need to be dismantled and services should be privatized. This view is consistent with the privatization of government services, which the Alberta Provincial government had begun prior to the onset of the Children's Initiative. *Calgary Herald* reporter Robert Bragg (1997) summarizes this activity in the following statement: "In rapid order they privatized a broad range of services including liquor retailing, vehicle registries, public broadcasting—Access TV and CKUA Radio—highway maintenance and parks services and maintenance. This also meant cutting 12,000 government jobs" (p. A5).

Second, this co-chair's statement aligns flexibility, innovation, and creativity with non-union agreements. These values are all seen as important in the new "business" of Children's Services but are also viewed as impossible in a union environment. This belief of the inflexibility of Children's Services was stated in other forums. For instance, on April 3, 1996 in Question Period Social Services Minister Michael Cardinal was asked what was preventing Authorities from discontinuing services once considered necessary. He replied, "for once the flexibility is there to design programs to deal with the problems, not walk in and apprehend children" (Hansard, April, 1996).

Changing the relationship with the union is also justified in this co-chair's statement because it is viewed as what "our community wants." To my knowledge there is no documentation to support this belief that the community saw the need to change the relationship with the union as a priority in the redesign of Children's Services. On the contrary, there was opposition to the idea of privatization. This opposition was headed by Workers Opposed to the Reorganization of Children's Services (WORSC) and supported by the Foster Parents Association of Alberta. These groups criticized the reorganization as it "likely means privatization . . . which will result in a lack of accountability and a system which counts dollars over the lives of children" (Helmer, 1997 April 17, p. A1).

These workers had a very public and persistent campaign against the reorganization, despite being cautioned of possible repercussions for speaking out. The newly appointed Minister of Social Services, Dr. Oberg, labeled the situation as a "'nasty' situation when employees speak out against their employer" (Helmer, April

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

17, 1997, p. A1). This statement not only labels a situation but it also passes a value judgement on people who create "nasty" situations. Synonyms for the word nasty include "indecent", "harmful" and "ungodly" which by association labels these social workers "nasty" workers as well.

Third, the co-chair's statement also implies that the union has not been "focused on children and families" in the past although this is the focus of the newly ministerial-appointed Children's Authorities. Clearly, this perception justified the attack on the unions, not for the possible financial savings but for the welfare of children and families.

For the first eighteen months of the initiative, the Steering Committee members were led to believe that services could and would be privatized. Further there was an understanding that the newly appointed Authorities would "not be delivery agents for services, particularly Child Protection Services" as stated in the minutes of meeting with Steering Committee co-chairs, Regional Directors and Facilitators, May 1, 1997. Shortly after this meeting the Alberta Government abruptly changed direction. The following two excerpts from the interviews with the co-chairs explains what happened.

> Well, initially our understanding was that everybody was given their layoff notices at the time. . . . That's what we planned for the first eighteen months and where we got snagged up was Alberta has successor right legislation involved in the Labor Act.

> We were moving merrily along until the spring of '97, still on the basis that all of the government workers would be let go. . . . But right about then was when at least one and maybe two rulings came down. . . . these rulings came down, not in favour of the government. They came down in favour, supporting the succession rights and stuff, which I guess wasn't too clear up until then. . . . There was a meeting of several Ministers, to decide what to do. One of the options they were considering was introducing legislation which would allow this to all happen. And they could do that quite legally, but they didn't want to do it, politically, because the relationship between labour and government was quite good and they didn't want to make any more waves the year before the next election. So they made a political decision to live with it, or to not upset the unions and instead to have the Authorities inherit the staff and deliver services. Now the logic was, and the way they explained it then was, "We'll do that for three years, and within three years there will be enough staff attrition and you can start contracting stuff out around the edges and stuff, that by then it will be a non-issue," kind of thing.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

So the idea of dismantling the union and privatizing services had not been re-evaluated and decided against because of an ideological shift away from economic liberalism as applied to social services. Rather the idea "got snagged up" and was put on hold to "not cause problems," or "have a war with the union." The strategy identified was to wait for a later, unannounced date, to put the plan into effect when "there will be enough staff attrition and you can start contracting stuff out around the edges and stuff, that by then it will be a non-issue." In the 1999/2000 budget the Alberta Government announced that the number of provincial employees would be reduced by a significant amount and that a number of support services would be privatized.

The same concerns that were expressed over the unions were also expressed regarding the social services bureaucracy. As one co-chair described the perceived potential difficulty with bureaucrats:

> Politicians can make promises. Deputies are a little more cautious because they know this promise translates into a lot of stuff. Career bureaucrats, career civil servants . . . say, "You guys have no bloody idea how this is going to work at all" and they resist. And they say, "This has worked historically so why would we try and do something other that it?' So we have these three levels and then the Authorities that are saying, '"We can do this. Give us money. We can do it." So we have four forces in competition here. And well, a civil servant himself, a leader in this whole area . . . said "the way that civil servants succeed is to not do anything."

Co-chairs provided a number of examples of bureaucrats "setting up hurdles" during the formation stage of the Steering Committees and the actual running of the Authorities. One co-chair described how the previous co-chairs resigned because of their concern with government facilitators whom they felt were controlling the process.

> One of them had resigned because she could not get along with the facilitators. That was the aboriginal chair. The other person who had resigned . . . couldn't get along with the facilitators and felt that they were driving the whole mechanism of community process and he fundamentally disagreed with that and he didn't have time to do anything about it.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This co-chair also provides two other examples of how the bureaucrats were perceived as attempting to control the process and lessen the impact of the Authorities.

> They wanted it back because they realized by letting us design the protocols, we had the financial protocols. . . . and we also put forward that the Ministers had to sign off on the protocols, which meant that we weren't asking the bureaucracy to sign off. So every step along the way they resisted it and mostly they resisted that we had the control to do that and were not accountable. Which of course we don't see ourselves that way at all. We see ourselves as having all these people attached to our shoulders and I'm just about stooped over with the burden of accountability. So what they meant was that we were not accountable to a bureaucrat.

> They have not devolved their power. We are continually saying, we have the power. Don't take it away from us, instead of vice versa. There's no recognition of that power. There's always a new way of trying to take that power away. For example, now the terminology is, "oh, that's not a governance question. This is an operations question". And I always push back on that. Every time they say that, I will say to them, whether it's governance or operations, that's not for you to decide.

As part of the battle with bureaucrats, this co-chair threatens bureaucrats with what is perceived as the volunteer's power. This co-chair described this as "part of the game I play with them is I make it very clear to bureaucrats that I'll tell politicians if they don't allow me to leverage my knowledge of the community on their policy." Another co-chair described how the Authority had one senior bureaucrat removed by complaining about his/her lack of co-operation and follow through.

Despite this, several of the co-chairs described how their community service plans could not be operationalized because of lack of support from the Departments of Infrastructure, Human Resources, and Finance who were unable or unwilling to make the changes suggested by the Authorities. The co-chairs interpreted this as part of the on-going battle with the bureaucracy.

Problems arose with the Department of Infrastructure when inadequate or in some cases, no office space for the Authorities was forthcoming. As one Co-chair described the Department of Infrastructure, they are just another example of inefficiencies in government and why a more business orientation was necessary.

> They're just very passive. They don't act like realtors should act and that's very frustrating. That normally works for the way government's been because most of government hasn't moved all that fast anyhow.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> But now we've got a bunch of Authorities wanting to make things happen.

Human Resources also was identified as a barrier since they would not re-classify some social worker positions which the Authorities had requested. For example, one co-chair expresses frustration when describing trying to get Human Resources to reallocate funds for positions differently:

> They say, "If you do that then every authority is going to do that and that isn't the way we do it." Finally we get some action. But you know then that's pink ticketed. It's an exception and if the Minister says, "What the hell's wrong here," pulls it all back, our CEO is out on his ass, probably I'll be out on my ass and it'll be back to the old style.

Finance was sometimes unwilling, due to perceived control issues, and usually unable to provide the type of information that the Authorities wanted, due to a new computer system that was adopted just as the Authorities came on-line. This caused considerable frustration for the co-chairs. "We just knew we were getting sometimes no information and sometimes we could just tell, management could tell that it looked wrong."

Although the metaphor of citizen participation as a battle is inconsistent with the idea of partnership and collaboration, each of the five co-chairs interviewed had stories to share regarding how this battle was waged and the importance of the battle. Each believed it was for the betterment of the children and their families and something the public supported and in fact, encouraged. Citizen participation as a battle is complementary to the metaphors of citizen participation as a means to good business practices and as the emperor's new clothes. All three of these metaphors find their roots in the New Right critique of the Welfare state.

The next three metaphors, (i.e., citizen participation as strategic co-opting, as a change in worldview, and as empowerment) outlined in the following sections describe citizen participation from a different position. These metaphors are all based on values of social change, consumer voice, and the reduction of power differentials. Rather than focusing on the dismantling of the welfare state, they are a reflection of a desire to use citizen participation as a vehicle to redesign and strengthen the welfare state within the economic, social, and political restructuring that was occurring.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Citizen Participation as Strategic Co-opting

Citizen participation as strategic co-opting was the fifth metaphor that seemed to arise out of the interviews with the five co-chairs. There appeared to be the view expressed by the co-chairs that co-opting was a necessary component of being able to acquire some power in the policy development process. As one co-chair described it,

> to a certain extent I have to be co-opted to have my voice heard . . . but they also know its going to allow them to listen to it . . . in some cases I'll have to admit, they ignore it, in a safe way.

I describe the concept of co-opting as it applies to citizen participation and examine as well, the issue of integrity, which seems to impact and separate good from poor co-opting, as described by the co-chairs. I also outline the reasons given for their involvement even when they know they are being co-opted.

Two co-chairs stated the opinion that to some extent one has to be co-opted to have his/her voice heard. This view involves the belief that to be able to change a system one has to become part of it rather than try to change it from outside.

This view also involves a belief that the citizens participating and the government initiating the process can achieve an agreement. The citizens, on one hand, have the opportunity to voice an opinion that might not be heard otherwise, the government, on the other, can choose to ignore this opinion. Those who hold to this metaphor of strategic co-opting, hope that the former occurs more often than the latter. Two co-chairs expressed it this way:

> that's why I say I don't know why I got appointed. . . . I'm not a fit into the mold type of person, they just kind of tolerate me. . . . I think it's a step forward, and better than what we ever came out of before. Before nobody listened, period.

> They got me co-opted on probably about seven issues because I wanted that one. But mine was much bigger and much more important than those other ones.

Participants aligning with this view of citizen participation also believed that they bring a special quality to the process that others, such as politicians and bureaucrats, cannot. One co-chair described this as bringing integrity to the process:

> There are reasons why we can bring that integrity to the process and that is because we are hybrid. We are political appointments but we are not politicians. So we aren't accountable to a party whip. We can be a fairly independent voice. Nor are we accountable to the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> bureaucracy. Yet we have to get funding and resources and we have to have a relationship with that bureaucracy. We are accountable to our community, but yet we have to bring some of the government mandate to the committee, I mean, we are bound by an Act. So that is the kind of integrity we can bring. Bureaucrats are unable to bring that by the very nature of their structure and politicians are unable to bring that by the very nature of their structure. So, without that component, the process would not be capable of the kind of integrity that's needed to meet the community needs.

Integrity was a word used extensively by the co-chairs and others when describing their experience with citizen participation as part of a strategic co-opting process. Since integrity is used as one of the main justifications for the strategic co-opting it may be revealing to examine this word in more detail.

To understand what is meant by this "vague but difficult to challenge formulation" (Tonkiss, 1998, p. 258) it is necessary to examine it in the number of contexts in which it has been used by the co-chairs. For instance,

> With respect to the aboriginal pillar. I'm not aboriginal myself -- I am involved in the aboriginal community but that's an area where the integrity of the process has been really lacking.

> Well there's this big commitment to an aboriginal pillar. We know that the numbers vary across the province in terms of percentage, but provincially it's usually going between 38 and 45% of children involved in my system are aboriginal children. We're still two solitudes. There has been no process other than having aboriginal co-chairs, some aboriginal members of the board. Their discomfort with the position they're put in, as to how you represent two solitudes? I don't know. The process of engaging that community has not had any integrity.

> It doesn't take more than ten minutes for that gong to go off that this isn't working. Three years ago it would have taken maybe four days. I would have gone through the whole process. They would have had my name. . . I'm going to bring that integrity voice.

> The process will be a partnership, I don't like the word partnership, a collaboration, an integration where all the pieces will hang together, they'll all work together, each will have its own integrity like in the mosaic every piece is valuable and essential to the process each one with its own integrity.

Although each of the uses of integrity in these quotes is slightly different they do seem to have a common theme. Synonyms for integrity found in a thesaurus are

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

words such as honesty and completeness. Integrity in the context of citizen participation has been used to mean: a process at the political level; the ability to identify and voice when a consultation process is flawed; an unique, different and independent perspective; a valuable and necessary addition in problem solving, and; being accountable to the community. Together they seem to refer to the issue of power.

Co-chairs, aligning with the perspective of strategic co-opting, believed that their involvement in the participatory process brings a degree of power that was not present in social policy development previously. This power derives from the uniqueness of their perspective, its importance in long-term solutions, and their accountability to the community. This power is manifest in the perceived freedom to voice an opinion or objection and to be involved in political processes.

But just how powerful are these citizens? Brodie (1996a) argues that public consultation is a government institution of the neo-liberal state that serves to "silence informed voices, in a specific policy field by labeling them as 'special interest'. . . [and] acts as an illusion of democratic policy-making"(p. 140). Saul (1995), although in favor of more citizen participation within a democracy, suggests that the power of citizens in this form of populism is dramatically over-rated. He argues the procedure can undermine real democratic process by reducing complex issues to simplistic notions and by providing a façade of pluralistic debate while decisions are actually made elsewhere.

Others would argue that in fact citizens could be quite effective and powerful. Pal (1993) assessed the Citizens' Participation Directorate established by the Federal Liberals in 1968, as an example of strategic co-opting. According to Pal, although the government's goal was to co-opt the associations who were receiving government funding, these groups, became the government's most articulate opponents: "the state, pursuing an eminently statist strategy, had been ensnared by the fruits of its own efforts. . . the roots of 'citizen participation' among groups and organizations themselves were now firmly established" (p. 123).

In outlining the benefits of community governance, Wharf and McKenzie (1998) identify a number of Canadian situations where citizen input and voice have been very successful. These authors reference the Children's Aid Society of Ontario, the Health and Human Resource Centres in British Columbia, and the Manitoba Child

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Welfare Services as examples where citizens have been able to exert power in designing and monitoring policy initiatives.

As well, Rutman (1998) describes her involvement in the development of adult guardianship legislation in British Columbia in 1991. She considers the early stages of the legislative reform as very rewarding.

> Unquestionably, citizens and groups had unprecedented opportunities to contribute to the framing and even the drafting of the new adult guardianship legislation. The level and nature of "partnership" with government, and support from key government players (e.g., the attorney general, Colin Gabelmann) was unparalleled. Needless to say, witnessing ways in which discussions in our committees at times translated into legislative changes was highly gratifying. (p. 108)

Unfortunately, a few years after the process began and a "number of the champions of the process" had left, Rutman felt that a change in the intent of the community involvement had taken place. This led her to question the process.

> Were community members working in tandem with government to *co-create* the new adult guardianship legislation, or was government *consulting* with the community in order to get feedback on a pre-conceived framework for legislation and policy? Taking the latter model one cynical step further, were community members being asked to participate in the reform enterprise just so that government could claim it had successfully undertaken a consultation exercise—and were community participants therefore being co-opted through this process? (p. 109)

Rutman's comments shed some light on when strategic co-opting may actually be a possibility and when it is not. The observations she makes regarding the conditions that surrounded the change in relationship with the government are important. First, there is the issue of the duration of time and second, the issue of a "number of the champions of the process" leaving. Both appear to be significant factors in the success of the co-opting participation.

In the redesign of Children's Services, in which the co-chairs participated, both of these also played a role. First, the redesign and the movement to Children's Authorities took place over three, and in some regions four, years. During this period, 6,000 community members were consulted or involved in one form or another. Co-chairs argued that it was this grass-roots involvement and knowledge that added to their power. Conversely, the long period of time before the Authorities were actually established also meant that some of the enthusiasm and attention to the details of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

involvement of the citizens, waned in the community and among the volunteer Steering Committees' members.

Second, the "number of the champions of the process" leaving was also an issue of the redesign of Children's Services. Since the onset of the redesign, the Department of Alberta Family and Social Services has been restructured extensively twice and had experienced three changes in the Department Minister. These changes lessen the power of the citizens for a number of reasons including: a weakening of relationships and on-going communication; a lack of knowledge of the new workings of the political structure; and an on-going reduction in information, technical, and administrative support necessary to be effective. As well, over this time there was a change in membership of the Steering Committees, which further detracted from the attention to detail, the understanding of the initial goals of the redesign, and from the overall enthusiasm.

When the relationship does deteriorate from co-creation to consultation and direct co-opting these co-chairs believe that not all is lost. They felt that the process provided positive learning for both parties and strengthened their power for future situations. This is summarized in the following quote:

> Even if all is lost, and it totally doesn't work, this process has internally given me a standard as to what community consultation, what brokering power means and . . . I immediately transferred those things that I had learned about integrity to that. So, people are being developed that will always have that voice now in all sorts of different places and they're also sanctioning that voice.

The implications for co-opting will have very different consequences for aboriginal co-chairs as acknowledged by one co-chair.

> I think the higher risk of that is in the aboriginal community. And it's very risky for them because they won't be accepted by their own community if they are co-opted.

Acceptance of citizen participation as strategic co-opting does mean that some "realities" are assumed by those involved. These realities include the understanding that the act of participation is time limited, and that at some point the opportunity for "partnership" will be taken away or as one co-chair said, "the window of opportunity has been closed." Those who operate under this assumption also understand that their involvement is also limited in the scope of issues that they will be allowed to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

influence. Both of these realities are acceptable to the co-chairs aligning themselves with this metaphor because this limited ability to influence is better than not having any voice which they traditionally have felt has been the case.

Acceptance of citizen participation as strategic co-opting also means a limiting of the following other "possibilities": that citizens have a right to participate in issues that affect them; that by not accepting this right it is possible to set in motion a self-fulfilling prophecy of co-opting; that if partnership and co-creation are to occur they need certain conditions to exist, specifically, the resources (technical, financial, and support) need to be available to both partners so as to reduce the power differential between parties; and, that strategic co-opting may be closer to advising than co-creating and therefore should be identified by all parties as such so as not to set in motion false expectations for those citizens participating.

Citizen participation as strategic co-opting speaks to a sense of power felt by the co-chairs despite the obvious difference in size, resources, and possibly the philosophy between the co-chairs and the bureaucracy of the government department. Co-chairs felt that their presence was at least a move towards a greater community voice in planning and resulted in providing some integrity to the process. The co-chairs who aligned themselves with this metaphor feel that they can be strategic in achieving some goals knowing that all that they want will not be possible.

Citizen Participation as a Change in Worldview

I describe the metaphor of citizen participation as a change in worldview in this section. The co-chairs rationales for the change in worldview or "moving to a new land" are outlined.

A metaphor frequently used throughout the first three years of the formation of the Authorities was "moving to the new land." In the course of the interviews with the co-chairs similar imagery was used. References were made to "ships turning around", "open sea," "waves," "getting the ship stabilized," "changing winds," which all refer to the non-static nature of the process, to the uncertainty of the final destination, and to the necessity of leaving one shore to find another. This feeling of being afloat between two places, what Schwartz (1992) refers to as a sea change, is often used to describe marked transformations or changes. Schwartz observes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> during a sea change, experienced cruise passengers will tell you, the world one has left behind seems strangely distant and suspended. One may think unusual thoughts or do unusual things while the world is in transition upon the seas. (p. 1)

The change in worldviews or "going to the new land" had many connotations over the course of the restructuring of Children's Services depending on who used the phase. In hearing it, I often had images of the exodus of the English Puritans coming across the Atlantic in the early 1600s to colonize North America. In writing about this period, Fisher (1989) describes the conditions under which people were fleeing.

> This great migration was a great flight from conditions which had grown intolerable at home. It continued from 1629 to 1640, precisely the period that Whig historians called the "eleven years' tyranny," when Charles I tried to rule England without a Parliament, and Archbishop William Laud purged the Anglican church of its Puritan members. These eleven years were also an era of economic depression, epidemic disease, and so much sufferings that to John Winthrop it seemed as if the land itself had grown "weary of her Inhabitants, so as man which is most precious of all the Creatures, is here more vile and base than the earth they tread upon." (p. 16)

So what were the conditions that people were fleeing in the restructuring of Children's Services through the use of citizen participation? Once again the answer to this question depends on who is answering. For some, the answer is similar to John Winthrop's observation that, "man which is most precious of all the Creatures, is here more vile and base than the earth they tread upon." Children's Services across Canada had come under public attack for not protecting children at risk. Alberta was no exception. In the Fall of 1993 and then again in 1994, Bernard Walters, the Children's Advocate, released two scathing reports on the Child Welfare system in Alberta entitled *Finding a Better Way* and *Focus on Children* respectively. Given that these reports were the most recent documents in a long line of critiques of Alberta Children's Services the department undertook its own study.

Ray Lasnik, Assistant Deputy Minister, completed a community consultation process in Fall, 1994. His report entitled *Reshaping Our Future* outlined 32 recommendations for changing Children's Services. These recommendations stressed the need for community-based services, increased attention to aboriginal issues, increased early intervention focus, and an integration of department services that affect children, specifically health, education, justice, and social services. As a senior

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

department bureaucrat explained to me, what these recommendations were focusing on was "not just to be a transfer of services, not just privatization but an attempt to find the most effective means to meet the needs of children."

This observation reflects another possible explanation as to what was being left behind in coming to the "new land" where travelers were informed that there would be "a transfer of services" and "privatization." Government would discontinue providing services to children and families and would privatize these services in the community. The implication of this privatization for those unions involved in Children's Services and the government bureaucracy associated with these services is that they would be dismantled. The "new land" meant not only the creation of "effective means to meet the needs of children" but also an efficient means to meet children's needs. The worldview was changing.

> The welfare state, which was once a defining cause for social democrats and, by turns, a source of despair and indifference for those on the right, is now the object of almost universal demands for urgent and profound change. The stakes have been raised, as welfare reform has been transformed into the key strategy for "reviving the economy" and "mending the social fabric" but faith in traditional solutions is in seemingly terminal decline. We are told that, in anything like its traditional form, the welfare state cannot survive. (Pierson, 1998, p. 1)

Moving to a "new land" according to one co-chair also refers to a change in worldview to "native thought as opposed to European or Occidental thinking." This change meant a change from "the linear to holistic thought because the linear paradigm was far too strong in the design of services." This co-chair provides an example of how these two orientations or worldviews are different and how they have had an negative impact on Aboriginal people.

> I come from that history of my brothers and sisters as aboriginal people being apprehended from their homes in a system that was very judgmental from an Occidental worldview. That's the model that we fear as aboriginal people all of this time and there are still today aboriginal people that have the same fears that they are going to be judged on a basis that is foreign to them.

The acceptance of this metaphor of citizen participation as a change in worldview assumes that the "old world" was desperately flawed. The flaws existed in those residing in this world. The social workers, the bureaucracy, unions, and the recipients of the Children's Services were all viewed as contributing to the problem.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Recognition of the historical under-funding of social services in Alberta was not considered as necessary, and this blinded those aligning with this metaphor to the very real problems of children not receiving adequate services. The solution was to dismantle Children's Services, rather than revisit the government's moral, legal, fiscal responsibility to provide welfare services to children and their families.

The metaphor of citizen participation as a change in worldview was explored in this section. Participates were told they were going to a new land and establishing new traditions and practices. The co-chairs were supportive of this view of citizen participation since they agreed that the current situation was flawed. In the next section the metaphor of citizen participation as a means to empowerment is explored.

Citizen Participation as a Means to Empowerment

The last metaphor I describe is citizen participation as a means to empowerment. I explore what empowerment means to the co-chairs and the possibility of it being operationalized.

Without a prior definition of empowerment each of the co-chairs was asked whether they felt their participation in policy development was about empowerment? Their responses were enlightening. Three co-chairs were not sure what I meant by the question, were hesitant to use the word empowerment, and were afraid they were using it incorrectly. One co-chair, for example, said that the government was "committed to doing empowerment but they don't know what that means; not sure I know what that means."

The responses of two co-chairs reflected a belief that the co-chairs and their communities had organizational power already and it was a matter of them deciding how much of their power they wanted to give away to the government.

> I think it's a lot bigger and broader than empowerment. Again, it goes to my own personal philosophy and my own personal thoughts are that nobody empowers me. I have it in me. It's just how much I give away and how much I allow people to guide my behaviours.

The co-chairs justified this perspective by providing an explanation of representative government without any acknowledgement of the political nature of decision making, organizational change theory, or the power differential between community and government and between various groups within the community.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> There's no difference between community and government, government is just reflective of community. Government was made of a bunch of people that was elected by the people in the community to do specific jobs or roles for them. The power we give government is what we give away as members of community.

Describing a meeting in which fellow co-chairs were expressing their frustration with the lack of clarity regarding their power this co-chair suggests that the power of the co-chairs lies in the community direction given to them. This co-chair encourages others to act on that basis and to not wait for government direction.

> Well, again, the level of authority you have is what you need to do your job. You have to go out and take that if that's what you think you need to do. If you're going to wait for government to give you your level of authority then they'll give it to you and you might not like the results. So what you've got to do is be the caretakers of a vision. Listen to that.

As indicated in this quotation, empowerment was equated with having power and control to make decisions, which is similar to theoretical definitions of empowerment. For instance, Israel, Checkoway, Schulz, and Zimmerman (1994) describe empowerment as the capacity to understand and control various factors to improve one's situation. They identify various types of empowerment: individual or psychological, organizational, and community. Individual empowerment refers to an individual's ability to make decisions and positively control one's life. Psychological empowerment involves a sense of personal competence, a desire for, and a willingness to take action in the public domain. Psychological empowerment is further broken down into three dimensions: intrapersonal or the perceived personal capacity to influence, interactional or the knowledge and skills to master situations, and behavioral or the actions that result in influencing a situation. While organizational empowerment refers to an individual's increased control within an organization to affect decisions made in a community.

Other co-chairs felt being empowered occurred when they were "being listened to," and government "honoring what we have to say," and when they were given "permission to make one's own decisions" which also fell within these formal definitions of empowerment.

Rather than viewing empowerment as all or nothing, one co-chair acknowledged that the process was full of contradictions surrounding the issue of empowerment. These contradictions were justified because of the newness of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

venture and the very negative consequences if something were to go wrong. When asked if it was a process of empowerment or one of control the co-chair said,

> I think it could be both. But, it's up to the players. If you want the opportunity for emancipation it is there. All you have to do is take it. All the board has to do is take it. I mean, take it nicely or take it wisely and with some courtesy and tact. But it's there. And if a board wants to be an instrument of control, be controlled, that option's there too, because there's still people willing to control them. They can be both at the same time, some of the government people can hang on and let go at the same time depending on who they're hanging on to or who they're letting go of. Going back to the original motivation for the redesign, I think there was a duality in there, too. Even then, there were some people who saw it as true empowerment and others who saw it as just remote control. And, if this is possible, it may be that even within one person or several persons, you can think both ways at the same time. Because you could say, "Yeah empowerment is the objective, but if it doesn't work, we could have ourselves a real mess. Not just egg on our face, but we could have damaged children. So we need to have the opportunity of control in case the empowerment doesn't work." There's some soundness to that reasoning. As long as it's honest. Some people had that honesty and there may have been some dishonesty there.

One co-chair felt that the process was supposed to be about empowerment of the Authorities and communities but the co-chair was suspicious of the government's ability and desire to follow through. This distrust was evident in statements such as, "The history of government relations with aboriginal people is pathetic so there is an inherent distrust to their so-called fiduciary areas of responsibility."

Given these definitions it would appear that based on their own observations, the co-chairs have achieved intrapersonal empowerment, that is that they had come to believe that they had the personal capacity to influence social and political systems. This is a critical element in citizen involvement in policy development. Through the process of citizen participation these co-chairs have also acquired some knowledge and skills about social and political systems. Each was willing, to varying degrees, to take actions towards influencing the social and political systems. Unfortunately, their impact was limited by a number of institutional barriers, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. So the level of interactional and behavioral empowerment achieved by these co-chairs was limited.

Discussion of the last metaphor, citizen participation as a means of empowerment, demonstrated that the co-chairs had some hesitation in using this

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

terminology, acknowledging that they were not really sure what the term meant. All the co-chairs expressed the desire for community empowerment but they acknowledged that the path to its actualization was fraught with considerable difficulties.

DISCUSSION

The seven metaphors outlined in this chapter describe citizen participation as a spiritual experience, as the emperor's new clothes, as a means to good business practices, as a battle, as strategic co-opting, as a change in worldview, and as a means to empowerment. These metaphors are not entirely in agreement with each other nor do they represent and exhaust the possibilities of how citizen participation is constructed. They do, however, provide some insight into how participants have constructed citizen participation in a state-initiated process.

Figure 3, The Metaphors of Citizen Participation, provides a summary of the major characteristics of these metaphors. The essential feature of each metaphor, the reported level of trust between the participant and the state, the focus of change, the citizen's role, the bureaucracy's role, the state's role, and the nature of the participation are summarized. The intend of the matrix format of Figure 3 is to provide a summary of the metaphors, it is not intended to suggest that each metaphor is a discrete category, or imply that a particular metaphor describes the experience of citizen participation for the co-chairs in its entirety. Summarizing this information in this manner provides an opportunity to make a number of observations. These observations are outlined in this section after each metaphor is reviewed. As well, I consider the relationship to these metaphors to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation.

Citizen participation as a spiritual experience has relationship formation as its central feature. The key values underlying this metaphor are faith and vision. The goal of the state-initiated process is to create a more responsive state (i.e., Minister, bureaucracy) through citizens' input. Citizens view themselves as followers and the Minister is viewed as the activist, while bureaucracy's role is to establish systems that reflect the new relationship between citizens and the state and the input of citizens. Citizen participation is viewed as an open and trusting process that will result in the creation of a new culture within government (i.e., the Minister and the bureaucracy)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that values the input of citizens' views; therefore, the perceived level of impact of the participating citizens is by definition very high.

In sharp contrast, citizen participation as the emperor's new clothes represents a different view. The central feature is overall skepticism of the entire process. This skepticism has been the result of a deep distrust that has developed over a number of experiences that have proven to be futile and dishonest from the citizen's perspective. Citizens aligning with this view of citizen participation see the maintenance of the status quo as the goal of the participatory process under the façade of being responsive. From this perspective, citizens view their role as bearing witness to this flawed process so that they become the whistle-blowers, while the bureaucracy maintains the status quo and the Minister continues to provide the rhetoric of inclusive policy development. Because citizen participation is viewed as a guarded and closed process very little if any perceived impact is anticipated.

Citizen participation as a means to good business practices is characterized as having managerialism as its central feature, with values of efficiency and effectiveness predominating. The goal of citizen participation is to dismantle the current operating values, systems, and powers of the government bureaucracy. Citizens, who are viewed as the new managers of government process, view the Minister as their ally in attempting to make the bureaucracy become more business-like in its functioning. For this reason the process of citizen participation is also viewed in a business-like manner with a systematic delegation of power to citizens to change the operations of the bureaucracy.

Citizen participation as a battle is characterized as focusing on confrontation with the union and the government bureaucracy. The goal is to dismantle both. The citizen's role is as rescuer while the minister's role is viewed as victim to an oppressive bureaucracy. The participation is thought of as guarded and confrontational.

Citizen participation as strategic co-opting is based on the central feature of co-opting, an old theme in citizen participation. The difference in this metaphor to other acknowledgements of co-opting is that in this case the co-opting is viewed as a two-way process. Citizens acknowledge that they are being co-opted but they also view citizen participation as a process for co-opting the bureaucracy as well. For this reason they view citizen participation as a process for maintaining the status quo with the exception of a few issues that the citizens are successful in changing despite the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

bureaucracy's efforts to thwart their attempts. While the bureaucracy is viewed as the incompetent adversary, citizens are the opportunists working to assist their allies the Minister. Citizens who view participation as strategic co-opting believe that although there may be the structures for citizen input, it will have little positive impact with the exception of a few time-limited opportunities. At these times, the impact is dependent upon the skills of those involved in maneuvering the political environment that surrounds policy development.

A change in the worldview as the metaphor for citizen participation is based on the central feature that there is a crisis, both economic and political, that requires immediate resolution. This metaphor reflects the value of non-incremental change with the goal of the citizen input being to change the roles and responsibilities of the state, the bureaucracy, and citizens. Once again the bureaucracy is viewed, as needing to change dramatically, to become smaller and more targeted in its provision of government services. Citizens, who are likened to wasteful and demanding prodigal sons and daughters are also required to change their expectations of a historically benevolent government, who now has the vision of a better future based on a new ideology. Citizen participation is thought of as an ideological shift that requires complete buy-in of all parties to be successful in addressing the imminent crisis. Once this shift has occurred the belief is that citizen participation will have a positive impact.

The final metaphor, citizen participation as empowerment has empowerment of an active and effective citizenry as its central feature. The value of a lessening of the power differentials between citizens, the bureaucracy, and the state underpins this metaphor with the goal being a redistribution of this power. The bureaucracy is viewed as having excess power, which needs to be taken back, by the government and its citizens. The impact of citizen participation is viewed as being in the mid-range, that is if citizen are willing to continue to assume their rightful power in directing policies their impact will be positive, but if they falter then the bureaucracy will assume the power again.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 3. The Metaphors of Citizen Participation

Metaphor (Feature) *Key Values*	**Goal**	**Level of Impact**	**Citizen's Role**	**ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY**	**Minister's Role**	**Type of Participation**
Spiritual (Relationship Formation) *Faith and vision*	Create a more responsive state	Very high	Follower	To establish systems that reflect the new relationship	Activist	Open, trusting, formation of a new culture
Emperor's New Clothes (Skepticism) *Distrust*	Maintenance of the status quo	Very low	Witness	To maintain the status quo	Manipulator	Closed, guarded
Good Business (Managerialism) *Effectiveness through efficiency*	Dismantle the values, systems, & powers of government bureaucracy	Very high	Manager	To become business-like	Ally	Delegated power, systematic, operations-focused, administrative
Battle (Dismantling) *Confrontation and individualism*	Confront union and bureaucracy	Very high	Rescuer	To become less powerful and smaller	Victim	Guarded, confrontational
Strategic Co-opting (Co-opting) *Opportunities achieved though negotiation*	Maintenance of the status quo with the exception of a few issues	Low	Opportunist	To be the incompetent adversary	Ally	Political negotiation, time-limited involvement
Change in Worldview (Crisis Resolution) *Non-incremental change*	Redefine the roles and responsibilities of the state, bureaucracy, & citizens	High	Repentant prodigal son/daughter	To become smaller and more targeted	Benevolent and visionary leader	Ideological shift and buy-in, time-limited
Empowerment (Empowerment) *Lessening the power differential*	Redistribution of power between the state, bureaucracy, & citizens	Medium	The liberated and the liberator	To give over power to citizens and ministers	The liberator and the liberated	Articulation of voice; a sharing of power

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

A number of observations can be made based on the results of Figure 3. First, the most obvious observation is the emphasis on the need for the bureaucracy to dramatically change. This change collectively involves becoming smaller and more targeted in its delivery of services, handing over power to citizens and ministers, developing systems that facilitate a better working relationship between the state and its citizens, and becoming more business-like in their values, structures, and services. Clearly the bureaucracy is viewed as a major problem that citizen involvement will help address.

The second observation is the perceived alliance between the state (i.e., Minister) and its citizens. The citizen's roles involve being the participant-follower, the participant-witness, the participant-manager, the participant-opportunist, the participant-repenter, participant-rescuer and the participant-liberator and-liberated. In the same manner the role of the state varies across the seven metaphors. The state was characterized as either being the state-activist, the state-manipulator, the state-ally, the state-victim, the state-leader, and the state-liberator and-liberated. The relationship between the bureaucracy and the ministers is being replaced by this new alliance led by the minister.

Third, the interviews with five co-chairs revealed seven metaphors. This observation reflects the fact that each of the co-chairs themselves had multiple constructions of citizen participation. Depending on their recent or historical experiences in the participatory process and, as we will see in the next chapter, depending on who they are attempting to participate with, on what issue, their metaphor for citizen participation changes or is modified. Related to this observation is also the notion that not all participants arrive at the participatory process with the same beliefs and experiences, which ultimately effects their actions and awareness of other agendas, motivations, and ideologies.

Finally, although models of participation, most notably Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, grade the type of participation based on the power redistribution, the metaphors identified here seem to suggest that participants have a more instrumental view of citizen participation (e.g., citizen participation results in more economical, effective, and efficient services).

Figure 4, Participant Construction of Citizen Participation as Compared to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, reflects how these metaphors correspond to Arnstein's model. This expanded model provides a framework of citizen

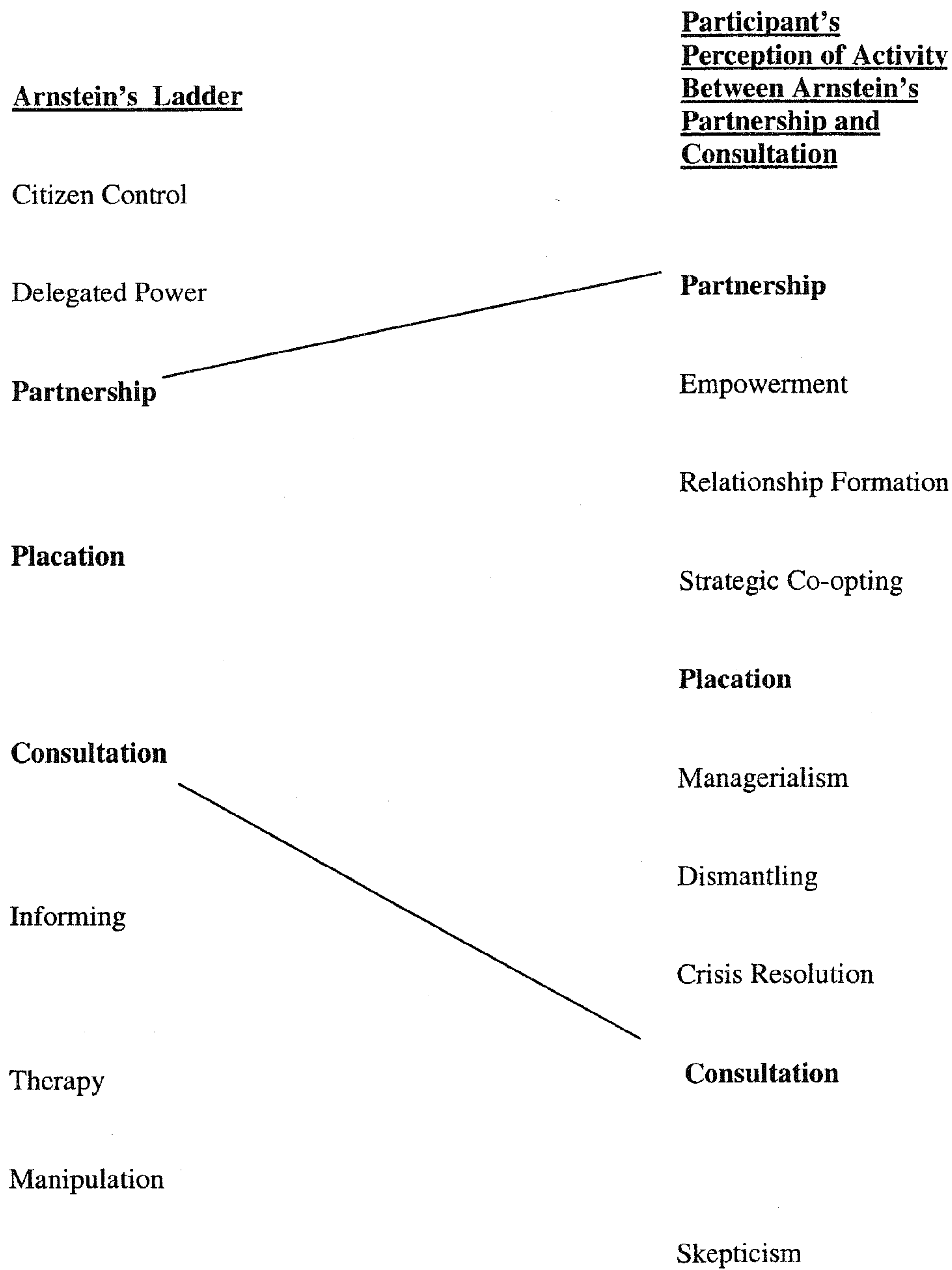
Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

participation from the viewpoint of the citizen-participant. It identifies a number of activities (i.e., crisis resolution, dismantling, and managerialism) that appear on the surface to be based in the values of partnership and empowerment but upon closer examination appear to be closer to unpaid administrative tasks directed by the state in fulfillment of the New Right agenda. This agenda involves less government, more cost effective and efficient government services in the form of the affordable welfare state, and redefinition of the expectations of citizens and the role of government. This expanded model also expresses the political nature of policy formation as articulated by Stone (1988). Her model envisions policy analysis as more than a linear and rational process. She contends that the values of influence, loyalty, cooperation, information, power, and passion are all critical in understanding how the process evolves. The metaphors of strategic co-opting, empowerment, relationship formation, spiritual experience, and skepticism all reflect these importance of these values in policy analysis.

In summary, seven metaphors of citizen participation have been summarized in this section to highlight a number of observations regarding its construction and contested nature from the perspective of the participants. Citizen participation is viewed as constituting a number of agendas, values, and role descriptions for the identified parties. As well, it appears that from the perspective of the participant, citizen participatory processes are not emancipatory but rather utilitarian in nature. Finally, citizen participation, as it is constituted in these seven metaphors, seems to function as a tool of the New Right agenda, addressing its concerns, as identified in Chapter 3. In the next chapter, the strategies utilized by the state to dominate the citizen participation discourse to ensure it reflects the New Right ideology are discussed.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 4. Participant Construction of Citizen Participation as Compared to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation



Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER 5.
CONSTRUCTING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

> The problem with participation is that the agenda is almost invariably someone else's. People are invited or coerced to be involved. The idea or project is derived from outside their own experiences. Usually it is the more powerful inviting the less powerful to participate and get involved. (Ward, 2000, p. 47)

The context that gave rise to citizen participation and the co-chairs' perceptions of the process of citizen participation has been discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. Much of the New Right's ideological attack on the welfare state is reflected in these metaphors. Downsizing the role of government, changing the role and expectations of citizens, dismantling the bureaucracy and unions of the civil service, and introducing managerialism into the operation of Children's Services were all values underlying the metaphors. The co-chairs believed that these measures were necessary, and that government-run services generally, and Children's Services specifically, were in a state of crisis, and significant non-incremental measures were necessary. They also believed that the solutions would be found in a partnership between the community and the government. But over the course of the formation of the Children's Authorities a shift occurred in the construction of the meaning of citizen participation. This shift was from the partnership or a co-creation framework that was proposed in the rhetoric that initially surrounded the formation of the Authorities, to an advisory and utilitarian government-led framework.

Some of the reasons for this adoption of the New Right ideology in their construction of citizen participation by the co-chairs and the eventual shift away from a co-creation to a utilitarian framework are as simple as the personalities, astuteness, and ideological perspectives of the players. Other reasons are more complex and involve an examination of the rhetorical and structural changes that were implemented. As others have argued (Kachur, 1999; Machuk, 1989) a simplistic explanation based on a grand conspiracy theory is untenable.

Three factors were identified as contributing to the shift in the perception of what the citizen participation process constituted. These factors were: the rhetorical positioning and strategies used by the government to influence the identification of issues and possible strategies for solutions, the institutional/structural strategies

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

implemented by the government which resulted in a limiting of the power of the Children's Authorities, and the ideological and motivational factors of the players.

The strategies used to "channel the desires and manage the meaning of language" (Kachur, 1999, p. 68) are described. Kachur (1999) provides an instructive analysis of the process used by the Getty and Klein governments, in their "stakeholder" consultation processes, that conveyed the appearance of public and permanent consent to the existing social order and the New Right agenda. He identifies seven rhetorical strategies: classification, definition, value judgment, factual judgment, vernacular tropes, vernacular coding, and orchestration. Some of these as well other rhetorical strategies were used in the formation of the Steering Committees and later the Authorities.

As well, the institutional/structural practices used by the department in their relationship with the Steering Committees and the Children's Authorities, which resulted in a limiting of the input of the Authorities, are outlined. In addition to rhetorical strategies and institutional/structural practices a third factor, the ideological and motivational factors of the players played an important role in the construction of citizen participation. Although a large cast of players was associated with the participatory process in its initial three years, and each player contributed either negatively or positively to the process, the specific role of the co-chairs is considered here. Each co-chair was, without question, motivated to be involved in the process of redesigning Children's Services with community input, but their vision for themselves and the process differed considerably, as did their ideological orientation and experience.

An overall discussion of the findings in this study is provided in Chapter 6. The final chapter, The Ethics of Citizen Participation, provides ethical guidelines, based on the results of this study and other literature, for the operationalization of participatory processes in social policy formation. Recommendations for further research are also included in the last chapter.

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING CONTROL

According to Stone (1988) controlling the meaning of the discourse, culture, and symbols is the nature of the political struggle surrounding social policy, a struggle that focuses on persuading others of the legitimacy of a particular position. During

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the formation of the Children's Authorities this political struggle was dominated by New Right ideology. This ideology defined the meaning of the redesign and the meaning of citizen participation in social policy development. Kachur (1999) identifies various rhetorical strategies, used during the government's consultative processes surrounding public education, which sought to maintain and give authorization to the social order. Some of these same strategies were also used to frame the meaning of citizen participation and the role of the citizen in the redesign of Children's Services. Specifically, the strategies that were used were classification, definitional strategies, value judgments, and simplified language.

Classification

The first of these strategies is classification which "allows the facilitators of the process to invest facts with political values or to smuggle in political values under the veil of objective and neutral statements" (Kachur, 1999, p. 68). After consulting with a reported 3,300 Albertans in 65 communities, the Commissioner of Services for Children submitted two documents in November, 1994: *Focus on Children* and *Finding a Better Way*. These documents became the basis for the planning of the redesign. In the introduction of *Finding a Better Way*, entitled "Organizing for Success," the New Right economic stage is set. In this document the necessity for a "reinvention of government" (p. 2) is justified. The process is framed as the only option available and is given validity because the private sector is also realizing the need for this transformation. The introduction notes that

> economic realities have drawn to a close the long history of growth in federal and provincial programs . . . the corporate sector, as well, is making dramatic readjustments in order to succeed, indeed to survive . . . in an era of declining resources, organizations in both the public and private sectors have had no choice but to re-examine their objectives and the ways in which they meet them . . . observers of the modern organizational experience have been calling for the *reinvention*, the transformation, the total re-engineering of systems, structures and work processes . . . services must be customer-focused . . . services must be of high quality . . . services must be decentralized . . . services must be based on net budgeting. (pp. 2-4)

The reader is led to believe that government programs have expanded over the years, although there is evidence to suggest the opposite is true, especially in Alberta (Lisac, 1995; Taft, 1997; Harrison and Kachur, 1999). As well, the message is that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the very "survival" of government services is in jeopardy because of the "economic realities" that exist, although this idea has also been challenged (McQuaig, 1993). The government argument is made that only through a dramatic change in expectations and operations can anything be salvaged.

Definitional Strategies

The introduction to *Finding a Better Way* also provides an example of definitional strategies used to control meaning. "Definitional strategies impart specific meanings to the classification schemes. Definitions are given ahead of time and – in the name of consensus – establish claims, which impart one particular point of view" (Kachur, 1999, p. 68). This passage limits the reader from asking other questions that might be asked regarding Children's Services. Such questions as: Why are there limited funds for services when significant government funds are expended in the corporate sector? What role should a government have in supporting families and children? What do we value as a society and how are our government services reflecting this? The definition of and the solution to the problem have been pre-established. The reader is told that the survival of government and the services it provides is in serious jeopardy and the ready solution is available, the reinvention of government. As well, the four criteria at the end of this quotation define successful service provision. By implication, Children's Services, which is part of the Department of Alberta Family and Social Services, is in need of "reinvention" and "transformation" because government services are not "customer-centered," "decentralized" "high quality," nor "based on actual budgets."

The role of the community participant in this redesign of Children's Services is also outlined in this passage. Participants are advised to emulate private business in their processes, accept reduced funding for public services, and appreciate that dramatic changes are necessary in a system that is not "modern" but stagnant. The citizen is also to expect less government services and intervention.

In the redesign of the Children's Services, the most contentious definitional issue was the definition of "community." The confusion surrounding the definition of community is not unique to this policy initiative but is common in policy development studies, as evidenced by Cochrane's (1986) comment, after locating 94 definitions, that "community" is a particularly elusive and value-laden concept" (p.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

51). The *Handbook I Laying the Foundation: A guide for planning children's services in Alberta* (Government of Alberta, 1995) defines community as follows:

> as either a group of people who have an identity of their own, or boundaries where membership brings certain benefits or a group of people who have a common interest and develop relationships based upon shared beliefs and social circumstances. (p. 6)

As well, in *Handbook I* "trained professionals who work with children" (p. 11) and "contracted service-providers, their networks and associations" (p. 11) were identified in a list of possible participants in the working groups who would report to the Steering Committee. To promote integration of the services across departments, communities were also advised to involve the Departments of Alberta Family and Social Services, the Children's Advocate, Aboriginal Affairs, Alberta Education, Alberta Health, Alberta Department of Justice, Alberta Community Development and the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

In practice, the definitions of "community" and "participant" were considerably more limited. During approximately the first two and one half years, Alberta and Family Social Services frontline staff did not participate in the planning for the redesign. This lack of participation was due to their professional opposition to the redesign, their fear that they would be dismissed for any critical comments due to the Department's "gag order," and the fact that staff's participation was considered by the department to be voluntary and therefore non-salaried work. Clearly, from the Department's perspective, "community" did not include their own staff. This situation changed when Dr. Oberg became the Minister of Alberta Family and Social Services, but by then considerable harm had been done to the planning process. Professional morale had dropped, valuable information was inaccessible, and the potential fruitful relationships among the community, the Children's Services staff, and the personnel of the Office of the Commissioner of Children's Services had become strained and alienated. Later the community, the department staff, and some of the co-chairs I interviewed would criticize the Authorities for not using enough professional advice during the initial planning period.

Non-profit and for-profit organizations providing services for children and families were also not included in the operational definition of community. Although *Handbook I* suggests these organizations would be valuable community participants, in practice their comments and views were considered to be self-motivated and not

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

focused on the "community's" interest. One director of a non-profit agency in Alberta said that the Regional Director continually reminded her that her views and those of the agency she represented were not the community's views. The agency she was employed with had a community-based board of directors and had been offering services in the community to children and families for over thirty-five years.

This rhetorical strategy of associating self-interest with professionalism gave significantly less credibility to professional opinion during the community consultations. These professionals were labeled as contributing to, if not being the major cause, of the current difficulties in Children's Services. This labeling had the effect of establishing a polarization, based on mutual feelings of mistrust and disregard, between the volunteers on the Steering Committees and the Authorities and the professionals in their community. Ultimately, it made these volunteers more dependent on the office of the Commissioner of Services for Children for resources and personnel in identifying issues, solutions, and best practices.

The families who used Alberta Family and Social Services were also less likely to be involved in the planning of redesign. The very nature of the department's services, (e.g., child welfare, prevention of family violence) limited service recipients' desire to be involved in the public consultations that were conducted. In some cases, families felt intimated to openly criticize the Department that was providing them with on-going services (e.g., Handicapped Children's Services).

The eligible recipient of Children's Services was also defined during the initial discussions regarding the proposed funding model. The funding model proposed a population-based funding scheme. Regions would be funded based on four criteria: the number of children, the number of children living in poverty, the number of single-parent families, and the number of Aboriginal families. Although regions were not required to reflect this scheme in their local resource allocations the government consultative process had identified the target groups.

The underlying message, proposed in the funding model generated by the office of the Commissioner of Services for Children, is that Children's Services should not be viewed as a universal right for children and families in Alberta. Some children and families are a higher priority for services, while others are less of a concern (e.g., handicapped children). There was also a fear that this targeting would eventually result in blaming and scapegoating these identified families for any increased costs to Children's Services in the future. The government document

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

entitled *Reshaping Child Welfare* (1993) contains passages that appear to fuel this fear. In the section entitled "Holding Parents Accountable", the following is written:

> In the past, child welfare has taken too much responsibility away from parents, extended families and communities for raising their children. Occasionally we fail to recognize that parents are responsible for caring for their children. Parents are responsible for resolving the problems that lead to their children needing protection. Many people have come to expect that government has the primary responsibility for resolving family problems. (p. 39)

In this section of the document the recommendations include: making families responsible for 16-17 year old children who do not live at home; amendments to the Child Welfare Act and policy to "encourage parents and extended family to be responsible guardians" (p.42); and, broadening the Criminal Code to "include police involvement where parents put the child's life at risk by abandoning or neglecting them" (p. 42). This section also includes other recommendations: supporting communities to develop self help groups for families experiencing family conflict, training social workers in family mediation skills, and preparing children to provide evidence in court. There appears to be a lack of proactive recommendations in this document that focus on providing ongoing supports and services to families living in poverty and who are at risk. For instance, these recommendations imply that families are solely responsible for neglect and delinquency issues. Implied in this document is that poor parenting skills and low motivation and resolve of the parents of these delinquent children is the root cause of these problems. The solution correspondingly, is equally simplistic. Parents should be held responsible for the improvement of their own abilities and the behavior of their children. This limited and simplistic interpretation of the problem and its solution does not reflect the reality that poverty is a major contributing factor to both neglect and delinquency issues (Callahan and Wharf, 1993) and that a number of complex and systemic issues will have to be addressed in considering possible solutions.

The rhetorical strategy used here is to provide simple explanations and solutions for complex issues. This strategy of oversimplification rather than systemic evaluation and change is consistent with the New Right approach. The volunteers involved in the Redesign of Children's Services easily assimilated the information conveyed in this approach. These well-meaning individuals were struggling to "do

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

something" to correct the social problems in their communities while establishing their own credibility. These preconceived and inexpensive solutions seem reasonable and doable.

A third group that was also unlikely to be involved in the planning process was the group of representatives from the partnering departments. Throughout the redesign and the formation of the Authorities the integration of the other departments was a constant struggle and disappointment for the Steering Committees. Integration of services across the departments was one of the four pillars or guiding values of the redesign. The co-chairs interviewed and other volunteers contacted, viewed integration as a critical factor in the redesign. Despite the co-chairs' request for a more assertive stand on this pillar, these partnering departments did not actively participate in the regional planning. At the provincial level, after two and one half years, these departments did identify a common goal in their business plan: identifying common issues.

A fourth group that was also unlikely to participate in the planning process was aboriginal people. Various reasons were given for this lack of participation including: the possible threat to self-government, the historical lack of trust between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, the limited timeframes in which the planning occurred, the large gap in communication, and the initial confusion as to whether treaty and reserve Aboriginal people were to be included. This confusion was increased when an eighteenth Steering Committee was added to the initial seventeen, after approximately two years of the Steering Committees' existence. This Steering Committee was for the Metis throughout Alberta.

So for various reasons although the process was to be based on community consultation, in practice "community" or "citizen-consultant" frequently meant non-aboriginal, non-social services professional, and non-recipient of Children's Services. Because these three groups were usually absent from the planning process policy development could be primarily based upon a business model and values rather than be balanced and even in some instances challenged by other perspectives.

Value Judgments

The rhetorical strategy for value judgment was also used during the establishment of the Steering Committees and the Authorities. Standards were established with "reference to a particular definition of what 'Albertans' value"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(Kachur, 1999, p. 69). Government-solicited and -edited public opinions were disseminated as representative sound bites on Albertans' values. For example, in the case of the Children's Services Redesign, the Commissioner of Children's Services conducted a province-wide consultation, speaking to over 3,000 people in 65 communities. Further consultations took place with the formation of the Steering Committees when it was reported that over 6,000 people were consulted. As Kachur (1999) notes, "this strategy is politically expedient because the massive number of consultations and polling possibilities create a situation where politicians can pick and choose values as they would the flavor of the month" (p. 69). These consultations resulted in the following conclusion being drawn by the Government of Alberta:

> The consensus which emerged out of our consultations indicated that Albertans share the government's commitment to redesign Alberta's services for children and families. (Government of Alberta, 1994, p. 11)

Without question, this conclusion could be made since those consulted were asked to come together to discuss the problems with Children's Services and how to change it to better serve children and families. With this agreement, the government could then choose which strategies, out of the numerous ones suggested by all of those consulted, best met their agenda. In effect, if you consult enough people, enough times, over a long enough period, you are going to find some groups who agree with you and others who agree with some of what you want to do.

Simplified Language

Using simplified language was another rhetorical strategy employed. Given the complexity of the issues and potential solutions, this rhetorical strategy would have been a welcome relief for some of the participants. This allowed "participants to make sense of the information they are asked to think about" (Kachur, 1999, p. 70) and "to 'justify' action for action's sake without forcing participants to confront the potential irrationality of government thought or action" (Kachur, 1999, p. 70). In the redesign of Children's Services the use of the metaphors and cliches, which have been outlined in the two previous chapters, allowed for complex issues to be brushed over. Participants were not given time to debate what could be modified in Children's Services or why the services had come to such a state of dysfunction; rather they were advised that Albertans wanted action to be taken quickly to resolve the situation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Through numerous rhetorical strategies the government was able to control the meaning of the discourse, culture, and symbols in the redesign of Children's Services. Participants were persuaded that Albertans wanted a transformation of Children's Services using business practices, that social policy must be guided by the economic realities of fiscal crisis, and that families in Alberta, especially single parent and Aboriginal families, had become irresponsible and unaccountable for their children.

INSTITUTIONAL/STRUCTURAL STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING CONTROL

Richard, Edelstein, Hallman, and Wandersman (1995) note that the capacity of the institution to respond either in an enabling or limiting fashion has a significant impact on the ability of citizens participating in a policy initiative to be empowered. This was also true in the redesign of Children's Services. There appears to be a number of institutional/structural practices implemented by the government that resulted in the limiting of the Children's Authorities' power in influencing policy development. These practices included: the appointment of the Commissioner of Services for Children, the restructuring of the Department, the reshuffling of the Cabinet and of ministerial appointments, the process for the appointing of the members of the Steering Committees and Boards, the structure of the Ministry Partnership Council and the Council of Co-chairs, the ongoing dual allegiances of employees, the establishment of the Shared Support Service Centres, the lack of adequate technological and infrastructure support, the constant struggles over governance versus operations delineations, and the challenge to sustain momentum despite delays.

The Appointment of the Commissioner of Services for Children

The appointment of the Commissioner of Services for Children was the impetus and the vehicle for the creation of the citizen participatory process. The Commissioner of Services for Children, Ray Laznik, was appointed by the government in 1993 to consult with Albertans regarding the redesign of Children's Services in Alberta. After he submitted his scathing report on the state of Children's Services in Alberta, Michael Cardinal, Minister of Family and Social Services, announced a plan for a new approach to delivering Children's Services. This plan

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

involved the appointment of Regional Steering Committees to "co-ordinate a community planning process to develop a service plan for the region. Based on the Service Plan, a Regional Children's Service Authority would be established to administer the new system in the region" (Government of Alberta, 1995, p. 3).

In 1996, the Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children was staffed by fifteen individuals who were primarily "seconded from Education, Health, Justice, Aboriginal Affairs and Family Services" (Government of Alberta, 1994, p. 1). Those who were not seconded were either private contractors or temporary employees with the exception of the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner, their support staff, and one other individual. The Commissioner's office was viewed as a temporary unit, "independent of the departments of Health, Education, Justice and Family and Social Services" (Government of Alberta, 1994, p. 1). This independence was helpful since the Office had the flexibility to make the changes that were required in establishing this new way of doing business.

A drawback of this design lay in the seconded and consultative nature of the staff. The majority of the employees were not recruited because they were committed to a community-led process. These employees did not have either the experience or the training to be able to facilitate the process. I observed the workings and products of this office over the course of eight months and was struck by the discrepancy between the stated goals of the Office (e.g., "to transform the existing system so that it provides community-managed, integrated and more prevention-focused services" (Government of Alberta, 1994, p. 4)) and the activities and documents produced by a number of these employees.

For example, in 1997, Steering Committee co-chairs from three regions and their community facilitators, who were also employees of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's although regionally located, met with three staff from the Commissioner central office to discuss the proposed governance model and the business planning process. One of the presenters from the central office described the business planning document as "what is already in government, we're just looking for suggested changes." The community co-chairs sat for most of the morning listening politely to the presenters describing these documents. When they finally did react, it was with a fair amount of passion regarding how these documents reflected a "top-down" hierarchical approach that was inconsistent with community-based planning and consultation. Some of the co-chairs spoke about the social capital that was still

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

missing in the process as well as, the need to try to develop and use a language in all the documentation that reflected community partnership.

This constant friction between two very distinct cultures, the community and the bureaucracy, was a major structural barrier in achieving community partnership and emancipation in the planning process. One co-chair I interviewed reflected upon the difference in these two cultures and suggested that the Steering Committees were in some ways "hybrids" of these two cultures attempting to bring a necessary "integrity" to the community consultation process.

> There are reasons why we can bring that integrity to the process and that is because we are hybrid. We are political appointments but we are not politicians. So we aren't accountable to a party whip. We can be a fairly independent voice. Nor are we accountable to the bureaucracy. Yet we have to get funding and resources. And we have to have a relationship with that bureaucracy. We are accountable to our community, but yet we have to bring some of the government mandate to the committee, we are bound by an Act.

The challenge for the Steering Committees was two-fold: to continue to act as hybrids and to be the protectors of the integrity of the process.

Skelcher (1996) observed the difficulty of dual allegiance and responsibilities in his study of the public service agencies in the UK. Public service workers are expected, in the new climate of consumer involvement to be paradoxically both welcoming and controlling of the public. The latter is inherent in the tradition of bureaucratic paternalism and the protection of public funds which they would be well versed while the former reflects the push for more consumer involvement, a new and somewhat foreign concept to most public service workers. As a result they "may be poorly equipped to undertake the newer of these roles let alone resolve the inherent contradiction" (p. 67).

The Restructuring of the Department and Cabinet

During the establishment of the Steering Committees and the Children's Authorities, 1994 -1999, the Department of Family and Social Services was restructured twice and the Cabinet was reshuffled three times with a corresponding change in the minister responsible for the Children's Initiative. The consequences of these changes revolve around the issues of commitment and communication. Rutman

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(1998) points out in her analysis of a government-community partnership developed to create the adult guardianship legislation in British Columbia, that when the champions "quit the scene" the sense of commitment and passion is lost. She notes,

> It seems as though the work of key individuals as champions of the legislation is essential to successful implementation, particularly when political commitment to the content of the package and to 'equal partnership' with community may be on the wane. (p. 106)

For all those involved in the Children's Initiative in Alberta these changes meant further delays in an already protracted process, as well as, a sense of frustration by those involved in knowing that yet again a new relationship would have to be developed and re-education would have to occur. One co-chair voiced frustration with the department's restructuring while attempting to have a policy adopted at the provincial level. The co-chair explained,

> You know, I really would have liked another six months to have landed the work properly and sold it to the right people; to land the policy and get the right hooks on it with the right people. My need for more time was due to the fact that we were going through the second restructuring process in six months. So I kept losing the people I needed. They kept getting restructured and then I'd get the hooks on and then they'd get restructured again.

Department restructuring in 1998 also resulted in the Department taking responsibility for social policy and strategy, standards, monitoring and evaluation, community input and research, finance, information technology, and support and income services. Although it is appropriate that the government monitor a number of these functions, this restructuring meant that community input, in these areas, was no longer based on a partnership model but rather community input would be at the discretion of the Department. This development gives the appearance that very little has actually changed in how policy related to Children's Services is developed in Alberta. The direct involvement of the community or of Children's Services' recipients is limited to local service provision issues.

The redesign has meant that the Children's Authorities now represent a large group of dedicated volunteers who facilitate and advise on regional planning and service delivery. Salaried bureaucrats previously did this work. The advice of these Authorities occurs within the policy and standards parameters established by the Department.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Appointing of the Members of the Steering Committees and Boards

The appointments of Steering Committee and Authorities also contributed to hampering the development of a true partnership between the government and the community and heightened the potential for these committees to be used as a mechanism for social control. The Minister approved all committee appointments after a community selection process occurred. This selection was based on self-nominations and followed by interviews conducted by the two co-chairs in each region and some community representatives. The Office of the Commissioner of Children's Services Regional Directors approached and encouraged each of the co-chairs to apply for the co-chair position prior to the nomination process. Community members at large did not have an opportunity to vote or select committee representatives.

Given the over-representation of aboriginals and females in receipt of Children Services, the members of the selection process attempted to be sensitive to ensuring they had adequate representation of aboriginal, female and consumer members at the co-chair and member level. This was achieved throughout the Steering Committees and the Authorities with the exception of the consumer voice being represented. Unfortunately, given the adversarial nature of the protection-based practices of Child Welfare Services it was difficult to attract many direct consumers of this service to the Steering Committee and the working committees. Although I should note that each of the co-chairs, I interviewed, did have prior experience with Children's Services either in the position as a volunteer in a publicly-funded service or as direct or indirect recipient of the service.

Dual Allegiances of the Children's Authority Employees

Another major structural barrier to community emancipation was the fact that the employees of the Children's Authority had a dual allegiance. They were employees of and accountable to both the Authorities and the government. Although all Children's Services were to be privatized and the Authorities were not going to offer services, the government reversed its decision after the succession rights rulings were upheld in two court decisions.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

All five co-chairs interviewed, identified the hiring of the Chief Executive Officer of each Authority as a significant attempt on the government's behalf to regain control of the community consultation process. The Minister of Social Services required all but one of the eighteen Authorities to submit their short list of potential candidates for the position before making their final selection. As one co-chair noted,

> the Minister wanted the right to appoint the CEO, right? We didn't want to do that. Well, not just we didn't want to. To me, if you're going to do that, you don't need a Board. That's the one thing the Board needs to do, right? So then it was the case of, "Well, can you give us the short list and we'll approve the short list?" And I pointed out that if you do that, it's the same thing as final approval because if we give you two names and you say I don't like that one, then really you're making the decision for us, right?

The one Authority that did not have to submit to this procedure had a management agreement already in place that had the Minister approve a process for the selection of the CEO but not the selection of the individual. The other Authorities were not allowed to use this procedure and had to submit their short list to the Minister for approval.

Structure of the Ministry Partnership Council and the Council of Co-chairs

The control and management of the CEOs was taken a bit further by the department with the establishment of monthly meetings of the regional CEOs, the Minister, the Deputy Minister, and the Assistant Deputy Ministers. One co-chair describes the frustration with this process. These meetings were designed to give the participants the impression that a consensus model of decision making would be used but, according to this co-chair, the discussion was used as the cloak to cover what in the past would have been a bureaucratic directive.

> Our CEO was extremely frustrated with the Ministry Partnership Council, which is a gathering bringing together of all the Assistant Deputies, Deputies, the Minister was there, Oberg, to meet with CEOs and discuss policy. Operational decisions. Sixty people in the room. Consensus statements were never agreed on. There was never a conclusion from the CEOs, from the boards, to the decisions that the Ministry Partnership Council was directing. A few days after the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> meeting, the directive would come out that such and such was there, the agreement was this and this was going to be the action. And that was never the decision. So, what was happening is that we have a bureaucratic process that, instead of saying, "It's mandated. You'll damn well do it," you had instead a statement like "The discussion was such and we're going to proceed this way," and that wasn't the case. I was extremely frustrated.

Approximately six months prior to making the above-noted statement, this same co-chair was quite excited about the being involved with this committee. The co-chair, at that time expressed excitement with the opportunity to meet with the Minister and his department. The co-chair said "I was at a Ministry Partnership Council meeting. Fascinating! Find it hard to say no. Fascinating to be part of this, CEO, government ministers, and deputy ministers and so on and so on." This co-chair's two statements, summarizing the early fascination and the later frustration with the Ministry Partnership Council is illustrative of something identified earlier: Saul's (1990) criticism of referenda and direct democracy. He contents that these processes keep citizens excited and distracted by the "fireworks of their direct involvement on the big questions and their direct relationship with big people" (p. 109) while the "complex, real questions are dealt with behind the scenes through efficient 'interest mediation' between different interest groups" (p. 109).

As well, the department had the CEOs report directly to them and would supervise, direct, and reprimand them without involving the Authorities. The following passage from an interview with one of the co-chairs describes this process. This co-chair describes some of the signs that indicated that the "closing of the window" or the end of community partnership with the government was close at hand.

> The bureaucrats, from Edmonton, started giving orders to the CEOs and they weren't going through us to give those orders. So, that was one of the signs. The second one was that the financial reporting mechanisms, Edmonton started getting more information than we were getting about our finances. They were demanding information regarding our finances that was basically reporting on our abilities, rather than vice versa. We had no control over that information, but that information would be brought together in a kind of a consolidation and then your CEO would be getting into trouble on various things. . . . You realized the wind had shifted.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"The wind had shifted" means the window of opportunity for the community partnership was closing. Further, the Council of Co-chairs, a committee of all the co-chairs for the eighteen regions, had significant difficulties in co-operating was to the point that according to one co-chair, it became completely dysfunctional and disbanded. Another co-chair attributed this development to "simply part of the ending of the Steering Committee phase; after regional Authorities were appointed, an assembly of co-chairs was created, which still is in operation". One co-chair describes the impact, of what appeared to them to be the disbanding of the Council of Regions, had on a small region versus a larger region.

> It's gone now and they won't get it back. It's gone for good as far as I am concerned. So that ball was fumbled and some people were glad it fumbled. Like (reference made to a large urban-based region) was glad that ball fumbled because it had a much stronger relationship, because it's so big, and serves so many children, it's to its advantage to deal one-on-one with the province. So it was quite happy to see them bungle that. Whereas rural co-chairs, such as myself, I need the strength of those numbers.

The Establishment of the Shared Support Service Centres

This co-chair describes the other mechanisms that were used to control the activities of these Authorities, notably the critical role the finance, human resources, and communication units played. These three services, with the re-structuring of the Department of Family and Social Services, were combined into what was referred to as the Shared Support Centres. These centres were designed to provide services to the Authorities. But, in effect they became mechanisms to control the efforts of the Authorities. The following examples from the co-chairs demonstrate the power of these Centres. Both co-chairs discussed their frustration with the Human Resources department, who despite a decision made by the community, was unwilling to carry the decision forward.

> Its wonderful to have the resource but the truth is we are being molded to fit into the old style. We'll tell you the kind of things you need to do but we're saying just wait a minute, we want to see it so we've asked for different analysis, different breakdown.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> They say, "If you do that, then every authority is going to do that, and that isn't the way we do it." Well, is it going to work for us? Is it going to work for kids and families? Okay. Finally we get some action. But you know then that's pink ticketed. It's an exception and if the Minister says, "What the hell's wrong here," pulls it all back, and they can do that, our CEO is out on his ass, probably I'll be out on my ass and it'll be back to the old style. How can you do a redesign?
>
> My community members were real advocates of generalist social workers and then, of course, when we went to do the hiring, the social workers weren't very keen on it because they see the specialist system as, you know, their way of increasing their knowledge base and also I think it gives them a sense of security of who they are and where they fit. When we tried to hire them, basically human resources told us we couldn't because human resources thought it was much better that they would stay as specialists.

In the first example, the decision was being made but the co-chair expressed fear that the decision would be "pink-ticketed" and the Minister might become displeased. One gets a sense that this co-chair will try to avoid these confrontations with this department in the future. The co-chair in the second example chose not to fight the decision of the Human Resources department because the co-chair did not agree with the community. When asked why the Human Resources Department had such a strong voice in the decision this co-chaired replied, "Because they're doing the hiring. They do the hiring on our behalf." The rigidity of the Shared Support Centres controlled the flexibility and initiatives of the community on behalf of the government and in some cases on behalf of the co-chairs.

The Lack of Technological and Infrastructure Support

Related to the issue of the Shared Support Centres is the issue of the lack of technological and infrastructure support given to the Authorities in their establishment. In the same year that the Children's Authorities were appointed across the province the government also introduced a new computerized accounting system for the Province. This system was fraught with problems. The consequence was that the Authorities were left having little if any faith in the financial statements that were being produced, while the government insisted that the Authorities' projections and expenditures were not aligned.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although the government promised transition funding to facilitate the movement of services from a government-run to a community-run operation there was less money available than was promised. Some of the Authorities were then unable to implement programs and ideas that the community had recommended during the previous three years of consultation. One co-chair described the situation as follows:

> We've been telling our community we're ready to go and now we have to go back and say, "It isn't going to go as fast." And they are going to say, "Right, what's new! You guys are no better than anyone else," and all the credibility that we have worked so hard to build and that we have rightfully deserved that they have also rightly earned is really tenuous at this point now.

One implication of this situation is that the Authorities looked incompetent to the community. It also re-affirmed for those members of the community who doubted the process that in fact nothing was going to change with the establishment of these governing Authorities. This lack of community support, leadership, and commitment is a critical factor in the efficacy of the Authorities.

If an Authority becomes isolated or alienated from its community it is easier for the government to justify disregarding their partnership with the Authorities and later the recommendations that come out of this partnership. One co-chair describes the consequence of the government leaving an Authority to "hold the ball" as follows:

> I don't think they'd go as far as firing them. But they have other ways of disciplining people other than firing them. I think they're also a lot more brutal than firing boards. Oh, they make a fool of you in your local community or drop the ball when you need them to hold it. You know? There are more political means than direct lop your head off. I'm always quite surprised when a Minister actually thinks they have to go that far as to fire a board. I mean, there's so many way more effective things that can keep the Minister out of hot water than firing boards.

As well, even with the reduced transition funds available, the Alberta Infrastructure, formerly know as Public Works, also hamstrung the Authorities.

> Now anybody who thinks about doing that realizes that you need facilities and those facilities have to be hard wired, they have to have hot pockets and they have to have terminals. Now we could have had community resource centres up and running in December actually. We can't even get our regional office ready for our CEO. We've haven't even had an agreed design for the office, despite the fact that we knew way back when what we wanted and how we wanted it and that was

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> submitted. Alberta Government, Public Works and the larger ministries should have been thinking about that.

All of the co-chairs mentioned their frustration with the significant delays attributed to Public Works. Different rationalizations were given by the co-chairs for the delays including Public Works not being consulted in sufficient time, Public Works not being run like a business, and overall inefficiencies in government-run departments. There is one reason that was not mentioned by these co-chairs, which seems to be consistent with the direction that the Steering Committees were being led: the government had planned, up until the final months of the project, to privatize all government services. Therefore, although Public Works was involved in the initial planning surrounding the formation of the Authorities, there was no need to plan for offices and service centres because these would be the responsibility of private organizations and not be an expense that the government had planned to incur. But from the communities' perspective the Authorities were left "holding the ball" and dropping it.

Governance Versus Operations Delineation

Another structural factor that resulted in controlling the effectiveness of the Authorities was the effort put into the delineation between governance and operational issues. This distinction became critical in limiting discussion at the board level and in the department's direction and supervision of the CEOs as the following two co-chairs note.

> We're back here, we're back not to a collaborative integrated community based process, we're back to the stove pipe. You know you pop out of your stove pipe what you want and we'll pop out, and if anything falls that's good fine. You know we see this you see this, how in the world can we run this together?

> Well the specific events were the continual labelling of this policy work as operational. Because I knew the children were in jeopardy if this didn't go through, I didn't really give a damn. So whenever this operational thing (came up) I could talk somebody's ear off about how it wasn't, so I think to avoid me talking about it any more they would stop.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The implication was that anything that was operational was the charter of the CEO at the regional level and the Department's at the provincial level.

Authorities were encouraged and received training in the Carver Model of Policy Governance. This model is based on the belief that the purpose of a governing body is to create policy and not deal with operational issues that should be left to the CEO to direct. The CEO, in turn, provides information regarding the state of operational issues to the governing body on a predetermined scheduled basis. Three of the five co-chairs felt that this distinction between governance and operational issues at the regional level was not only possible it was imperative. The following statement indicates that although one co-chair felt they were adhering to this distinction, the line between the two was a bit more arbitrary than this co-chair appears to appreciate. In fact, in this quote this co-chair is not only venturing into some of the operational aspects of the region, the co-chairs referred to here are actually operating as an elite group directing the regional operation, a concept which is inconsistent with community participation and governance.

> Oh, I really feel that it is not a fine line. It's a definite line and we adhere to that very well. The whole board does. We have chosen a CEO that we have all the confidence in the world in. We have our regular co-ordinating committee meetings, which are composed of the two Co-chairs and the CEO and probably, as time goes on, if we add more staff maybe some of those staff members will be present as well. And at the co-ordinating committee meetings, we basically set the pace for the whole regional authority and bring into focus any of the issues that are happening with the CEO and I think it works very well.

I asked one co-chair, who was in support of this distinction between governance and operational issues, if there were concerns about this distinction given the newness of this government-community partnership in policy development? The co-chair replied that it worked because the region had a CEO that was not a bureaucrat and never had been. This co-chair felt that other Authorities would have more difficulty because most of the other CEOs had experience or some prior association with government so they would be more inclined to return to old ways of doing business. The belief that one individual can be independently successful against a large system seemed to be a consistent theme with this co-chair and the region this co-chair represented. This orientation tends to demonstrate a lack of awareness and/or appreciation of organizational dynamics or the structural aspects of bureaucracies.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Challenge to Sustain Momentum

The final factor that seemed to have had a negative effect of the possibility of the Authorities being emancipated partners is the issue of sustaining momentum. This issue has three critical components to it. The first, as was previously noted is the issue of "champions" leaving the project. This had damaging effects on a partnership being formed. The second is the element of time. The duration of the formation of the Authorities took place over three years. The commitment of the community was difficult to sustain over this time given that there were no visible actions or products associated with all the community consultation. Community members, who were committed to making a change in their communities, did not want to spend a year discussing the values and principles under which community intervention would occur. Although the Minister did release funds for early intervention projects during this time this was in effect a distraction and dis-incentive to planning since the projects funded were not based on the community planning that was occurring concurrently.

The third element under the issue of sustaining momentum was the amount of written material these Steering Committees and later Authorities were required to assimilate as volunteers. One co-chair referred to this as the paper "blizzard" and noted that the idea is to overwhelm the receiver "so much that they won't see you make a huge move in another area." This co-chair felt that the department was "blizzarding" the Authorities.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CONTROL

The final group of factors that appeared to affect the development of the Steering Committees and later the Authorities was the individual ideological orientations, and the psychological and motivational factors of the participants, in this case the co-chairs. There was no question that each of the co-chairs was committed to community consultation and co-creation of policy with government and that each worked very long and hard hours to achieve this goal. It was also apparent that their individual ideological orientations their motivation for their involvement, and their experience and training all contributed to the impact of the Steering Committees.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Individual Ideological Orientation

The ideology of the New Right is broad enough to accommodate communitarian views as well as liberal viewpoints although these two ideologies would have contradictory values on a number of issues. Co-chairs of either orientation were focusing on how the redesign would address their particular values. Communitarians were having their need for community involvement and responsibility met while the economic liberals were aligning themselves with reduced bureaucracy and increased efficiency. The discourse of redesign through citizen participation spoke to each of them.

Co-chair's Motivation

The various psychological or motivational reasons behind the co-chairs' participation in the redesign of Children's Services also had an impact on the effectiveness of the Steering Committees and Authorities. Heunks (1990) notes that a number of psychological benefits may stimulate participation. He suggests that instrumental rationality, non-instrumental rationality, and semi-instrumental rationality may all play a role in determining why a person participates. When participants anticipate that the inputs will produce significant outputs, their continuation in the participatory process is referred to as instrumental rationality. The non-instrumental rationality or the psychological benefits of participation might include the solidarity benefits or personal martyrdom. Semi-instrumental rationality, which Heunks defines as extrinsic satisfaction and political ethics, replace personal gain and pleasure. One's duty to and concern for one's community become the driving force. Heunks describes this force as "a wish to contribute to the quality or the mere existence of a (new) political system . . . replacing the potential system by one with an alternative quality, irrespective of its chances to achieve that aim" (p. 158).

Although Heunks does not make any conclusions regarding the suitability of either of the rationales for participation, my own observation and experience suggests that the co-chairs who operate from a semi-instrumental position had a better chance of dealing with the challenges and maintaining their own momentum. Co-chairs who

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

operated from the instrumental rationality or the non-instrumental rationality became discouraged and defeated long before any progress had been achieved.

Co-chair's Experience

It became apparent, when interviewing the co-chairs that there was a significant variation between the co-chairs in their level of training and experience in a number of areas that they were required to understand and make decisions on in their capacity as the regional co-chairs. As well, it appeared that the involvement with the Steering Committees and Authorities was, for a few of the co-chairs, part of a long-term plan in their political affiliation and potential careers. All of these factors appeared to influence whether in fact a particular co-chair would recognize and/or contest a situation they felt was not contributing to the co-creation of policy. This observation is similar to that made by Fawcett (1995) in their examination of collaborative partnerships and Richard, Edelstein, Hallman, and Wandersman (1995) in their exploration of empowerment processes in cases of environmental hazards. Both of these studies note that individual and group factors can impede or facilitate the possibility of empowerment. Factors such as sufficient self esteem, intellectual resources to understand the technical aspects of the issues, and in the case of grassroots resistance, adequate monetary resources to be able to hire technical and legal expertise when necessary. Fawcett concludes that active recruitment of leaders who had the skills, knowledge, and critical consciousness about the causes of the problems, and the prerequisite values to facilitate change would be essential in any empowerment effort.

DISCUSSION

The rhetoric of the New Right framed the parameters and definition of the citizen participation process in the redesign of Alberta's Children's Services. The combination of economic liberalism and social conservatism constructed the problems and solutions in the policy development as well as the construct of participation. Some of the co-chairs interviewed acknowledged and provided examples of the shift in relationship between the state and the citizen-participant from the partnership or a co-creation framework that was proposed during the formation of the Authorities, to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

an advisory and functional government-led framework when the Authorities became operational.

In this chapter a number of rhetorical strategies used by the state to construct participation were identified. These included classification, definitional strategies, value judgments, and simplified language. There also appears to be a number of institutional/structural practices implemented by the government that resulted in the limiting of the power of the Children's Authorities in influencing policy development. These practices included: the appointment of the Commissioner of Services for Children, the restructuring of the Department, the reshuffling of the Cabinet and of ministerial appointments, the process for the appointing of the members of the Steering Committees and Boards, the structure of the Ministry Partnership Council and the Council of Co-chairs, the ongoing dual allegiances of employees, the establishment of the Shared Support Service Centres, the lack of adequate technological and infrastructure support, the constant struggles over governance versus operations delineation, and the challenge to sustain momentum despite delays. The final group of factors that appeared to affect the development of the Steering Committees and later the Authorities was the individual ideological orientations, and the psychological and motivational factors of the participants, and their experience and training.

The articulation of all of these factors is useful for a number of reasons including: understanding the challenges those involved in participatory processes face in changing large systems, identifying signs of ideological domination in a participatory process, identifying possible avenues for intervention and resistance to this domination, and understanding the power relationships that exist.

Challenges that exist in changing any system are well documented in the management literature (See for example, Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick and Kerr,1995; Heifetz, 1993; Jick, 1993; Robbins & Finley, 1997). All of these authors note the importance of buy-in and commitment by members of the organization if the change is going to be successful. Although imposed change in sometimes necessary, Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick and Kerr (1995) acknowledge that it requires constant monitoring and support because the system will return to its old ways at any opportunity. Given the analysis of the interviews with the co-chairs, it appears that although the co-chairs tried to monitor the progression of the participatory process and the possible devolution of power to them from the Department of Children's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Services, the task was too large for any one co-chair or region. The possible resistance to the dominant ideology in the redesign of Children's Services did not exist because not enough of the participants had the awareness, resources, and motivation to collectively work together. As well, the hegemonic nature of the relationship between the state and the market would make resistance difficult despite the best attempts of the citizens participating in the process.

In an earlier chapter in this study, a reference was made to the belief held by some of the co-chairs regarding the motivation behind the initiation of the consultation process. These co-chairs believed that it did not matter what the motivation had been because the process had begun and it had gained too much momentum to be stopped. Unfortunately, this rather hopeful sentiment is a little misguided because the values behind a change process will ultimately affect the outcome. Two organizations can go through the same process of change but for very different reasons and based on very different guiding values and principles and the results will be dramatically different. For instance, if the redesign of Children's Services was based on a feminist or socialist ideology, the issues and the possible solutions deemed appropriate would be in sharp contrast to those identified in the redesign which was based on a New Right ideology. Both changes could involve citizen participation but the values underpinning the change would ultimately define what constituted participation and citizen. The literature on citizen participation in Third World countries (See Cooke & Kothari, 2001) clearly documents the impact the philosophical stance of the intervening agent can have on the ultimate outcome.

The purpose of articulating the rhetorical and structural strategies used by the government and the bureaucracy to maintain control of the discourse is to facilitate a greater awareness for the co-chairs and other citizens involved in such a process. With this awareness there can be a greater chance of these strategies being challenged and increasing the dialogue and discussion.

When the participants and the state construct citizen participation, as an advisory and functional government-led task, as occurred in this study, the representative and transformational potential of the experience is lost. The task of participation becomes one of reducing costs and increasing legitimization of policy development while the representative and transformative aspects of participation are limited. Citizen participation becomes a means to an end rather than a valued means

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and end in and of itself (White, 1999). In the next chapter, Chapter 6, I will discuss the theoretical, methodological, and substantive implications of these findings.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER 6.
THE PROMISE, PERIL AND THE PARADOX OF PARTICIPATION

> Participation must be real not cosmetic (Pollitt, 1986, p.188).
>
> Meaningful change is in the micro-practices at the innumerable sites of power relations (Foucault, 1980b). Democracy cannot simply be found in some new form of social relations but in an ongoing task of struggle and decision as new forms of control evolve. (Deetz, 1999, p. 162)

Just as I was about to start writing this chapter, in the fall 2001, the Department of Children's Services announced more cuts in funding. One program director told me that the Children's Authority informed his agency that they would be losing $100,000 from their budget by double registered mail. There was no negotiation around this decision or discussion about how the children receiving this service would be accommodated in the future. This was probably a good business tactic consistent with the wisdom of contract law, which would advise a contractor to move swiftly to cut loses, formally register the end of the contract, and sever ties. It reminded me of the 1980s oil bust in Calgary when oil executives came to work in the morning only to be escorted out of the building by security guards after they were informed they were fired. There was no discussion, no sentimentality that could jeopardize the legal position of the company. With a $100,000 cut this agency actually lost $200,000 from its operational budget because a private donor was matching the Child Welfare funding. Without the Child Welfare funds there was nothing to match.

This incident is a good example of what citizen participation, as framed by the New Right, despite its promise, has become. Within this ideology, citizen participation has been re-constructed as an extension of administration of department policy. The dominant discourse values managerialism and the affordable welfare state. Citizen-participants, consciously or unconsciously, have become the conduits for the operationalization of these values.

This chapter includes a summary, implications, and the findings reported in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. The implications of these findings, including several paradoxes of citizen participation are considered.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The key findings of this study which provide the basis for a theoretical, methodological, and substantive discussion are summarized.

The Contextual Overview

Chapter 3, outlined the socio-economic discourse preceding and surrounding the government's move to state-initiated citizen participation in Alberta are discussed. The New Right agenda dominates this discourse: balancing the budget, creating an attractive environment for the private sector, streamlining government, and listening to the people. These goals appeal to economic liberals, neo-liberals, and social conservatives. The Alberta Government expressed commitments to the four political platforms of the affordable welfare state, viewing social services as a human resource problem, embracing the new public managerialism and deficit hysteria, and the recodification of the new "good" citizen.

The New Right discourse attacks the welfare state in unique ways from those conservative discourses that have preceded it. This attack is focused not only on the structural implementation of social supports but the very principles that underpin the welfare state. The nature of the state, the citizen, and the social are being reconstructed. Governments are to be involved less, citizens are to do more and ask less, and social rights have been rescripted as economic rights conducive to national and global capitalism.

The Metaphors of Citizen Participation

Chapter 4 identified seven metaphors. These describe what "citizen participation" has meant during the redesign of Children's Services in Alberta, from 1994 to 1999. These metaphors depict citizen participation as a spiritual experience, as the emperor's new clothes, as a means to good business practices, as engaging in a battle, as strategic co-opting, as a change in worldview, and as a means to empowerment.

Citizen participation as a spiritual experience places an emphasis on relationship formation, openness, faith, and vision. The goal of the state-initiated

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

process is to create a more responsive state (i.e., Minister, bureaucracy) through citizens' input with the citizens as followers in the Minister's lead.

Citizen participation as the emperor's new clothes reflects a skepticism, distrust, and futility towards a guarded and closed process that maintains the status quo. Citizens view their role as bearing witness to this flawed process so that they could become the whistle-blowers, while the bureaucracy maintains the status quo, and the Minister continues to provide the rhetoric of inclusive policy development.

Citizen participation as a means to good business practices focused on managerialism, efficiency, and effectiveness with a goal of dismantling the current operating values, systems, and powers of the government bureaucracy which include democratic processes, specialization, coordination and control. Citizens align themselves with the minister against the bureaucracy. Citizen participation is the systematic delegation of power to citizens to change the operations of the bureaucracy.

Citizen participation as engaging in battle has as its aim the dismantling of the government bureaucracy and unions. The participants are posed to confront these organizations and rescue the minister from their ineffectiveness and power.

Citizen participation as strategic co-opting represents the belief that not only are the citizens co-opted but the bureaucracy becomes co-opted to the citizens' agenda as well. The status quo is maintained with the exception of a few issues that the citizens with their ally, the Minister, are successful in changing despite the bureaucracy's efforts to thwart their attempts.

A change in the worldview as the metaphor for citizen participation is based on the central feature that there is a crisis, both economic and political, that requires immediate and non-incremental redefinition of the roles of the state, the bureaucracy, and citizens. This metaphor speaks to an ideological shift in defining the roles of each.

The final metaphor, citizen participation as empowerment has empowerment of an active and effective citizenry, lessening of the power differentials between citizens, the bureaucracy, and the state, and the redistribution of power as its central features. The bureaucracy is viewed as having excess power, which needs the government and its citizens to taken it back.

The first theme underlying these metaphors is that the bureaucracy has become a major problem that citizen involvement will help address. Through the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

implementation of citizen participation the bureaucracy should become smaller and more targeted in its delivery of services. Administrative power will be returned to the citizens and ministers and the bureaucracy will become more business-like in its values, structures, and services.

The second theme that arises from these metaphors is the perceived alliance between the state (i.e., Ministers) and its citizens. The relationship between the bureaucracy and the ministers is being replaced by a new alliance lead by the minister with citizens in an operational relationship. The citizen as participant-follower, the participant-witness, the participant-manager, the participant-opportunist, the participant-repenter, and the participant-liberator and-liberated, is reflected in the relationship with the state as the state-activist, the state-manipulator, the state-ally, the state-leader, and the state-liberator and-liberated.

The third theme, the contested nature of citizen participation, is evident in the metaphors of citizen participation. The alignment with one metaphor over another is dependent upon a number of individual factors. What is also apparent is the dominance of the New Right ideology in the perceptions and views of the co-chairs.

Finally, although models of participation, most notably Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, distinguish different types of participation based on the level of power redistribution or empowerment involved, the metaphors identified here seem to suggest that participants have developed a more instrumental view of citizen participation. Participating citizens view their role, and therefore participation, as a functional process that results in more economical, effective, and efficient services. Little mention is made regarding analysis and identification of issues because those involved have accepted the notion that addressing the size and unbusiness-like practices of the bureaucracy and the associated unions will enhance the delivery of Children's Services. Although it may be argued that the insensitivity and rigidity of bureaucratic systems may need modification one may question whether this modification is sufficient to enhance services for children in a more or less democratic way. The question as to whether social services should be thought of and delivered as if it were a business was not debated nor discussed. It is an assumption of citizen participation. The "citizen participant" becomes a "stockholder" in the business of social service. Their "clients" become "consumers."

A modified Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation provides a framework of participation from the viewpoint of the citizen-participant. A number of activities

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(i.e., crisis resolution and managerialism) appear to be based on the values of partnership and empowerment but upon closer examination they appear to be closer to unpaid administrative tasks directed by the state. The metaphors of strategic co-opting, empowerment, relationship formation, spiritual experience, and skepticism all reflect the political nature of policy analysis in which the values of influence, loyalty, cooperation, information, power, and passion dominate.

Constructing Citizen Participation

Chapter 5 discussed the manufacturing and construction of citizen participation and identified the rhetorical strategies, institutional and structural practices, individual characteristics of the co-chairs that impact on citizen participation. Specifically, government officials used classification, definitional strategies, value judgments, and simplified language as the rhetorical strategies to influence opinion and judgement.

The government implemented institutional/structural practices that resulted in limiting the Children's Authorities' power to influence policy development.. These practices included the appointment of the Commissioner of Services for Children, the restructuring of the Department, the reshuffling of the Cabinet and of ministerial appointments, the process for the appointing of the members of the Steering Committees and Boards, the structure of the Ministry Partnership Council and the Council of Co-chairs, the ongoing dual allegiances of employees, the establishment of the Shared Support Service Centres, the lack of adequate technological and infrastructure support, the constant struggles over governance versus operations delineation, and the challenge to sustain momentum despite delays.

The final group of factors that appeared to effect the development of the Steering Committees and later the Authorities are those related to the individual characteristics of the co-chairs. The personal factors were the participants' individual ideological orientations, the psychological and motivational factors, and their previous experience and training. These factors determined the understanding, actions and possible resistance exhibited by the co-chairs.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE

This section outlines the findings. Specifically, the results are contrasted with those reported in the literature. The construct of citizen and participation, aspects of resistance and the social construction of women, and a number of the paradoxes of citizen participation that are evident in this study but not described in previous literature will be outlined. I argue that the citizen participation process has empowered citizens but that this empowerment has severe limitations. I caution that those empowered may be in danger of mirroring the technocratic decision-making process that they hoped to replace, that those most affected by policies are still the least likely to be the decision-makers, and that the content of the decisions focuses on administrative implementation of department policy which may be counter to community needs and aspirations. There is little emphasis on critical reflection, questioning of the initiators, and analysis of systemic issues. Participation, as constructed by the New Right ideology, is an inexpensive and voluntary administrative mechanism of the government. Differences between individuals and groups are depolitized and homogenized. Community voice replaces citizen voice, while democratic representation takes a backseat to government-appointed representation. The "integrated citizen" is the cornerstone of this participatory process while women continue to be the consumers and inexpensive community-based providers of community supports. The social contract they had with the state is replaced with an economic contract. While the ethic of care is supported in the rhetoric of "it takes a village," the ethic of self-sufficiency is guiding cuts to government services.

The New Right's Construction of Citizen Participation

On the basis of the findings in this study, it appears that the social construction of citizen participation in the context of the New Right ideology frames citizen participation in a manner different from that which has been outlined in the research literature to date. In this section the theories of citizenship and participation are contrasted with the constructions of citizen participation in this study.

Brodie (1996) coined the term the "good citizen" to describe the relationship of the citizen to their government in the New Right era. She noted that the "good citizen" realizes that they are to be individually self-sufficient and to not ask for state

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

support. This study supports a variation of this concept of citizenship. Rather than being the independent "good citizen" the results support that notion of the "integrated citizen." "Integrated citizens" do not ask for need fulfillment from the state but they are not individualists. "Well-integrated citizens" are integral parts of the social fabric and functioning of their communities. They are community members who have the time and personal resources to assist themselves and others. This "integrated citizen" is participatory in a technocratic functional sense as the self-administering consumer.

This "integrated citizen" is part of an inclusive community collective who speak as one. Those who might argue that they have been excluded from realizing their full socio-economic rights of economic welfare and social security due to language, economic, sexual, and cultural barriers are disregarded as special interest groups and fringe to the community voice. In the redesign of Children's Services the Authorities are intentionally structured to reflect male and female, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and some racialized minority voices. Although this structure is advantageous, the differences reflected in these groups are then easily depolitized since their interests are presented by government–appointed representation. As well, differences are homogenized through consensus building and the drive towards a collective voice. Community voice replaces citizen voice, while democratic representation takes a backseat to government-appointed representation.

Citizenship is also not confined to individual community members, but is also extended to corporations. The "corporate-citizen" has become critical in the definition of citizenship in the New Right agenda. The basic principle of the New Right ideology is to reduce government involvement in the lives of its citizens and correspondingly reduce the amount of funding for such items as services for children and families. The "corporate citizen" facilitates the acquisition of funds necessary to meet the demands and also creates the necessary employment opportunities for citizens in the community. The government, in turn, provides a stable economic situation for the "corporate citizen" to have her needs met. These citizens, whether individual or corporate, join with elected officials in managing the efficient and effective delivery of services for the collective good of the community. This business model of citizen participation takes issue with the control and apparent ineffectiveness of bureaucracies and unions.

The construct of "participation" is also different than that discussed in the literature. As noted previously, almost every article on citizen participation makes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

reference to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation. In Chapter Four I presented a modification of Arnstein's model. The expansion of Arnstein's classification system resulted from a number of differences between how the co-chairs thought about citizen participation and the Arnstein model. These differences reflect the ideological context in which citizen participation was framed. For instance, none of the participants advocated for a reduction of state involvement in decision making. Based upon the data collected the participants felt that empowerment was not about being asked to develop and implement policy independently, as would be suggested in Arnstein's delegated power rung but rather the participants viewed the state as playing an important and necessary role.

The strategic co-opting seems to be related to, but also different in tone and direction from, Arnstein's "placation" rung. When the participants referred to strategic co-opting they did so from a position of power rather than weakness. They felt knowledgeable and strategic in their involvement with the government and believed that they had sufficient power to influence decision making on some issues. This stance is in fact consistent with the theory of the interactive state, that is, that influence and power are dynamic constructs which are fluid between the state and the citizenry. But the issues that the participants saw themselves conceding, in an effort to be strategic co-opting, may be significant when compared to what was actually gained. Further analysis of this strategy seems warranted.

The participants' view of citizen involvement as "managerialism" and a "battle" also appear different from Arnstein's "consultation" rung. Although participants were consulted in the redesign of Children's Services the discourse of participation and citizenship had already determined what the parameters were in the definition of the issues and probable solutions. The primarily question for participants became not what were the multiple strategies they could pursue to improve services but rather how were they going to perform most efficiently the task they had been given (i.e., to streamline the bureaucracy). Key questions such as why there was inadequate funding to address the needs of children and families, or why the government was wanting to reduce their role in providing services, or even why at this point the government had endorsed the participatory process, were not pursued. Participation was not conceived of as critical reflection, questioning of the initiators, or analysis of systemic issues it was doing what was asked. There was considerable

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

discussion about what was the best way to implement the changes but not about whether the changes suggested should have occurred in the first place.

Managerialism appears not to be similar to Arnstein's "delegated power" rung because in the managerialism construct, participants were merely following the wishes and plans of the state, although sometimes unknowingly. As well, "crisis resolution" involves more education, buy-in, and attention from the participants than does Arnstein's "informing" rung.

Similar to Arnstein's model, the expanded model implies a progression of activity, from consultation to partnership, with each rung requiring a greater release of responsibility by the state and a greater acceptance of responsibility and power by the participating citizens. As well, similar to Arnstein's model, this proposed model does not suggest that there is an equal distance between each rung or that progression through the ladder is determined by success at a prior activity. The rungs of citizen participation in this proposed model are not discrete but rather overlap with the other rungs, so much so, that as a participant it may be difficult to determine where strategic co-opting ends and relationship formation begins.

This expanded model informs our knowledge regarding the construction of citizen participation within the framework of the New Right. Although Arnstein's and Deshler and Sock's models both classify participation by the amount of control and power citizens are given, with the exception of the empowerment and spiritual metaphors, in this expanded model, participation is viewed as task-specific activity. The task in question is to create a more efficient system by reducing the size of the bureaucracy and the power of the unions. Therefore, participation as constructed by the New Right ideology becomes an inexpensive and voluntary administrative mechanism of the government.

As was previously noted, despite the reoccurring waves of popularity of citizen participation throughout the years it never seems to develop beyond its previous state. The tendency to compartmentalize citizen participation into time-limited functional tasks that exist at the whim of a dominant group, rather than as a value integral to every component of policy development may contribute to its limited evolution. What is lost in this construction of participation is the open discussion among the decision-makers, their opposition, and the general public-as would be expected in the definition of participation in a democracy. As well, the appreciation that policy development is more than a rational argument and involves the elements of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

loyality, passion, power, influence, and cooperation (Stone, 1988) is missing. Co-chairs' interpretation of the process of participation and decision-making is to present a rational and effective business case. In fact, the process is mirroring the bureaucratic technocratic decision-making process at the policy and service delivery levels that it was meant to replace. Technocratic decision-making with community sanction.

Consistent with the literature on democratic processes, participation is viewed as both a means and an end. The technique of citizen participation becomes the means for the New Right to have their policies more effectively implemented. Participant-citizens view it as a means to improve services and because they are learning the skills necessary to be more responsible for influencing policy development they value the process itself.

Confirmed in this study is Innes and Booher's (2000) classification of participation based on the model of the planning adopted (i.e., the technical/bureaucratic model, the political model, the social movement model, and the collaborative model) does shed some light on the construction of participation. The co-chairs strive for a type of participation that is based on the collaborative model of planning, in which all issues are open for discussion, all diverse and interdependent collaborators are equally informed and listened to, and consensus is reached after full understanding of all those involved. Unfortunately, in practice the participation is a hybrid between the technical/bureaucratic, political, and the collaborative models of planning. Decision-making at the local level is based on the data collected and collaborative input, while the provincial decision-making still operates within the political model.

Both elite and participatory democratic theorists would acknowledge some benefit in the New Right's construction of participation. Elite democratic theorists (Dahl, 1956; Kweit & Kweit, 1981; Sartori, 1973; Schumpeter, 1950), although not completely satisfied with citizen involvement in decision-making, would acknowledge that if this involvement is restricted to the implementation level it will probably not interfere with the efficiency of government. Participatory democracy theorists (Bachrach & Botwinick, 1992; Barber, 1984; Pateman, 1970, 1979) would support citizen involvement but would want to see a more substantive role for these citizens. There in lies the critical element of citizen participation as it is defined by the New Right ideology. It has the ability to satisfy to some degree all those who would

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

want to criticize it. Feminist, communitarian, socialist, populist ideologies each support citizen involvement, while the neo-liberal and corporatist support less government involvement and funding. So feminists, communitarians, and socialists can endorse a process in principle whose outcomes may in fact reinforce non-democratic practices.

In summary, in the context of the New Right citizen participation is not constructed as power-sharing but rather as administrative technology that increases efficiency. Decision-making by participants is limited to the local implementation of provincial decisions that have been economically driven. Participation has mirrored technocratic decision-making with the community present to validate and implement the decisions. There is little emphasis on critical reflection, questioning of the initiator's motives, and analysis of systemic issues. Participation, as constructed by the New Right ideology, is an inexpensive and voluntary administrative mechanism of the government. Differences between individuals and groups are depolitized and homogenized. Community voice and government-appointed representation replaces citizen voice and democratic representation. The "integrated citizen" is the cornerstone of this participatory process.

Resistance and Disillusionment

Resistance to this construction of citizen participation was initially vocal but faded over time. Some participants tried to resist the government's attempts to introduce this version of participatory strategies. In the redesign of Children's Services, the department's employees, community agencies, and Foster Home Parents Association attempted to coordinate some resistance. Their efforts were disorganized and labeled as being motivated by self-interest.

Since these initial attempts, service recipients and service providers have been reluctant to criticize the activities of the citizen-participants for a number of reasons. First and foremost, based on some of the conversations I've had with service recipients and providers, community members are empathic with the difficult position of these Authorities who are required to implement budget restrictions. Second, opposition has been discouraged from the onset of the formation of the Steering Committees, five years ago. The consequences, either real or imaginary are too severe for service recipients or agencies to risk. Third, the fact that there are eighteen

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Authorities across the province makes on-going organized opposition difficult. Fourth, citizen boards and Authorities have become part of the Alberta policy landscape existing in the areas of education, health, children's services, and services to persons with disabilities. Each of these bodies is slightly different in its formation (i.e., elected, appointed, or both), its scope, and its relationship to the corresponding minister. Being critical of citizen participation as it exists in the Authorities is opening the possibility of being critical of all these bodies, some of which, (i.e., Boards of Education) have proven to be valuable to the community. Finally, opposition has been difficult to orchestrate because of the appeal of the notion of community involvement. Those aligned with a social conservative, a communitarian, a feminist and/or a socialist ideology, as well as, all those who are dissatisfied with the ineffectiveness of government programs would support citizen participation in principle, as a means to greater democracy, empowerment, community development, and social capital.

Over time the dissidents became discouraged. Based on anecdotal information it appears that one of the possible outcomes of this discouragement is that these dissidents began aligning themselves with the department and the minister, further isolating the Boards and Authorities. For example, an executive director of a large provincial association told me, that there is no benefit in dealing with the Authorities and Boards because the ministers are making all the decisions. This executive director, deals directly with the department, specifically the deputy ministers and executive directors and is not interested in attempting to influence, educate, or plan with the Authorities and Boards.

So resistance to the acceptance of this definition of citizen and participation is limited. Potential resisters, for various reasons, are unable or unwilling to object and therefore the transfer from a participatory framework to an administrative framework is complete.

Women and Citizen Participation

The dominant discourse on citizen participation, as described in this study, has impacted the social construction of women, as shown in this next section. Given the paradoxical relationship women have had with the welfare state (Sapiro, 1990) the introduction of citizen participatory processes could also have complex implications

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for women. In this section the question regarding the impact of the New Right's definition of citizen-participant on the social construction of women will be considered.

A number of benefits to women have arisen out of the introduction of citizen participation in social policy planning. Citizen participation has facilitated the presence of women in the social policy community. Placing them in positions of leadership, such as co-chairs has increased the chances of their voices being heard. It has provided women the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge surrounding the workings of government and policy formation. The formal recognition of the importance of community development and social supports for families has been beneficial to women. These developments have positive implications for lessening the marginalization of women. They reflect an appreciation of the value of women and their families and hint at potential strategies for supporting them.

Unfortunately, many of the issues that concern women cannot be addressed adequately through the delivery of local services, despite the efficiency of these services. For instance, the Authorities ensure services are provided for children who are victims of abuse and neglect. Neglect is related to poverty (Callahan & Wharf, 1996). The solution to poverty requires economic and social policy changes at the federal and provincial level, which is well beyond the current service-focus of the Authorities.

Citizen participation has meant an attack on professional and unionized government services and a move towards privatization. Given that women dominate social services this devaluing of their profession and unions negatively impacts them. The move to privatized services has affected women who work in government services as well as women who use these services. Cochrane (1986), observing the changes towards privatization that occurred in Britain, notes that contractual funding was fraught with problems. He found that funding reflected the whim of the funder, there was an increase in fragmentation of the community, there was an increase in monitoring and inspections of services, and the contracts did not reflect community needs. Any one or combination of these problems will have negative impacts on women and their children. One of the perceived fears expressed by opponents of the redesign of Children's Services was that the move towards privatization would result in children with complex needs, who were once served by the government, not receiving adequate services. Since agencies' funding is contingent on their ability to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

meet performance goals there may be reluctance on the part of these agencies to serve children with complex needs. It then becomes a community responsibility to meet the needs of these children. Women are the "community" that provides the services.

The relationship of women to the state is paradoxical. The introduction of citizen participation in social policy planning has had a number of potential benefits for women. It has also meant that the importance of the construction of woman-as-employee has been devalued while the construct of woman-as-volunteer is being enhanced. A sufficient response to women's issues is also threatened. Consistent with Crofts and Beresford's (1992) observation that the citizen participatory processes often reflect the relationships found in society, the following section describes some of the paradoxes found in citizen participation.

THE PARADOXES OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

This section outlines a number of paradoxes of citizen participation that are evident in this study. The complexity faced in the implementation of citizen participation is captured in these apparent contradictions. The six paradoxes that are described here are decentralization means centralization, community sensitivity results in increased insensitivity, citizen participation hinders citizen voice, the more involved the citizen the less the citizen is involved, treating people equitably requires unequal treatment and some victories are losses. They are presented as a means to sensitize the citizen-participant to some of the potential traps that can occur in the implementation of participatory processes. Awareness of these paradoxes may facilitate the critical reflection that is needed in a participatory process.

Decentralization means Centralization

During the redesign of Children's Services the restructuring of the Department of Children's Services resulted in the creation of the provincial policy and research unit, as well as the development of provincial standards. Policy and research design were viewed as the responsibility of government while the introduction of minimum standards was viewed as necessary to ensure provincial consistency across the regions. Consequently, there was an increase in the use of monitoring and reporting strategies by the department.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Unfortunately, this principle of centralization runs counter to the idea of citizen participation at the regional level. While there is a need to have a centralized vision regarding the direction and scope of Children's Services, too much direction and control at the centre, without citizen input, reduces the likelihood that citizen input at the regional level will have sufficient impact in the direction and delivery of services. The regional Citizen's Authorities become, in this situation, the operational arm of the central department.

There is need for a system to be developed that allows for and encourages debate and discussion about the provincial direction and scope of Children's Services that would begin at the community-based level and involve service recipients and general community members. The results of this discussion would be then integrated into a provincial plan. Unfortunately the Authorities are too busy responding to provincial directives or service-provision issues in their own communities to have time to consider these bigger issues in a participatory way.

Community Sensitivity Results in Increased Insensitivity

Currently, with the introduction of the Authorities the provincial government has slashed regional budgets. This has had devastating consequences for the relationship between the Authorities and the communities they represent. Over the course of three years the Steering Committees, who later became the Authorities, worked with their communities to develop visions and plans for the delivery of services within their regions. Predictably, this increased community sensitivity resulted in an increased demand for services and identification of service gaps. Unfortunately, the reduction in regional funding has meant that the Authorities were in the position of not being able to implement these community plans. As well, the Authorities also have to inform their communities that services previously offered before the Authorities were struck are either being discontinued or being offered in such a limited fashion as to make them inadequate. Authorities, up to the Fall 2001, have had little or no discussions with their communities regarding where these cuts in services should occur and therefore have isolated themselves from their communities. This, in turn, has hampered the potential for a more open debate about the larger questions concerning the responsibility of the state to provide adequate supports to children.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Citizen Participation can Hinder Citizen Voice

As mentioned previously in this study, citizen participation has been identified as a strategy to silence oppositional discourse by co-opting resistance. But this is not the only reason citizen voice is hindered in a process that is meant to enhance it. The enhancement of social capital and collective action modeled by the citizen participatory process can actually destroy its development at another level in the community. The reason for this destruction is that the Authorities lose touch with their communities and become a second level of bureaucracy, while still being touted as representing the community. The more citizen-participants align themselves with the efficiency model of citizen participation, as demonstrated in this study the greater the danger of this occurring. Complicating the situation further is that communities can become disillusioned and begin reducing the amount of engagement they have with the Authorities. The latter has little choice but to become insular and closed.

The Rockyview Child and Family Services Authority in Calgary is taking some measures to try to ensure citizen input remains a vital component of their structure. They have begun a process of supporting the development of community councils who will have input into the Authorities' planning process. This is a very positive strategy and one that has the potential to facilitate greater community development.

The More Involved the Citizen the Less the Citizen is Involved

This paradox of involvement was evident in the redesign of Children's Services. In this case the "more-involved citizens" refers to those citizens with the most at stake, such as those who were recipients of Children's Services. These individuals were the least likely to be involved in the redesign process. Professionals and technical experts, who were also well informed and involved in the delivery of Children's Services, were discouraged from being involved.

The discourse of participation in the redesign of Children's Services implied that everyone will eventually participate in the redesign in some form or another, either in consultations or assisting at the community level in "raising a child". This notion is inconsistent with Rebick's (2000) citation of an Ekos' *Rethinking Government* 1998 survey that indicated that "42 percent of respondents agreed with

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the statement 'these days I'm so hard-pressed to take care of my own needs that I worry less about the needs of others.'" (p. 129). People generally are feeling they have less time and personal resources to become involved in supporting others in their community and/or being involved in community consultations. In Children's Services the majority of service recipients have incomes well below the poverty line and they also have had to deal with the negative stigma of being recipients of services. Furthermore, these service recipients by definition have serious personal issues for which they need assistance. Although the presence of problems is not a deterrent to being involved in participatory activities, an inability to feel that you can solve the problems yourself is correlated with a lack of participation. Given these findings and antidotal reports regarding participation during the redesign it seems appropriate to reject the assumption that anyone could or would participate. Rather, it appears that a participant was generally not a recipient of services or someone in need of services. The exception to this generalization was the families of disabled children, who did not have the same negative stigma as other service recipients, were well organized by their provincial advocacy organization, and who kept themselves, informed of the potential issues and solutions.

Although the Authorities attempted to engage service-recipients, their voices for the most part were absent resulting in negative implications for the redesign plans. Pal (1997) suggests that these non-service-recipient stakeholders operate from a post-materialist framework. That is, they place an emphasis on "freedom, self-expression, and improving the quality of their lives" (Pal, 1997, pp. 48-49). For these stakeholders, a major criterion in policy decision-making is fiscal feasibility (e.g., tax implications), since this is how they will be affected. The non-service-recipient perspective defines and frames the issues and generates the potential solutions. This structure has the potential to treat service-recipients' issues as individualistic rather than as collective problems with systemic implications. Further, problems are more easily viewed out of context therefore reducing the likelihood of creative solutions being sought (Dominelli, 1995).

Treating People Equitably Requires Unequal Treatment

A concerted effort was made by the Office of the Commissioner of Children's Services to have equal representation of men and women on the Steering Committees

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and as co-chair representatives. A similar effort was made for Aboriginal representation with each Steering Committee having one Aboriginal co-chair. With these two exceptions everyone was treated equally with regards to their invitation to participate.

Unfortunately women, people from racialized minorities, and those with low income are at a distinct disadvantage in competing in domains of power. Educational, employment, and economic situations play a significant role in limiting people's experiences in political activities. Women usually have higher social commitments and expectations to nurture and care for their families and this further limits women's participation. The separation between public and private issues and the individual and community concerns misrepresents the experience of many women, therefore reducing the likelihood that women would find the process and the issues identified for discussion as valid.

Consultation in the form of public meetings and forums may limit who can participate. Many cultures find it inappropriate to use a public forum to articulate their difficulties with their families, with their communities, or with the services they are receiving. Aboriginal peoples who were reluctant to become involved in the redesign for a variety of reasons including the structure of the planning process. Written material or consultation that required some form of public presentations would have put people who had literacy issues at a disadvantage.

Given Stone's (1988) analysis of the contested nature of equality as an instrument of policy analysis, it becomes apparent that to treat all people equally can result in inequity. Given the disadvantage in ability of women, service recipients, and low-income people to participate in an equitable manner in the citizen participatory process, the Commissioner of Children's Services should have seen the need, if truly committed to the real participation of these groups, and made different arrangements for them. For instance, rather than having an equal number of men and women participating in the Steering Committees and Authorities it may have been advantageous to have twice as many women as men so that the women's voices were reinforced. As well, engaging the assistance of immigrant-specific service providers in enlisting the voice of immigrants would be advantageous. Based on community development work I've been involved in, young families need baby-sitting provided to become involved in any consultations and training sessions. As well, low-income families are more likely to participate if there has been an honorarium or meal

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

supplied at the meetings. These "extras" are not necessary if your goal is to entice those in our communities who have the most resources personally and economically, but this unequal treatment will be necessary for the equitable participation of those who will be most affected by the changes in Children's Services.

Some Victories are Loses

In the redesign of Children's Services one co-chair told me that being co-opted on some issues was part of the price participants had to pay to have bureaucrats also co-opted on other issues. This co-chair said that there were seven issues that the co-chair had allowed co-opting on so that the bureaucracy would adopt the one issue the co-chair had wanted. The issues that this co-chair thought were worthy of not challenging included: the contracts for executive director of the Authorities, increasing control over Authorities' employees, the financial reporting mechanisms, the establishment and control of the service support centres, the establishment of the First Nations Liaison Unit which was attached to the Department of Human Resources, policy directives coming from Edmonton, and the dysfunctional nature of the Council of Co-chairs. The issue the co-chair wanted supported was the inter-authority protocols. Based on the experience in British Columbia and Ontario this co-chair thought that acceptance of these protocols, which had been designed by a committee of co-chairs, was critical in protecting children transferring between regions. But when the list of seven issues is examined it reveals a number of critical structural elements that facilitated the government control of the Authorities. It is open to debate whether the acceptance of what the co-chair referred to as "technocratic document," was worth the loss of the citizen participation process.

Being committed to the processes and being astute enough to recognize where your attention needs to be focused and what constitutes worthy co-opting is essential if citizen participation is to survive. It should be noted that this Co-chair, whose example I have used, acknowledged that "I don't think it's a bad thing that government's tolerance for citizen participation ends." Given this, the victory may have been really a loss long before any negotiation actually took place.

Each of these paradoxes highlights some of the promises and perils that exist in the citizen participation process. The paradoxes arise out of the political nature of citizen participation as a policy directive. It is the ambiguity that is created by the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

paradoxes that provides room for maneuvering by those supporting the dominant discourse (Stone, 1988). These are the potential peril. They are presented here as a means to sensitize citizen-participants to these dangers so that collectively resistance can be mustered. This is the promise of citizen participation.

CONCLUSION

The findings, theoretical implications, and the implications they have for the social construction of women were summarized. State-initiated citizen participation in Alberta is grounded in the New Right agenda. This discourse involves balancing the budget, creating an attractive environment for the private sector, streamlining government, and listening to the people. These goals appeal to economic liberals, neo-liberals, and social conservatives. The Alberta Government expressed commitments to the four political platforms of the affordable welfare state, viewing social services as a human resource problem, embracing the new public managerialism and deficit hysteria, and the recodification of the new "good" citizen are reflections of this discourse which attacks the welfare state in unique ways from those conservative discourses that have preceded it.

Seven metaphors of citizen participation evolved from this study. These metaphors depict citizen participation as a spiritual experience, as the emperor's new clothes, as a means to good business practices, as engaging in a battle, as strategic co-opting, as a change in worldview, and as a means to empowerment.

State-controlled rhetorical strategies, institutional and structural practices, and the individual characteristics of the co-chairs facilitated the construction of citizen participation. Specifically, government officials used classification, definitional strategies, value judgments, and simplified language as the rhetorical strategies to influence opinion and judgement. Structural/institutional practices included the appointment of the Commissioner of Services for Children, the restructuring of the Department, the reshuffling of the Cabinet and of ministerial appointments, the process for the appointing of the members of the Steering Committees and Boards, the structure of the Ministry Partnership Council and the Council of Co-chairs, the ongoing dual allegiances of employees, the establishment of the Shared Support Service Centres, the lack of adequate technological and infrastructure support, the constant struggles over governance versus operations delineation, and the challenge to sustain momentum despite delays. The individual co-chairs' characteristics which

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

determined the understanding, actions and possible resistance exhibited by the co-chairs were the participants' individual ideological orientations, the psychological and motivational factors, and their previous experience and training. Resistance to the acceptance of this formation of citizen and participation is limited. Potential resisters, for various reasons, are unable or unwilling to object.

Findings indicate that although citizens have been empowered their participation has been constructed as administrative efficiency. Therefore, it is empowerment at a cost. This limited view of participation mirrors technocratic decision-making processes, involves those least likely to be directly affected, focuses on administrative implementation of department policy, and downplays critical reflection, questioning, and systemic analysis.

Citizen participation has facilitated the presence of women in the social policy community, placing them in positions of leadership, providing them with the opportunities to gain skills and knowledge surrounding the workings of government and policy formation, and heighten awareness regarding the importance of social and community support networks. Unfortunately, many of the issues that concern women cannot be addressed adequately through the delivery of local services. The of managerialism and efficiency frames social services policy within a business framework, which results in women being viewed as consumers and inexpensive community-based providers. The contradictory ethics of care and self-sufficiency are both reflected in citizen participation as framed by the new Right.

Citizen participation has meant an attack on professional and unionized government services and a move towards privatization. Given that women dominate social services this devaluing of their profession and unions negatively impacts them. The move to privatized services has affected women who work in government services as well as women who use these services. Cochrane (1986), observing the changes towards privatization that occurred in Britain, notes that contractual funding was fraught with problems. He found that funding reflected the whim of the funder, there was an increase in fragmentation of the community, there was an increase in monitoring and inspections of services, and the contracts did not reflect community needs. Any one or combination of these problems will have negative impacts on women and their children. One of the perceived fears expressed by opponents of the redesign of Children's Services was that the move towards privatization would result in children with complex needs, who were once served by the government, not

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

receiving adequate services. Since agencies' funding is contingent on their ability to meet performance goals there may be reluctance on the part of these agencies to serve children with complex needs. It then becomes a community responsibility to meet the needs of these children. Women are the "community" that provides the services.

Participation, as constructed by the New Right ideology, is an inexpensive and voluntary administrative mechanism of the government within the parameters of limited government funding. Differences between individuals and groups are depolitized and homogenized. Community voice has replaced citizen voice, while democratic representation has taken a backseat to government-appointed representation. The "integrated citizen" is the cornerstone of this participatory process. Paradoxes of citizen participation were identified as a means to sensitize participants to potential difficulties.

After considering these results there appears to be considerable inconsistency and contradictions between the normative and empirical claims of citizen participation. These appear to reflect the fact that citizen participation has been adopted as a technology to facilitate an attack on the welfare state rather than as an organizational value integral to policy development. In the final chapter guidelines for the ethical implementation of citizen participation are recommended and areas of further research delineated.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER 7.
THE ETHICS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

> In all political situations, there are absolutely no guarantees about the outcome. The long-term effects of these reforms will depend on what we as a society and (more narrowly) what we as the women's movement can make of them. (Eisenstein, 1985, p. 113)

Community input, in particular from service recipients, into policy development at the local level, provides citizens with the opportunity to contribute to the democratic process in a manner that was previously not available to them. It provides them with an opportunity to positively impact policies and programs that will ultimately affect them. It also gives them a forum to educate policy developers and politicians on their life situations while also learning about the constraints and parameters of policy development. Participants can glean leadership skills and an enhanced self-esteem.

Input from service recipients benefits the traditional policy developers because of the added perspective that service recipients can bring. The experiences of poverty, underemployment, unemployed, chronic illness, disability, and systemic discrimination as well as the impact that government policies have on the lives of service recipients are invaluable in the policy development process. Wharf and McKenzie (1998) argue that

> attention to the principle of inclusiveness is the single most important reform needed in the human services. It is important because policies that exclude the knowledge of those who receive the services and of practitioners will be incomplete and inappropriate. (p. 127)

These researchers note that policy developers can avoid implementation delays if policies are developed using service recipients' input because after being consulted, people are better informed and committed to following through on programs and policies. But as can be seen in this study and others (see Cooke & Kothari, 2001) citizen participation can be used to control the agenda and dominate those who might resist.

The engagement of citizens in the policy development process has taken on a new importance within a number of departments and levels of government, across North America and, in particular, Alberta. Correspondingly, policy personnel are developing department guidelines for the processes used to engage citizens.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) has identified a number of core values to use in a citizen participation process. The values were developed through a two-year consultative process with "broad international participation to identify those aspects of public participation which cross national, cultural, and religious boundaries" (Citizen Participation Centre, 2001, p. 1). The values the Centre identified to guide participatory processes are:

1. The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. The public participation process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of participants.
4. The public participation process actively seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected.
5. The public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate.
6. The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision. (p. 1).

In an effort to contribute to a discussion regarding the ethics of public participation a number of recommendations are suggested in this chapter. These recommendations are based on an examination of the lessons learned during the redesign of Children's Services, as well as other initiatives reported in the literature. Because there is no one perfect strategy for the implementation of a citizen participatory process readers will have to determine whether these guidelines apply to their particular situation.

1. Citizen participation is considered an organizational value not just a technology.

The implementation of the technique of citizen participation in the redesign of Children's Services was highly successful. In the first two years of the redesign there were reports that 6,000 Albertans were involved in discussion and working committees.

The involvement of this many individuals in identifying the direction of Children's Services is admirable. But citizen participation is more than just a technology or a management or policy fad, it is a process routed in beliefs about the need to reduce

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

power differentials (Skelcher, 1996) and increase democratic and deliberative decision making. Although well meaning citizens contributed hundreds of volunteer hours to the development of community visions and plans their input was limited by ideological, rhetorical, and structural barriers which reflected a value of technocratic over democratic decision-making. They became volunteer administrators of government policy despite their best efforts to be otherwise.

In an examination of elite and participatory decision-making in planning for forestry management, Steelman (2001) found different levels of involvement of experts and citizens in each stage of the process. In his study, which included questionnaires of all participants, he found that the lack of thoughtfulness on the part of the administrators in using citizen participation resulted in disastrous results. He cautions,

> These multiple methods and outcomes should serve as warnings to the decisionmaker that would view increased citizen participation as a benign policy prescription for formulating better decisions. Citizen participation should serve a specific function within the process and should be used, like any policy tool, with care and practical intent. (Steelman, 2001, Finding Balance in Elite and Participatory Decisionmaking section, par. 3)

Although Steelman was attempting to be impartial in his analysis of the data, the above statement reflects a bias that is counter-productive to citizen participation. This sentiment, that citizen participation is just another administrative or "policy tool", is not uncommon in the literature and reflects an elitist attitude toward decision-making. It is this very attitude that may result in the reported disastrous results.

Citizen participation must be acknowledged philosophically, as an important value in policy development, by the initiating organization (e.g., the Executive Committee and government departments). There has to be an acceptance that policy development, as Deleon (1994) observes, has become too technocratic and therefore ineffective in addressing complex issues. This acknowledgment needs to be reflected in the structure and activities of the organization over time and across its units, as well as in the training and allocation of the personnel. It cannot be viewed as a mechanism that can be implemented on some occasions and at other times neglected, or as the responsibility of a small unit within the organization, as was true in the redesign of Children's Services. It must be viewed as permeating the normative framework of the organization.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This guideline is probably the most central and important value in implementing a citizen participatory process. Unless this value is embedded in the psyche of the organization, the implementation of all the other guidelines identified in this chapter will be inadequate and the participatory process will appear more like "the emperor's new clothes" than any true redistribution of power.

As was demonstrated in the redesign of Children's Services, although the initiators of the process may have been, as one co-chair described them, "honorable" in their intent, this understanding of the necessity of value of citizen input was not adopted by everyone within the organization. The use of participatory process as an administrative, marketing, public relations, and/or social control mechanism is a natural consequence of the organization not having accepted the concept of democratic policy development. Being fluent in the rationale and terminology of citizen participation is necessary but insufficient in its operationalization. Braye (2000) notes that

> the terminology is less important than the intention behind the actions it describes. The fundamental contest in this territory is between rhetoric and reality. Talking and writing about participation and involvement, even understanding the concepts at a theoretical level, does not necessarily make them happen. What makes a difference in practice is the will and commitment in the hearts of those with power to meet the challenge and demands of those excluded, to change the nature of the relationship between them. (pp. 9-10)

One of the primary reasons for this is that the resistance to change within any organization is usually too large to be overcome by simply introducing a new technology. The values that underpin the change must be clarified and internalized by all those involved.

Clarification and acceptance of the values inherent in citizen participation are also necessary at the organizational level to facilitate the identification of competing and dominating ideologies that conflict with the values of citizen participation. Kiloh (1986) observes that merely introducing democratic mechanisms cannot alter inequalities or the fundamentally undemocratic ideology that underlies them. Unless these contradictions in values are identified and resolved, democratic schemes when introduced become "distorted and continue to reflect the very inequalities which they might be expected to overcome" (Kiloh, 1986, p. 45).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

2. Citizen participation is a dynamic element throughout all stages of the policy process.

The co-chairs described a number of occasions when either the identification of the issues to be addressed, or the potential solutions to these issues, or their suggested implementation of solutions were considered by the bureaucracy or the minister to be outside the parameters of citizen involvement and participation. Unfortunately, this resulted in the Steering Committees being in a reactive position to the decisions made elsewhere. In some of these situations, they could choose from limited options available to them, or could administratively implement a decision in which they did not have adequate input. In other situations, after actually taking a stance on a policy directive the Steering Committees passively watched as the bureaucracy implemented the policy without community input.

Stone's (1988) analysis of the political nature of policy formation highlights why acting as if policy development is a linear and rational process is dangerous. She argues that, in fact, policy development and implementation are not solely based on rational reasoning but are the result of negotiation, bargaining, and persuasion as well. What is identified as an issue or a concern, what possible options might be identified for its resolution, the selection of the option, and its implementation and evaluation are all decisions that reflect particular values and perspectives, as was evident in this study. For this reason it is important to have citizens actively involved in all stages of the policy formation and implementation.

Pal (1997) notes that this involvement of citizens at each stage in the policy formation and its implementation facilitates valuable information being shared as well as ensuring the integrity of the process and that the ideas generated are maintained. Caution and sensitivity need to be used when considering whom to engage and how, so as not to over-burden an already taxed service recipient population. Ensuring that their experience is captured in some form and incorporated into the discussions would be important.

3. Citizen participation is based upon on a "politics of integrity".

Integrity was a term frequently referenced by the co-chairs during their interviews. They used this term to describe the unique feature that their presence could bring to the planning process. They believed that they provided a reality that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was critical to good policy development. They also believed that their presence ensured that the community perspective was honoured, that adequate debate and dialogue took place, and that the government bureaucracy and administration did not control the decision-making.

Pal (1997) suggests that although the decision-makers have to be people of integrity, the system in which decisions are being made also has to have a "politics of integrity". Although Pal is referring to policy development at a national level, the guidelines have relevance for policy development using citizen involvement at any level of government. The "politics of integrity" outline key features of a successful citizen participatory process, that is: inclusion over exclusion, active dialogue over passive acceptance, messiness over simplicity, people-centered over economy-or administration-centered, honesty over falsity, openness over closed, and principled-driven over litigation-driven.

Pal describes what is meant by this term:

> Stephen Carter (1996) has recently provided eight principles that "point towards a politics of integrity" (p.47). The first is that the nation exists for its people. Our politics and our policies should treat people as ends, not means. The second is that a "politics of integrity is a politics that sets priorities, that does not tell the self-serving lie that every program preferred by a particular movement is of equal value" (p.48). Third, consistency is important. . . . Fourth, a politics of integrity refuses to arbitrarily exclude some citizens with political views that do not meet with the approval of the elites. . . . Fifth, "we must be willing to talk about right and wrong without mentioning the Constitution" (p.49). . . . Sixth, a politics of integrity must appeal to our higher selves: "we must try to respond to politicians who call us to our higher rather than our lowest selves; in particular, we must respond to politicians who talk of the national interest and our shared obligations, not merely those who promise to enrich us" (p.50). Seventh, a "politics of integrity is a politics in which all of us are willing to do the hard work of discernment, to test our views to be sure we are right" (p. 50). We must engage in dialogue which implies both stating views and listening with care. Finally, we must be prepared to admit that sometimes the other side wins. (Pal, 1997, p. 277)

Each of these principles could be used to direct the activities and evaluate the success of a participatory process.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

4. Citizen participation is supported by strategies to enhance the "efficient citizenship" of the community.

Each of the co-chairs felt quite strongly that they had a duty to become involved in the redesign of Children's Services. Each of them had had either a direct or indirect prior relationship with Children's Services and therefore they were motivated to be involved. Unfortunately, these co-chairs, through no fault of their own, ran the risk of becoming isolated and even alienated from the communities they represented because of the length of time involved and the lack of ongoing community development efforts to foster leadership and participation in the greater community.

Over the course of the first three years of the redesign it was reported that 6,000 Albertans were involved either in committee work or had been consulted in one manner or another. Unfortunately, over the duration of the redesign, which in some communities meant approximately four years before an Authority was appointed, community members became either discouraged with the lack of progress or suspicious of the motivation behind the redesign and lost interest in becoming involved. Valiant efforts were made by the Steering Committees to engage the community but interest and participation waned as the months passed. As well, service recipients were unlikely to be involved in the planning process for a number of reasons, which further limited the relevancy of the community input. Ongoing community development efforts are necessary to ensure that community voice and leadership is nurtured and supported otherwise the Authorities could easily be criticized as being elitist in their composition and decision-making. What is necessary to ensure effective citizen participation is the development of efficient citizenship.

"Efficient citizenship" is a term coined by the New York Bureau of Municipal Research. It refers to the concept that "citizens owned their government and as owners had a duty to get involved" (Schachter, 1997, p. 4). It is imperative that citizen participation efforts enhance the involvement of historically marginalized and service-recipient groups. These efforts would not only facilitate the development of the leadership skills and the capacity within the community (Smith and Frank, 1998), but also would enhance political knowledge and interest in political affairs, both critical preconditions for active involvement (Putman, 2000). As well, community development efforts could educate community and organizational personnel to the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pertinent information regarding the issues and "best practices" in a particular policy issue. It is important that this community development not be viewed as "doing onto" the community but rather, in the true sense of community development initiatives, partnering with the community to come to a higher understanding of the issues and possible solutions. Developing effective citizenship and involvement requires time and resources.

5. Citizen participation is based upon the principle of inclusiveness.

As was previously discussed, the issue of who represented the community was a contentious issue and was sometimes used as a strategy to limit or to silence oppositional discourse. Citizen participation if it is to be effective needs to involve diverse views in the community. Groups and individuals should not be excluded from the discussion because they are labeled as "special interests." Diversity of views should be valued and debate and dialogue should be fostered (Saul, 1995). This has implications for the selection, representation, and maintenance of participants. It also has implications for the amount of time necessary for true participation, rather than just reacting to a particular position, dialogue requires more time for consideration of differing views. It requires also planning to identify who will be directly affected by the policy initiative, who will indirectly affected, and who has expertise over and above experiential expertise as well as, an identification of how best to engage and maintain the involvement of each party.

6. Citizen participation fosters full understanding before consensus is sought.

With the exception of one of the co-chairs, each of the co-chairs understood the importance in hearing and understanding the diversity of opinion represented in a community, before attempting to move forward with a decision that everyone could feel comfortable in supporting. They stressed the value in achieving a common ground of understanding before striving for consensus.

Rowbotham (1986) notes that the consensus ethic "can become a new form of repression rather than a means of democratic self-realization" (p. 90). In the compromise that is necessary in achieving consensus legitimate differences and issues can be ignored. Forester (1999) advises planners and policy advisers who want "to encourage productive and well-informed deliberative discussions. . . to anticipate the plural and conflicting stories of differently affected citizens and stakeholders" (p. 12).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The planner must be able to recognize them although not necessarily agree with them as well as be able to meet with all parties several times to facilitate their mutual discussions. He further notes that good participatory process "requires as well a commitment to shared evidence and good argument, a commitment to the distinctions between warranted truth and demogogic posturing as well" (p. 12). Forester (1999) also notes that "the challenge of democratic deliberation is not to avoid, transcend, or displace conflict but to deal with practical differences in and through conflictual settings" (p. 84). The trap in planning is to label situations as either adversarial or collaborative, which he points out, is "simplistic, misleading and self-defeating" (p .84).

7. Citizen participation allows for the expression of both individual and community needs.

In attempting to conduct a process that involves citizens in policy development, the planner can become paralyzed by the potential diversity of opinions and values that may be represented in a community. The temptation is to try to homogenize the opinions of the group to facilitate the ease of the decision-making or to manipulate the eventual outcome of the group discussion. Unfortunately, this homogenization results in a dilution of the real differences that exist within the group and thereby limits the potential identification of issues, ideas, and solutions that a recognized heterogeneity would foster.

In considering this dilemma, as it exists in the feminist community, Dean (1997) articulates the distinction between the politics of identity and the politics of a reflective solidarity. This distinction is instructive when considering citizen participation in policy development because it provides guidance in considering the balance between the representation of both individual and community needs.

In the politics of identity, essential characteristics are ascribed to a group. In so doing, a sense of pride and empowerment develops within the group. Group members develop a sense of who they are and how they are to "be". A sense of group solidarity develops reinforcing the group's uniqueness. Unfortunately, according to Dean, this clarity also results in "rigidification of group identities" (p. 244) and an exclusion of others. For instance, in the case of feminist literature, historically the identity of "woman" has generally meant white, straight, and middle class women at the exclusion of women who represent other races, sexual orientations, and classes.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Ultimately, this lack of representation and respect for the diversity within the woman's movement has resulted in a limiting of the ways that various groups of women are able to work together. The issue of fulfilling the group's rights dominates discussions in policy initiatives.

In contrast, the politics of reflective feminist solidarity embraces diversity and values the creative tensions that it creates. As Dean (1997) notes reflective feminist solidarity is

> based on the idea that our disagreements and arguments can bring us together rather than tear us apart. . . . If we can take a reflective attitude toward ourselves and our interactions, adopting the perspective of situated, hypothetical thirds and realizing that no difference is absolute, and if we can recognize that our relationships are fluid and interpretable rather than fixed and immutable, we can start the process of building a community in which disagreement is no longer disempowering. (p. 260)

Dean argues that reflective solidarity is more than respecting "multiple intersecting differences" (Fraser, 1997), it is "taking the perspective of the third (which) tells us that the difference between speaker and hearer is not absolute. Instead, it is simply a particular set of differences that can be understood as sharing some similarities when seen from another perspective" (Dean, 1997, p. 257). It also involves appreciating that:

> We who are solidarily connected share a mutual expectation of a responsible orientation to relationship (Dean, 1995). The relationships articulated by the term 'feminist', then, arise through critique and discussion, through repeated investigations and interrogations of politicized terms and identities in confrontation with exclusion, oppression and domination. (Dean, 1997, p. 245)

In this model solidarity is obtained through an understanding and a respect for diversity, disagreement, and dissent. One's membership in a group is defined by one's agreement to be in the relationship with others. The issue of fulfilling one's responsibility to the larger group dominates discussions in policy initiatives.

Attempts to understand differences need to be viewed as integral to the process, while rejecting the concept of absolute differences. Dean (1997) suggests that in respecting individual differences we adopt the perspective of the "generalized other" in order to be able to work together. The generalized other is borrowed from

> Mead (1934/1962) (who) uses the concept of the generalized other to refer to the organized set of expectations of a social group. When we

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> adopt the perspective of the generalized other, we are seeing from the standpoint of relationship, taking account of the shared expectations members have of one another and our common understanding of what it means to identify as a member of a group.

Although this concept of reflective solidarity comes out of the feminist literature it has relevancy in considering guidelines for citizen participation, in particular with regard to definitional issues, process issues, individual roles, and resultant policy. For instance, rather than developing exclusionary definitions of who is to be appropriately considered a community member it may be more fruitful to open the membership up to attract a diversity of experience, skills, and perspectives to enrich the discussion and policy development.

Consistent with the concept of reflective solidarity, the process of policy analysis should be filled with debate, discussion, reflection, and messiness. Conformity, passive acceptance, and even strategic co-opting should be telltale signs of group think or ideological domination. Individual participants would take on the role of problem solving not from their own particular situated perspective, but from the position that there are similarities between group members when approached from another perspective. As well, the resultant policy formation based in an attitude of reflective solidarity should reflect the diversity within the group. Simplistic, short-term solutions as well as those based upon one ideological perspective would be avoided. Respect for the relationship of each member of the interested parties would dominate.

8. Citizen participation is both locally focused and globally sensitive.

Although this, as well as the previous value seems to be paradoxical, an understanding of both is imperative in policy development with citizen involvement. Being locally focused is one of the real advantages of citizen participation. With regional divided groups of citizens, community issues can be identified and solutions sought that are consistent with the unique nature of the local community. Unfortunately, it is this community-centeredness that can also limit the scope of understanding of the problem, its systemic nature, and the inter-relatedness of issues and potential solutions.

For example, in the redesign of Children's Services, Community Steering Committees and Authorities developing regional policies for Children's Services

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

within their communities would need to also take into consideration the national and even global factors that contribute to child and family poverty and abuse. In the face of the massive national and international political, social, and economic restructuring it would be negligent to ignore the impact this has on local issues and the potential solutions that may evolve from such an analysis, solutions that require action and advocacy at the local level.

This is not to argue that creating efficiencies within a system where inefficiencies existed is not important but to equate this with citizen participation in policy development is inadequate. 'Citizen participation as good business practices' as one of the metaphors interpreted from the interviews with the co-chairs is administratively astute because it allows for difficult decisions to be made in a cost effective manner through the use of voluntary services while political reputations are maintained. But this approach to citizen participation does not reflect democratic decision-making in the major issues in Children's Services. According to Neysmith (1997) "if too much attention is given to how families can be helped to shoulder the costs of meeting the care needs of their members little energy is available for mounting an informed debate on the fair share to be assumed by non-familial social institutions" (p. 237).

9. Citizen participation promotes techno-democratic decision-making.

There was a tendency with some of the co-chairs interviewed to overestimate the ability of the community to direct policy decisions and to undervalue the input of technical experts. This backlash to technocratic decision-making is not surprising due to the fact that the public's dissatisfaction with the ineffectiveness of this type of decision-making is one of the suggested reasons for the increase in citizen participation. But as one co-chair noted, a sole reliance on democratic decision-making or community wisdom could jeopardize the credibility of the Authorities and possibly the lives of children.

Renn, Webler, Rakel, Dienel, & Johnson (1993) proposed a three-step model for public participation that they feel combines "technical expertise and rational decision making with public values and preferences" (p. 189). Although each of the various players (e.g., the experts, the stakeholder groups, the citizens, the sponsor, and the research team) play a role in each of the three steps of policy development: identifying concerns and criteria, assessment of options, and evaluation of options,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

each of their roles varies depending upon the task and their expertise. With the exception of evaluating the options identified, citizens assume a reactive rather than an active role in the policy development process. These authors explain the role of each of the parties as follows:

> The stakeholders are the principal source for building value-trees, but the other parties may augment the joint tree. Experts are principally responsible for constructing performance profiles for each option, but also the institutional knowledge of the sponsor and the specific knowledge of the various stakeholder groups are taken into consideration. The major task of the citizens is to evaluate options and generate or modify policies. (Renn, Webler, Rakel, Dienel, & Johnson, 1993, p. 193)

For reasons stated previously (i.e., the political nature of policy development) this model appears to be flawed.

DeSario and Langton (1987) assert that a metapolicy should be developed at each level of government to reflect how technocratic and democratic, that is bureaucratic and community-based decision-making can be integrated and implemented. They offer the following fluid and dynamic guidelines:

> 1) that the dangers associated with maximizing expert and citizen contributions without joint review and interpretation be avoided; 2) that the unique contributions of experts at the technical level and of citizens at the normative level of policy making be encouraged but that a later stage of mixed review be established that involves experts and citizens examining issues of impact and trade-offs regarding technocratic and democratic considerations; 3) that the issue of the role and power of citizens be made explicit at the outset, and appropriate procedures be developed to reflect power-sharing arrangements; 4) that government be experimental in selecting, evaluating, and refining procedures for integrating expert and citizen contributions that are most effective in dealing with the unique policy issues with which each is concerned. (pp. 218-219)

Governments need to make some operational decisions regarding how best to integrate technical and democratic decision-making, after they have committed to the value of citizen participation as more than just a technique. DeSario and Langton's guidelines seem reasonable especially in light of the recommendation from these authors that an experimental stance be taken in evaluating the processes implemented. Another suggested guideline would be that citizens are involved initially in designing the experimental processes for inclusion of experts and citizens and that they also are involved in the evaluation of the process.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

10. Citizen participation has equitable and adequate resources and supports for all participants.

Several of the co-chairs identified communication as a major limitation in being a active participant. Receiving information in a timely fashion, being able to identify quickly the relevant aspects of the deluge of information, and having to rely on government bureaucrats for interpretation of information were barriers co-chairs faced. Supporting these volunteers seemed critical for their effective input to be realized.

Rutman (1998) identifies factors that contributed to and detracted from the success of the public consultation around guardianship legislation in British Columbia. She notes that the multi-year, independent funding that allowed for autonomy of community participants contributed to the success of the consultation. This support "distinguished it from so many other 'vision and vanish' community engagement processes" (p. 113). Unfortunately, factors such as the chair being dependent on the government for information, scant information being available, and not enough time to process the information were all important in the efficiency and effectiveness of the committee. By way of contrast, Richard, Edelstein, Hallman, and Wandersman (1995) recommend that participating citizens should be given full access to data and independent technical assistance so that they can make an informed decision and verify that there is no deception involved.

As well as experiencing an imbalance of resources, the participants were not being paid to participate and ended up maintaining their regular work while they volunteered on the committee. The result of this double duty was that the "coalition's most active members were spent and need a break" (Rutman, 1998, p. 105). The issues of timelines, either their imposed urgency or their indefiniteness, were identified by the co-chairs interviewed in this study as an issue in the participatory process. Realistic timelines need to be established that facilitate credible involvement but do not also wear participants out. As well, the co-chairs identified the issue of the flow and degree of information available to them as being an issue. Adequate supports are necessary to ensure participants receive the appropriate information, in a timely fashion in a manner that facilitates the information being easily assimilated.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

11. Citizen participation is an engendered process.

Changes to policies in the area of health, education, and social services have direct and dramatic affects on women. For this reason it is imperative that citizen participation in these areas of policy become engendered. To make the practice of citizen participation, particularly in the development of social policy, sensitive to and reflective of the needs of women it will be necessary to: heighten awareness regarding the exclusion of women in the definition of citizenship, ensure a gendered analysis of policies that affect women and their children, democratize women's workplaces, include the principle of equity in policy deliberations.

According to Lister (2000) the "ungendered nature of much of the mainstream literature on citizenship has been well established by now in feminist writings" (p. 23). Citizenship has either been gender-neutral or gendered differentiated. Both of which have had detrimental effects for women and their children. Women, Fraser (2000) argues, have been seen as depended upon and therefore defined by their husbands, their employers, and the whims of public policy administrators. Gendered citizenship would reflect women as citizens with both unique and similar rights and responsibilities to those of men.

An examination of the welfare state and any attempts at its reform through citizen participation needs to involve a gendered analysis. The patriarchial construction of the welfare state reflects a number of false assumptions about women. Women need to find ways to participate in the planning process in which that they are not viewed only as recipients of aid and/or victims. Reform to the welfare system must also involve a consideration of the 'feminization of poverty" (Pearce, 1985) and the need to address discriminatory practices in employment and family life.

Women's workplace needs also to be democratized. Engendered citizen participation cannot evolve in a vacuum. Women need to experience democratized decision-making in their workplace and in other environments in order later to be able to operationalize it in less familiar settings like a community consultation process. For instance, in social services, which is predominately a female workplace managed by males, participatory problem solving processes historically have not been nurtured. As previously noted, social workers were nervous to participate initially in the redesign of Children's Services for fear of being sanctioned.

Finally the principle of equity needs to be reflected in policy deliberations. Fraser (2000) describes gender equity as comprising seven normative principles: the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

anti-poverty principle, the anti-exploitative principle, the income equity principle, the leisure-time equity principle, the equity of respect principle, the anti-marginalization principle, and the anti-androcentrism principle. In order for citizen participation to be a gendered process that reflects an equitable treatment of women these principles would have to be incorporated into the process itself and the policies that are being developed.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER RESEARCH

This study indicates that the dominant discourse of citizen participation has constructed participation to emulate good business strategies with the participant-citizens as the business managers of public funds. This conclusion lends itself to a number of possible research questions for further study. Specifically, an in-depth examination of the actual economic and service provision implications for the service-recipients would be useful in determining what the actual impact of this business orientation to social services has been over the last three years. As well, with the exception of a few groups in the initial stages of the formation of the Steering Committees there was very little organized resistance to the dominant discourse. But some of the co-chairs I interviewed, although accepting aspects of the business definition of participation, also had greater aspirations for the Authorities. They saw the Authorities, together with government, taking a leadership role in creating a better world for children in need. It would be helpful to look at their attempts at resisting the current construction of citizen participation to determine what if any impact they had and how those supporting the dominant discourse addressed their resistance. Finally, co-chairs, in this study, were interviewed just after they had finished volunteering for three years on the Steering Committees and were being appointed to the new Authorities. It would be useful to explore with the Authority members, the community members they represent, and service-recipients what the implementation of community governance has meant for them.

In this study a number of structural, rhetorical, and individual factors were identified as mediating the assimilation of a particular ideological interpretation of citizen participation. Other factors may also play a role. Local community factors such as the community's history of participation and populist movements, economic and socio-political make-up, and level of social capital may each have a contributing

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

influence. As well, the type of relationship that exists between the Authority's citizen-participants and their employee, their Executive Officer, would be critical in the formation of the citizen-participants' role. An examination of this relationship, and its contribution to possible resistance or acceptance of the dominant discourse would provide further information regarding mediating factors.

The concept of strategic co-opting is worthy of further investigation. Others (e.g., Pal, 1993) have observed that despite the government's best efforts to co-opt citizens through their involvement with government committees and structures, it is these same groups that have become the most ardent and articulate resisters of government policies. An examination of the characteristics (e.g., when, where, why and how substantive) of these processes for resistances may be instructive.

I provided guidelines for the ethical use of citizen participation strategies. These guidelines may help explore the utility of a participatory research design involving multiple stakeholders. Citizen participation could hold the promise of progressive and empowering practices in social policy development or it could merely be a tool for the operationalization of managerialism and the hollowing out of services. The ideology and values behind its implementation determine its fate. We, as a community, have to decide whether we are willing to participate in the latter or resist and work towards the former.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbott, M, G., & Caracheo, F. (1988). Power, authority, and bureaucracy. In N. J. Boyan (Ed.), *Handbook of research on educational administration* (pp. 239-257). NY: Longman.

Abelson, J. (unpublished). Obtaining public input for health systems decision-making: Past experiences and future prospects. Background Paper for CHEPA Policy Workshop November 16, 2000. Toronto, Ontario.

Ackelsberg, M. A. (1988). Communities, resistance, and women's activism: Some implications for a democratic polity. In Ann Bookman & Sandra Morgen (Eds.), *Women and the politics of empowerment* (pp. 297-313). Philadelphia: Temple University.

Alberta Advisory Council on Women's Issues (1996). *Breadmakers and breadwinners: The voices of Alberta women.* Edmonton, Alberta.

Alberta Hansard (1996, April 3).

Alberta Hansard (1996, April 6).

Armstrong, P. & M. P. Connelly, M. P. (Eds.). (1999). *Feminism political economy the state contested terrain* (pp.177- 204). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 4,* 216-224.

Aronson, J. & Neysmith, S. M. (1999). The retreat of the state and long-term care provision: Implications for frail elderly people, unpaid family carers and paid home-care workers. In P. Armstrong & M. P. Connelly (Eds.), *Feminism political economy the state contested terrain* (pp. 91-124). Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Ashkenas, R., Ulrich, D., Jick, T., & Kerr, S. (1995). *The boundaryless organization*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Aucoin, P. (1995). *The new public management: Canada in comparative perspective*. Montreal, Quebec: Institute for Research on Public Policy.

Bachrach, P. & Botwinick, A. (1992). *Power and empowerment: A radical theory of participatory democracy.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University.

Baiocchi, G. (2001). Participation, activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre experiment and deliberative democratic theory. *Politics & Society, 29,1*, 43-72.

Bakker, I. (Ed.). (1996). *Rethinking restructuring gender and change in Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Barber, B. (1984). *Strong democracy.* Berkeley, Calif.: University of California.

Bell, D. (1976). The end of ideology in the west. Reprinted in J. C. Alexander and S. Seidman (1990). *Culture and society contemporary debates* (pp. 290-297). Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Beierle, T. C. (1999). Using social goals to evaluate public participation in environmental decisions. *Policy Studies Review, 16, 3*, 75-103.

Bohman, James (1996). Critical theory and democracy. In D. M. Rasmussen (Ed.), *Handbook of critical theory* (pp. 190-219). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Borgman, A. (1992). *Crossing the postmodern divide.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago.

Bragg, R. (1997, April 27). Steve West reveals dos and don'ts of losing $2.5B. *Calgary Herald*, p. A5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Braye, S. (2000). Participation and involvement in social care an overview. In H. Kemshall & R. Littlechild (Eds.), *User involvement and participation in social care* (pp. 9-28). London: Jessica Kingsley.

Brodie, J. (1995). *Politics on the margins: Restructuring and the Canadian women's movement.* Halifax, Canada: Fernwood.

Brodie, J. (1996a). Restructuring and the new citizenship. In I. Bakker (Ed.), *Rethinking restructuring: Gender and change in Canada* (pp. 126-140). Toronto: University of Toronto.

Brodie, J. (Ed.), (1996b). *Women and Canadian public policy.* Toronto, Ontario: Harcourt Brace.

Bullock, A. (1990). Community care: Ideology and lived experience. In R. Ng, G. Walker & J. Muller, J. (Eds.), *Community organization and the Canadian state* (pp. 65-82). Toronto, Ont: Garamond Press.

Butler, C., Rissel, C., and Khavarpour, F. (1999). The context for community participation in health action in Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues, 34(3),* 253-254.

Calgary Status of Women Action Committee (1999). Watering down the milk: Women coping on Alberta's minimum wage (Electronic version). http://www.mycalgary.com/cswac/MWREP.html Retrived 14/3/00.

Callahan, M. & Wharf, B. (1993). The case for removing child abuse and neglect investigations from the mandate of child welfare. *In Rethinking social welfare: People, policy and practice.* Proceedings of Sixth Biennial Social Welfare Policy Conference. St Johns, Newfoundland, June 27-30.

Capper, C. Hanson, S. & Huilman, R. R. (1994). Community-based interagency collaboration: A poststructural interruption of critical practices. *Journal of Educational Policy, 9(4),* 335-351.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Caragata, L. (1999). The privileged public: Who is permitted citizenship? *Community Development Journal, 34 (4),*271-285.

Carroll, W. & Shaw, M. (2001). Consolidating a Neoliberal policy bloc in Canada, 1976 to 1996. *Canadian Public Policy, xxvii, 2*, 195-217.

Checkoway, B. (1982). Public participation in health planning agencies: Promise and practice. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law, 7(3),* 723-733.

Children's Commissioner's Office (1994). *Finding a Better way.* Edmonton: Author.

Children's Commissioner's Office (1994). *Focus on Children.* Edmonton: Author.

Children's Commissioner's Office (1995*). Laying the foundations, a guide for planning children's services in Alberta.* Edmonton: Author.

Christiansen-Ruffman, L. (1990). On the contradictions of state-sponsored participation: a case study of the community employment strategy program in Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. In R. Ng, G. Walker & J. Muller, (Eds.), *Community organization and the Canadian state* (pp. 85-106). Toronto, Ont: Garamond Press.

Citizen Participation Centre. The Core Values for Citizen Participation (Electronic version). http://www.policity.com/cp/toolbox_iap.htm Retrieved 7/10/2001

Cochrane, A. (1986). Community politics and democracy. In D. Held & C. Pollitt (Eds.), *New forms of democracy*. (pp. 51-77). London: SAGE

Cohen, N. (1995). Technical assistance for citizen participation: A case study of New York City's environmental planning process, *American Review of Public Administration, 25(2),* 119-135.

Cooper, B. (1996). *The Klein achievement.* Toronto, Ont.: The University of Toronto.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cornell, D. (1997). Gender hierarchy, equality and the possibility of democracy. In J. Dean (Ed.), *Feminism and the new democracy resiting the political* (pp. 210-221). London: SAGE.

Covey, S. (1990). *Principled-centered leadership.* NY: Simon & Schuster.

Crane (1999). *Directions for social welfare in Canada: The public's view.* Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Croft, S., & Beresford, P. (1992). The politics of participation. *Critical Social Policy, 12(2), 20-44.*

Cullingworth, J. B. (1984). *Canadian planning and participation.* Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto.

Dahl, R. A. (1956). *A preface to democratic theory.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

Dahl, R. A. (1970). *Modern political analysis.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Day, D. (1997). Citizen participation in the planning process: An essentially contested concept? *Journal of Planning Literature, 11(3),* 421-434.

Dean, J. (1997). *Feminism and the new democracy: Resiting the political.* London: SAGE.

Derber, C., Schartz, W. A., & Magrass, Y. (1990). *Power in the highest degree: Professionals and the rise of a new mandarin order.* NY: Oxford University.

Deetz, S. (1999). Participatory democracy as a normative foundation for communication studies. In T. L. Jacobson and J. Servaes (Eds.), *Theoretical approaches to participatory communication*, (pp. 131-167). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Delaney, C. F. (Ed.). (1994). *The Liberalism-communitarianism debate.* Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefleld.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Deleon, P. (1994). *Reinventing the policy sciences: Three steps back to the future. Policy Studies, 27*, 77-95.

DeSario, J. & Langton, S. (Eds.). (1987). *Citizen participation in public decision making.* Westport, CT.: Greenwood.

Dominelli, L. (1995), Women in the community: Feminist principles and organising in community work. *Community Development Journal, 30(2),* 133-143.

Douglas, R. (1993). *Unfinished Business.* Auckland, New Zealand: Random House.

Eisenstein, H. (1985). The gender of bureaucracy: Reflections on feminism and the state. In J. Goodnow & C. Pateman (Eds.), *Women, Social science and public policy* (pp. 104-115). Sydney: The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

Eisler, R. (1987). *The chalice and the blade: Our history, our future.* San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

Elster, J. (Ed.). (1998). *Deliberative democracy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Esping-Andersen (1990). *The three worlds of capitalism.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Evans, P. M. (1997). Divided citizenship? Gender, income security, and the welfare state. In P. M. Evans & G. R. Wekerle (Eds.), *Women and Canadian welfare state challenges and changes* (pp.91-116). Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press.

Fawcett, S. B., Paine-Andrews, A., Francisco, V.T., Schultz, J. A., Richter, K.P., Kewis, R. K., et al. (1995). Using empowerment theory in collaborative partnerships for community health and development [Electronic version]. *American Journal of community Psychology, 23(5),* p. 677-698.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fay, B. (1987). *Critical social science.* NY: Cornell University.

Feldberg, G. (2001). The power of citizen engagement to influence research and policy. *Centres of Excellence for Women's Health Research Bulletin, 2*, 1, 4-6.

Finkel, A. (1989). *The social credit phenomenon in Alberta.* Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press.

Fisher, R. & Kling, J. (Eds.). (1993). *Mobilizing the community local politics in the era of the global city.* London: SAGE

Foley, P. & Martin, S. (2000). A new deal for the community? Public participation in regeneration and local service delivery. *Politics & Politics, 28(4),* 479-491.

Forester, J. (1999). *The deliberative practitioner encouraging participatory planning processes.* Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.

Fraser, N. (1990). Struggle over needs: Outline of a socialist-feminist critical theory of late-capitalist political culture. In L. Gordon (Ed.). *Women, the state, and welfare* (pp. 250-264). Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Fraser, N. (2000). After the family wage: A postindustrial thought experiment. In L. Gordon. (Ed.), *Women, the state, and welfare* (pp. 1-32). Wisconsin, Il: University of Wisconsin Press.

Fraser, N. & Lacey, N. (1993). *The politics of community: A feminist critique of the liberal-communitarian debate.* Toronto: University of Toronto.

Fung, A. (2001). Accountable autonomy: Toward empowered deliberation in Chicago schools and policing. Politics & Society, 29, 1, 73-103.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fung, A. & Wright, E. O. (2001). Deepening democracy: Innovations in empowered participatory governance. *Politics & Science, 29(1),* 5-41.

Galvin, R. F. (1994). Moral pluralism, disintegration, and liberalism. In C. F. Delaney (Ed.), *The liberalism-communitarianism debate (pp. 39-56).* Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield.

George, V. & Wilding, P. (1985). *Ideology and social welfare.* London: Routledge.

George, V. & Miller, S. (1994). Squaring the welfare circle. In Miller, S. & George, V. (Eds.), *Social policy towards 2000: Squaring the welfare circle* (pp. 6-21). London: Routledge.

Glesne, C., & Peslikin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers.* White Plains, NY: Longman.

Gordon, L. (1990). The new feminist scholarship on the welfare state. In L. Gordon. (Ed.), *Women, the state, and welfare* (pp. 9-35). Wisconsin, Il: University of Wisconsin Press.

Government of Alberta (1993). *Reshaping Child Welfare.* Edmonton, Alberta: Author.

Government of Alberta (1994). *Focus on children A plan for effective, integrated community services for children and their families.* Edmonton, Alberta: Author.

Government of Alberta (1994). *Finding a better way the consultations and research leading to the redesign of children's services in Alberta.* Edmonton, Alberta: Author.

Haight, & Ginger, (2000). Trust and understanding in participatory policy analysis: the case of the Vermont Forest Resources Advisory Council, *Policy Studies Journal, 28, 4,* p. 739. (Electronic collection A75833886).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Harder, L. (1999). Depoliticizing insurgency: The politics of the family in Alberta. In P. Armstrong, & M. P. Connelly, (Eds.), *Feminism political economy the state contested terrain* (pp.177- 204). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Harrison, T. W. (1999). The "Alberta advantage": For whom? In T. W. Harrison & J. L. Kachur, *Contested classrooms education, globalization, and democracy in Alberta* (pp.33-44). Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press.

Held, D. (1987). *Models of democracy.* Standford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Held, D. (1995). *Democracy and the global order: From the modern state to cosmopolitan governance.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Held, D. & Pollitt, C. (Eds.), (1986). *New forms of democracy.* London: SAGE.

Helmer, J. (1997, April 17). Child workers want halt to privatization. *Lethbridge Herald,* p. A1, A2.

Henkel, H. & Stirrat, R. (2001). Participation as spiritual duty; Empowerment as secular subjection. In B. Cooke & U. Kothari (Eds.), *Participation the new tyranny?* (pp. 168-184). NY: Zed Books.

Heunks, F.J. (1990). From personal to political. In M. K. Jennings, J.W. Van Deth, & S.H. Barnes, D. Fuchs, F. J. Heunks, R. Inglehart, M. Kaase, H-D. Klingemann, & J. J. A. Thomassen, *Continuities in political action: A longitudinal study of political orientations in three western democracies* (pp.136-160). NY: Walter de Gruyter.

Hobson, B. (2000). *Gender and citizenship in transition.* NY: Routledge.

Innes, J. & Booher, D. (2000). *Public participation in planning: New strategies for the 21st century.* Berkeley, Calif.: University of California.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Institute on Governance. Summary of Conference Findings (Electronic version). http://www.iog.ca/publications/cereport21.html taken 7/10/2001

Israel, Checkoway, Schulz, & Zimmerman (1994).

Jick, T. (1993). *Managing change cases and concepts.* Burr Ridge, Illinois: Irwin.

Junn, J. (1991). Participation and political knowledge. In W. Crotty (Ed.), *Political Participation and American Democracy* (pp. 193-224). NY: Greenwood.

Kachur, J. L. (1999). Orchestrating delusions: Ideology and consent in Alberta. In T. W. Harrison, and J. L. Kachur, *Contested classrooms: Education, globalization, and democracy in Alberta* (pp. 59-74). Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press.

Kiloh, M. (1986). Industrial democracy. In D. Held & C. Pollitt (Eds.), *New forms of democracy* (pp. 14-50). London: SAGE.

Kinchebe, J. L., & McLaren, P.L. (1994). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 138-157). London: SAGE.

Klein, S. & Montgomery, B. (2001). *Depressing wages why welfare cuts hurt both the welfare and working poor.* BC: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Kweit, M. G. & Kweit, R.W. (1981). *Implementing citizen participation in a bureaucratic society a contingency approach.* NY Praeger.

Land G. & Jarman, B. (1992). *Breakpoint and beyond: Mastering the future-today.* NY: Harper Business.

Langton, S. (Ed.). (1978). *Citizen Participation in America: Essays on the state of the art.* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lather, P. (1986a). Research as praxis. *Harvard Educational Review, 56(3),* 257-277.

Lather, P. (1986b). Issues of validity in openly ideological research: Between a rock and a soft place. *Interchange, 17 (4),* 63-84.

Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern.* NY: Routledge.

Lea, J. F. (1982). *Political consciousness and American democracy.* Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi.

Lisac, M. (1995). *The Klein revolution.* Edmonton, Alberta: NeWest.

Lister, R. (1991). Citizenship engendered. *Critical Social Policy, 11(2),* 65-70.

Lister, R. (1999). Reforming welfare around the work ethic': New gendered and ethical perspectives on work and care. Policy & Politics, 27(2),

Lister, R. (1998). Citizen in action: Citizenship and community development in a Northern Ireland context. *Community Development Journal, 33, 3*, 226-235.

Lister, R. (2000). Dilemmas in engendering citizenship. In B. Hobson, *Gender and citizenship in transition* (pp. 33-83). NY: Routledge.

Luxton, M. & Reiter, E. (1997). Double double, toil and trouble . . . women's experience of work and family in Canada 1980-1995. In P. M. Evans & G. R. Wekerle (Eds.), *Women and Canadian welfare state challenges and changes* (pp. 197-221). Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press.

MacPherson, C. B. (1977). *The life and times of liberal democracy.* Oxford: Oxford University.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Maloff, B. Bilan, D. & Thurston, W. (2000). Enhancing public input into decision-making: development of the Calgary regional Health Authority Public participation framework. *Family and Community Health*, 23, 66-81.

Marchak, M. P. (1981). *Ideological perspectives on Canada.* Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Marchak, M. P. (1991). *The integrated circus the new right and the restructuring of the global markets.* Montreal: McGill-Queens' University.

Mawhinney, H. B. (1993). *An interpretative framework for understanding the politics of political change.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Ottawa, Ottawa.

McLaren, P. (1989). *Life in schools an introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education.* Oxford, OH: Miami University.

McQuaiq, L. (1993). *The wealthy banker's wife.* Toronto, Ont: Penguin Books.

Midgley J. with Hall, A., Hardiman, M., & Narine, D. (1986). *Community participation social development and the state.* NY: Methuen.

Moody, T. (1994). Some comparisons between liberalism and an eccentric communitarianism. In C. F. Delaney (Ed.), *The liberalism-communitarianism debate* (pp. 91-101). Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield.

Montgomerie, I. A. (1994). *Public consultation and public policy.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Morrissey, J. (2000). Indicators of citizen participation: Lessons from learning teams in rural EZ/EC communities. *Community Development Journal, 35(1),* 59-74.

Morrow, R. A. (1994). *Critical theory and methodology.* London: SAGE.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Murgatroyd, S. & McMillan, B. (1994). *Opening the door: Improving decisions through public consultation.* Edmonton, Alberta: Dark Horse Books.

National Council of Welfare Reports. (2002). *Child Poverty Profile* (Cat. No. H68-52/1998E). Ottawa, Ontario: Author.

Neysmith, S. M. (1997). Towards a woman-friendly long-term care policy. In P. M. Evans & G. R. Wekerle (Eds.), *Women and Canadian welfare state challenges and changes* (pp.222-245). Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press.

Neu, D. (2000). Re-investment fables: Educational finances in Alberta. In T. W. Harrison, and J. L. Kachur, *Contested classrooms: Education, globalization, and democracy in Alberta* (pp.59-74). Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press.

O'Dovovan, O. (2000). Re-theorizing the interactive state: Reflections on a popular participatory initiative in Ireland. *Community Development Journal, 35, 3,* 224-244.

Olsen, M. E. (1982). *Participatory pluralism.* Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall.

Osborne, D. & Gaebler, T. (1993). *Reinventing government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector.* NY: Penguin.

Orloff, A. (1993). Gender and the social rights of citizenship, the comparative analysis of gender relations and the welfare states. *American Sociological Review, 58*, 303-328.

Osbun, L. A. (1985). *The problem of participation a radical critique of contemporary democratic theory.* NY: University Press of America.

Owen, S. (1998). Shared decision-making: A case study. In B. Wharf & B. McKenzie. *Connecting policy to practice in the human services.* NY: Oxford University Press.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pal, L. (1993). *Interests of state the politics of language, multiculturalism, and feminism in Canada.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University.

Pal, L. (1997). *Beyond policy analysis: Public issue management in turbulent times.* Scarborough, Ontario: Thomson Canada.

Pateman, C. (1979). *The problem of political obligation a critical analysis of liberal theory.* NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and democracratic theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pateman, C. (1989). The disorder of women democracy, feminism and political theory. Polity Press.

Peters, F. (1999). Deep and brutal; Funding cuts to education in Alberta. In T. W. Harrison, and J. L. Kachur (Ed.), *Contested classrooms: Education, globalization, and democracy in Alberta* (pp. 59-74). Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta.

Peters, B. G. & Savoie, D. J. (1998). *Taking stock: Assessing public sector reforms.* Kingston, Ontario: Canadian Centre for Management Development.

Petts, J. (1995). Waste management strategy development: a case study of community involvement and consensus building in Hampshire, *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management, 38(4)*, 519-536.

Pierre, J. (1998). Public consultation and citizen participation: dilemmas of policy advice. In B. G. Peters & D. J. Savoie (Eds.*), Taking stock Assessing public sector reforms* (pp. 137-163). Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Pierson, C. (1998) *Beyond the welfare state: The new political economy of welfare* (2nd ed.). Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Piven, F. F. (1990). Ideology and the state: Women, power, and the welfare state. In L. Gordon (Ed.). *Women, the state, and welfare* (pp. 250-264). Madison, Wisconsin: the University of Wisconsin Press.

Plante, Marie-Carmen,M. D., Morin, C. Bruneau, M-A, & Nadeau, L. (1999). Women without homes: A growing phenomenon. *The Canadian Journal of CME, October*, 193-204.

Pollitt, C. (1986). Democracy and bureaucracy. In D. Held & C. Pollitt (Eds.*), New forms of democracy*. (pp. 158-191). London: SAGE

Pollitt, (1998). Managerialism revisited. In B. Guy Peters and Donald J. Savoie (Eds.), *Taking stock Assessing public sector reforms*. (pp. 45-770). Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Potter, J & Wetherall, M. (1994). Analyzing discourse. In A. Bryman, and R. G. Burgess (Eds.), *Analyzing qualitative data* (pp. 47-66). NY: Routledge.

Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities (1996). *A new context A new vision*. Edmonton, Alberta: Author.

Priscoli, J. D. (1978). The public interest movement and citizen participation. In S. Langton (Ed.), *Citizen participation in America* (pp. 102-122). Toronto: Lexington Books.

Putman, R. (2000). *Bowling alone the collapse and revival of American community.* NY: Simon & Schuster.

Rebick, J. (2000). *Image democracy*. Toronto: Stoddart.

Rein, M., Esping-Andersen, G., & Rainwater, M. (1987). *Stagnation and renewal in social policy: The rise and fall of policy regimes.* NY: Sharpe.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research.*

Renn, O. Webler, T. Rakel, H. Dienel, P. & Johnson, B. (1993). Public participation in decision making: A three-step procedure. *Policy Science, 26*, 189-214.

Richard, R. C., Edelstein, M., Hallman, W. K., & Wandersman, A. H. (1995). Citizen participation and empowerment: The case of local environmental hazards. *American Journal of community Psychology [Electronic version], 23(5)*, p. 657 (20).

Rifkin, S. (1986). Lessons from community participation in health programme. *Health Policy and Planning, 1 (3)*, 240-249.

Ritzer, G. (1992). Contemporary sociological theory. (3rd ed.). *NY:* McGraw-Hill.

Robbins, H. & Finley, M. (1997). *Why change doesn't work why initiatives go wrong and how to try again – and succeed.* London: Orion Business.

Rosenbaum, N. L. (1994). Romantic Communitarianism: Blithedale romance versus the custom house. In C. F. Delaney (Ed.*), The liberalism-communitarianism debate* (pp.57-90). Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield.

Ross, D. P., Shillington, E. R. , & Lochhead, C. (1994*). The Canadian fact book on poverty.* Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Rowbotham, S. (1986). Feminism and democracy. In David Held, & C. Pollitt (Eds.), *New forms of democracy* (pp. 78-109). London: SAGE.

Rowe, G. & Frewer, L. J. (2000). Public participation methods: A framework for evaluation. *Science, Technology & Human Values, 25(1)*, 3-29.

Roy, J. (1998). *Mechanisms for public participation in economic decision-making.* Ottawa: the Task Force on the Future of the Canadian Financial Services sector.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (1992). *Surviving your dissertation.* London: SAGE.

Rutman, D. (1998). A policy community: Developing gaurdianship legislation. In B. Wharf & B. McKenzie, *Connecting policy to practice in the human services.* NY: Oxford University Press.

Sanderson, I. (1999). Participation and democratic renewal: From 'instrumental' to 'communicative rationality'? *Policy & Politics, 27(3),* 325-341.

Sanoff, H. (2000). *Community participation methods in design and planning.* NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Sapiro, V. (1990). The gender basis of American social policy. In L. Gordon. (Ed.), *Women, the state, and welfare* (pp. 36-53). Wisconsin, Il: University of Wisconsin Press.

Sartori, G. (1973). *Democratic theory.* Detroit, MI: Greenwood.

Saul, J. R. (1995). *The unconscious civilization.* Concord, Ontario: House of Anansi Press.

Schachter, H. L. (1997). *Reinventing governments or reinventing ourselves.* Albany, NY. : State University of New York Press.

Schreader, A. (1990). The state funded women's movement: A case of two political agendas. In R. Ng, G. Walker & J. Muller (Eds.), Community Organization and the Canadian State (pp. 184-199). Toronto, Ont: Garamond Press.

Schmidt, F (1998). Citizen participation: An essay on applications of citizen participation to extension programming [Electronic version]. Retrieved October 13, 2001, http//ag.arizona.edu/fcr/fs/nowg/cd_essay.html.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Schumpeter, J. (1950). *Capitalism, socialism and democracy* (3rd ed.). NY: Harper Collins.

Schwartz, D. B. (1992). *Crossing the river: Creating a conceptual revolution in community & disability.* US: Brookline Books.

Selener, D. (1997). *Participatory action research and social change.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.

Shaw, M. & Martin, I. (2000). Community work, citizenship and democracy: re-making the connections. *Community Development Journal, 35,4,* 401-413.

Shields, C. M. & La Rocque, L. J. (1997). Reflections on consultative decision-making: Challenging concepts of best practice in a provincial change initiative. *The Canadian Administrator, 36(7),* 1-9.

Skelcher, C. (1996). Public service consumerism: Some questions of strategy. *Community Development Journal, 31(1),* 66-72.

Smith, (1998). Participation without power: Subterfuge or development. *Community Development Journal, 33, 3,* 197-204.

Squires, P. (1990). *Anti-social policy: welfare, ideology and the disciplinary state.* NY: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Steelman, T. A. (2001). Elite and participatory policymaking: finding balance in a case of national forest planning. *Policy Studies Journal [Electronic version], 29,(1),* 71.

Stokes, S. (1998). Pathologies of deliberation. In J. Elster (Ed.). *Deliberative democracy* (pp. 123-139). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Press.

Stone, D. A. (1988). *Policy paradox and political reason.* Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Taft, K (1997). *Shedding the public interest.* Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press.

Task Force on Community Consultation for the Edmonton Health Region (1994). *Citizen involvement in health planning and decision making in the Edmonton health region.* Edmonton, Alberta: Author.

Taylor, A. (1996). *Education for 'post-industrial' purposes: Understanding the context of change in Alberta schools.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, Toronto.

Thomas, G. W. (201). Habitat conservation planning: Certainly empowered, somewhat deliberative, questionably democratic. *Politics & Society, 29, (1)*, 105-130.

Tonkiss, F. (1998). Analysing discourse. In Clive Seale (Ed.), *Researching Society and Culture* (pp. 245-260). London: SAGE.

Townley, B. (1994). *Reframing human resource management power, ethics and the subject at work.* London: SAGE.

Tupper, A. & Gibbins, R. (1992). *Government and politics in Alberta.* Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press.

UNDP (2001). *Guidebook on Participation* http://www.undp.org/csopp/paguide1.htm Retrived 7/12/01.

Ward, D. (2000). Totem not token groupwork as a vehicle for user participation. In H. Kemshall and R. Littlechild (Eds.), *User involvement and participation in social care* (pp. 45-64). London: Jessica Kingsley.

Watt, S., Higgins, C., Kendrick, A. (2000). Community participation in the development of services: a move towards community empowerment. *Community Development Journal, 36(2)*, 120-132.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Weisbord, M. R. (1992). *Discovering common ground.* San Francisco: Berrett Koehier.

Wharf, B. (1995). Toward a new vision for child welfare in Canada. *Journal of Policy, Practice, and Program, 24(3),* 820-834.

Wharf, B. & McKenzie, B. (1998). *Connecting policy to practice in the human services.* NY: Oxford University Press.

Wheatley M. J. & Kellner-Rogers, M. (1996). *A simpler way.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

White, J. (1999). Changing labour process and the nursing crisis in Canadian hospitals. In P. Armstrong & M. P. Connelly (Eds.), *Feminism political economy the state contested terrain* (pp. 57-90). Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Williams, B.L., Suen, H.K., Brown, S., Bruhn, R., De Blaguirere, R. & Rzasa, S.E. (2001). Hierarchical linear models of factors associated with public participation among residents living near the US army's chemical weapons stockpile sites, *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management, 44 (1),* 41-66.

Woodward, V. (2000). Community engagement with the state: a case study of the Plymouth Hoe Citizen's Jury. *Community Development Journal, 35(3),* 233-244.

Yanklovich, D. (1991). *Coming to public judgment making democracy work in a complex world.* NY: Syracuse.

Zimmerman, M. A. & Rappaport, J. (1988). Citizen participation, perceives control, and psychological empowerment. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 16,* 725-750.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.