Chapter Three

Dissertation Excerpt

of

Constructing public dialogue:

A critical discourse analysis of the discourse practices that shape civic engagement in Portland, Oregon

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Chapter Three

"Indeed, each of us knows and uses certain parts of the metropolitan area and ignores others, living in regions of our own devising. The ways these personalized spatial worlds relate to each other are creating larger metropolitan patterns that we are still struggling to understand. In effect, our project is to make more visible the invisible patterns of daily life . . . In Portland, in short, we see multiple meanings of community, multiple understandings of the future, and multiple uses of the past in service to that future" (Abbott, 2001).

Every year hundreds of people from around the world visit Portland to learn about its innovative programs in urban planning, environmental sustainability, and public participation, among others. They want to know what is different about Portland, and what they can do to replicate these programs where they live. This chapter explores some of the underlying social structures and historical factors that contributed to the development of and continue to maintain "The Portland Way." It examines, in particular, the Portland Way's approach to practices of citizenship. It is within this broader social context that the Summit discourses occur, and this chapter lays the foundation within which the Summit discourses are analyzed.

The Portland Way

On March 7, 2003, Ira Flatow hosted National Public Radio's "Talk of the Nation: Science Friday" program in Portland. The purpose of Mr. Flatow's visit to Portland was to explore the widely regarded success of its urban planning initiatives, of which its reputation for citizen participation is an integral part. He spoke with a panel of long time, prominent Portland citizens who play various roles in the planning process, including

Mayor Vera Katz; Dr. Ethan Seltzer, Director of the Institute for Portland Metropolitan Studies and President of the Portland Planning Commission; Sumner Sharpe, a private planning consultant; and David Allred, a neighborhood planner with Friends West/Northwest.

At the outset, Mr. Flatow asked Mayor Katz, "Why is Portland rated so highly? Why does everybody love it so much? How did Portland get to be this way?" In response and throughout the program, Mayor Katz and the other panel members reiterated these reasons: Its people, a sense of place, and a sense of community. Dr. Seltzer elaborated,

> "Cities are human creations. It (sic) takes physical form but they're all about what people do with each other . . . Cities are created out of the hopes and desires of the people who are there."

Mayor Katz characterized Portland's residents as tolerant, respectful of diversity, and desirous of a quality of life in which they can feel safe, have diverse housing choices, maintain close proximity to nature, have access to good jobs, and is economically affordable. She said the City's health is measured by whether people can be attracted to stay, especially those who are well educated, creative, and who want "to be the next generation [of leaders]," rather than simply in economic terms, i.e. by the number of jobs created.

Mayor Katz described the planning structure within which the City has worked to achieve these outcomes. Its primary focus is on an urban form that balances a revitalized downtown with strong neighborhoods inside an expandable urban growth boundary. The

urban growth boundary protects the forests and farmlands at the perimeter from urban encroachment. Mayor Katz explained that this model of good urban form is successful because it is based on the "science" of integrating land use, housing, and transportation. Mr. Sharpe added that an important element in the implementation of these planning ideals is Portland's interrelationships with other governmental entities within the metropolitan region, which are regulated through the only elected regional government in the United States.

Mr. Allred informed Mr. Flatow that "part of what makes this so successful . . . is having the involvement of the local neighborhood communities." Mr. Allred depicted these involved communities as emerging from groups that are typically self-generated in response to specific issues. Those who "stick around" after an issue is resolved [may] form a

> "core of involved people that want to participate in the City's planning and decision making and that gives them a feeling of ownership and participation that . . . goes back and forth between local neighborhoods and the City policy makers and bureaucracies . . . that's the genesis of success."

Mr. Sharpe added,

> " . . . you wouldn't begin a project in a neighborhood without engaging the neighborhood coalitions or the neighborhood associations in a direct discussion about that. You may not always have agreement but there's an engagement which is very important."

This process of engagement is supported by requirements for citizen participation encoded in City and State regulations, which include the "right of opportunities for comment" and "notification of planning processes and development proposals."

Mr. Flatow responded to these characterizations by wondering whether he had landed in Camelot due to “the way the City has been so well described.” He wondered what happens here in the face of conflict. He asked the panel how priorities are decided among the 95 neighborhood associations and how neighborhood activists know City officials and administrators are listening to them.

In response, panel members portrayed a variety of means by which Portlanders accommodate differences. Mayor Katz described an open acceptance of disagreement and listed a variety of interests within which there are opportunities for participation. These ranged from stopping a freeway from being built to closing down drug and gang houses, or getting the City to place design review requirements on developers. Mr. Allred elaborated by pointing to the City’s encoded rights of notification and opportunities for comment as a means of addressing conflict. Dr. Seltzer added, “It’s about politics . . . make no mistake that, in the end, decisions get made and elected decision makers can’t delegate their responsibilities to citizens.” Dr. Seltzer also stated that “if citizens don’t see some value coming out of their participation, the greatest power a citizen has is to say forget it and go watch *Survivor*. . .” or to otherwise withdraw from the process. At an earlier point in the interview, Mayor Katz described the means for resolving conflict between the City and neighborhood activists this way: “ . . . I like to say [the City] funds them . . . and they sue us. So it’s a very nice collaborative effort to maintain quality neighborhoods.” The audience responded to this with laughter.

Mr. Flatow then wondered whether there is anything about Portland that "needs to be fixed." Dr. Seltzer pointed out,

> " . . . cities are a work in progress . . . Portland is not finished because the people who live here now live here now and someone's gonna come later and they're gonna figure out something else so never look at a city as if it's done or that the Plan is the end of it . . .there are many things we need to work on here. . . (ranging from) education, access to health care, school funding, caring for the chronically mentally ill, transportation, parks, and open space . . ."

He stressed that accomplishing these things boils down to people working together and "for that reason I'm very optimistic because our history is of making tremendous accomplishment collaboratively . . . and none of the things we care about . . . are gonna occur unless we pull it together and make it happen."

In his closing comments, Mr. Flatow inquired about what advice members of the panel would give other communities who wanted to change their cities to be more like Portland. The stipulation was made that all cities are unique and should, therefore, try to become more "like themselves" rather than like Portland. However, all panel members agreed that the fundamental critical element that characterizes city making in Portland is keeping local citizens engaged, not only in the discussions, but also in the decision making that will impact their lives.

A Rebuttal

In contrast, on April 15, 2003, the Portland Tribune, a bi-weekly, community-based newspaper, published this front-page headline, "The People vs. the Process: Complaints prompt citywide review." Two secondary headlines read: "Many neighborhood leaders

say the city asks for their advice but doesn't listen;" and "Complaints call for consistency." This article explored the events and attitudes that led to the creation of a citywide task force in January, 2003, at the request of City Commissioner Jim Francesconi. Initiating the task force was Commissioner Francesconi's response to numerous citizen complaints about the inconsistent implementation of citizen involvement processes across city bureaus in Portland. The task force was charged with investigating public involvement practices within the various bureaus and recommending standards for engagement to be adopted by city ordinance.

In his newspaper article, Mr. Redden's premise was that there is a deeply split view among citizens about the success of the City's public involvement processes. Of the twelve citizen activists he interviewed, three described the City's processes as positive, including praise for involving citizens in the discussion process, and for the ability of city staff to listen to competing interests and develop what was perceived as a fair compromise.

Nine of the citizen activists interviewed registered complaints about citizen participation processes in which they had been involved. The most consistent complaint was exemplified in the comments of a local shopkeeper, "Why do they make us feel we have a say in the matter if they just ignore the public and do what they want to do?" A land use chairperson from one neighborhood association remarked, "We've tried to get them to listen to us for years, but they've just worn us down by ignoring everything we've had

to say." Another activist commented, "We've told them they are destroying our livability, but they don't seem to care." Additionally, the chairperson of one neighborhood association complained that he had testified at many City Council hearings and had a recurring experience:

> "First the bureaucrats and special interests testify, and the City Council is very attentive . . . Then it's time for the citizens to testify, and the commissioners start talking to each other or walking out of the room."

He added, "Citizens always seems to lose when they go up against a powerful institution."

Brian Hoop, city staff from the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, speculated that one reason for this split in perspectives among citizen activists is the lack of a consistent involvement policy. "There are no standards for citizen involvement for all bureaus. Each bureau does outreach as they see fit. They all use different strategies and methods."

Mr. Redden also juxtaposed the perspectives of the City's representatives he interviewed and the citizen activists who are critical of the City's public involvement processes. While many City representatives say they constantly asks residents for their advice, many Portland citizens believe their input is being ignored when the final decisions are made, as voiced above. Commissioner Francesconi summarized his perspective on the issue:

> "My belief is that sometimes what we are doing is not public involvement but public informing. We are telling the public what we are doing instead of involving them in the decision. I want to make sure we are involving them . . ."

Redden reported that Mayor Katz does not believe the city council is ignoring the city's residents. She said, "We're elected to make tough decisions. Sometimes people don't like the results. Instead of simply accepting that they lost, sometimes they say we didn't listen to them." One activist's response to this was "Sure it's easy to say the City wasn't listening when you lose. The trouble is, citizens are losing all the time."

Dominant ideology: Visionary leadership or power struggle?

Both of the texts summarized above provide examples of the stories Portlanders tell about how and why civic involvement is practiced in their community. These texts articulate some of the elements of this community's processes for city-making and its style of public decision making, including the role of values, the roles of citizens and elected representatives, how conflict is managed, and what constitutes success, among other issues.

Each text provides a different set of insights. The first text is a good illustration of the strong, well-established, dominant ideology that drives Portland's formal processes in public decision-making. It demonstrates the rhetoric its civic leaders use to perpetuate their vision of the good city and it is what fuels the City's international reputation. It paints a picture of cohesion and inclusion, centered around the participation of citizens in decision making, and a place where difference can be accommodated. The second text demonstrates that local citizens, who actively participate in public decision making

processes, give a mixed review of the success of this ideology when compared to the City's practices of public participation.

The ideology, as put forward in the discussion with Mr. Flatow by Portland's civic leaders, recognizes that it is the particular people in a particular place going about their everyday activities and working together within a set of common values that creates, not only a sense of community, but the physical development of the city, as well. It depicts a cohesive set of values among the population that suggests an underlying modernist assumption that there is a unitary public interest, which can be identified. The values are reflective of those of a white, middle class, liberal, educated population: tolerant and respectful of diversity, and quality of life is defined as safety from crime, diverse housing choices, proximity to the natural environment, access to good jobs, and affordability for the middle class. Civic leaders work specifically to recruit well-educated and creative leaders who reflect these values in order to perpetuate the vision, its ideology, and the practices associated with them.

Conflict can be accommodated within the ideology because the underlying values are not in question. While conflict may arise out of issues associated with these values, such as how to accommodate transportation or social services needs, conflict is focused on issues and interests and how best to realize them. Further, while it is recognized that city-making is a dynamic process contingent upon particular people and their values, good leaders in that dynamic process are recognized as those who embrace and sustain the

values which support this ideology, not challenge it. While many things are cited as needing to be "worked on," including education, access to health care, transportation, etc., it is assumed that the solutions for these issues will emerge from within the dominant ideology.

Within this ideology, planning is promoted as a foundation for the successful achievement of desired outcomes and is legitimated as a neutral arbiter of the public interest, i.e. the set of cohesive values (Abbott, 1994). In other words, the planning process is situated as the regulatory mechanism through which competing interests are mediated. But rather than being in a position of neutrality, the planning process is embedded in a rational, technical, bureaucratic system that takes a comprehensive approach to planning within a downtown-centered, managed growth regime (Bello in Witt, 2000). The leaders in this bureaucratic system embrace New Urbanism as the most effective means for achieving desired outcomes and the mayor validates this choice by characterizing New Urbanism as a science in the interview with Mr. Flatow. It is worth noting that the interview is situated as part of a radio program called "Science Friday," which, by its association with "science," supports and validates the mayor's characterization. The same bureaucratic system is also responsible for regulating a diverse, dynamic, and pivotal role for citizen participation in planning and other public decision making, yet no mention is made of competing ideologies.

The foundation of the success of this ideology, as defined by the civic leaders interviewed by Mr. Flatow, is based on a set of good relationships, including relationships between elements of urban form, relationships between multiple levels and jurisdictions of government, and, most importantly, relationships between the government and citizens. The "goodness" of these relationships is grounded in whether they promote and achieve rational, technical, New Urbanist outcomes and support the values embraced by the civic leadership.

The reflexive exercise of the above relationships, the set of espoused values, the bureaucratic system, and supporting and reinforcing dialogue are the social practices and structures which provide the framework for creating and maintaining the dominant ideology which has become the signature identity of this community.

The Role of Citizens: An inconsistent construction

In the characterizations of the relationship between government and citizens in the two texts I have summarized, inconsistencies in the role of citizens are demonstrated both within the ideology and between the ideology and practice. Within the ideology, the participation of citizens in the city government's decision-making was identified by the panel of civic leaders as one of the primary and most important features that distinguishes Portland's success at city-making. An ethic of participatory democratic practices, however, does not emerge.

While there is a structure and vision for involving citizens in discussions *about* decisions, or serving in an advisory capacity, it is emphasized that the people who actually *make* decisions are elected representatives whose responsibilities cannot be “delegated” to citizens. The “greatest power” citizens have if they are dissatisfied is to withdraw from the process or sue the City. If they are dissatisfied with the decisions of elected representatives, citizens can vote them out of office. This perspective limits the expression of social action in public policy development for citizens to voting, withdrawal, or litigation. Citizens forced to withdraw from a process likely become apathetic and citizens forced to litigate likely become adversarial. In terms of voting, citizens’ frustrations with the electoral system have been well documented (McKinney, 1996). The social action most appropriate for citizens is proactive advisement to elected officials on specific projects; pursing individual civic activities; and community organizing around neighborhood needs and events.

The second inconsistency, between the ideology and the practice of citizen participation, is revealed in the comparison between the civic leaders’ interview text and the newspaper text. The civic leaders’ interview text portrays citizen participation processes as successfully inclusive and collaborative in decision making. In the newspaper text, citizen activists present a variety of statements to the contrary, and a city commissioner questions the efficacy and focus of the city’s citizen participation practices. Citizen activists who speak favorably of the City’s public involvement processes praise the deliberative features, but they accept the role of city staff as the negotiators and decision

makers of the public interest. Citizens who criticize these public involvement practices focus on the perspective that they lack a voice in decision-making. Again, while it is generally agreed that the citizen participation practices successfully support collaborative and inclusive discussions *about* decisions, they fall short of collaborative and inclusive participation in *making* decisions. When confronted with evidence of this discrepancy, the mayor characterizes citizen activists as sore losers who are upset because they did not get their way.

Another important observation is that, while the newspaper text could be seen as demonstrating an effort to resist, and perhaps transform, citizen participation practices within the dominant ideology, it does so from within the ideology because, as is consistent with the ideology itself, the dominant values are not contested. Instead, the resistance is focused on the interests and issues of a particular class of citizens who are included in the broader ideological framework rather than from those who might speak for a different ideology altogether. The ideology, therefore, is able to accommodate the conflict and continue to play a dominating role.

Four historical conditions that work to promote and preserve Portland's dominant ideological position on citizen participation

Hegemonic ideologies are deeply complex and multi-layered social constructions that probably can never be fully described. For the purposes of this study, I focus on four historical conditions underlying Portland's dominant ideology, which play a critical role in shaping its structures and practices of citizen participation. It is recognized that there

are more conditions than I have considered and that the conditions I have considered are inextricably embedded in the ideology as a whole.

The four historical conditions are:

1) a state-wide culture that is moralistic and conservative
2) a local governance structure which conflates the political with the bureaucratic
3) a national historical view of citizens' role as predominantly advisory in government decision-making
4) a strong relationship between land use planning and citizen participation

These four historical conditions play a critical role in promoting and preserving in practice the dominant ideological position on citizens' role in government decision-making. All four have deep historical roots, some of which are particular to Oregon and others that closely follow national trends in citizen participation. They reveal characteristics that can be used to understand and identify the dominant ideology in practice. I use these historical conditions as the context within which to understand the Summit discourse. In particular, they provide the basis for understanding the relationship between deliberative dialogue and social action in Portland; especially the ideological inconsistencies already portrayed between deliberation, or discussion about decisions, and social action, or the ability to participate in making decisions.

A Moralistic and Conservative Statewide Culture

Portland historian Carl Abbott (1994) makes the case that the foundation of Oregon's political culture and values are found in the economic and political leadership of New Englanders in the early Willamette Valley settlements. Subsequent migrations of people from the northern tier of the United States and immigrants from northern Europe, with similar social demographics, supported and reinforced this culture. Oregon has a history of jealously guarding this social homogeneity, and scholars claim that homogeneity provides the basis for much of the success of the social experimentation that has occurred here (Hovey, 2003).

Abbott (2001) writes that the small size of Portland's racial minorities has been a distinct advantage for maintaining consensus and the 2000 census data confirms a high degree of racial homogeneity in Portland. On the other hand, it is important to note that racial demographics in Portland have changed significantly since the 1960's. In the 1960 census, 94% of Portland's 373,000 residents were white. In 1980, the population dropped slightly to 366,000 but its racial diversity increased. 87% of the population was white. The 2000 census shows a large increase in population to 529,000 and a continuing decrease in the percentage of whites to 78%, with 6% African American, 6% Asian, 6% Hispanic, 1% Native American and 3% other races. Social homogeneity, however, does not necessarily break down along racial lines, as Portland has been host to strong African American, Asian, and Hispanic civic leaders who have supported and participated in the ideologies of white civic leaders over the years.

Abbott (1994) describes the political culture of Oregon as moralistic and conservative. A moralistic or regulatory political culture engages politics as a public activity that is centered on promoting the public interest. It places public service over individual gain, and accepts that government can legitimately regulate private activities for the good of the Commonwealth. Abbott (2001) recognizes this moralism in "progressive Portland," one of four distinguishable categories of social culture in Portland. Social cultures are "sets of neighborhoods whose residents share some distinctive political values, opportunities, behavioral expectations, and definitions of the good community" (p. 78). Abbott describes progressive Portland as a

> "land of white Americans that maps closely with the distribution of high education levels. It has a wide range of family income but a shared sense of civic responsibility . . . These are the folks pushing Portland into the national lead on many aspects of urban planning and development, doing things that other cities imitate" (p. 81).

Abbott further characterizes progressive Portlanders as people that "believe that government provides valuable services and they trust Oregon's 'good government' ethos to see that it works in the public interest" (p. 81). They evaluate government as open, honest, and accessible, believing that their input counts and that newcomers are listened to. They trust government, Abbott claims, because they *are* government (italics in original). Abbott quotes Broder, "Everyone seems to know everyone else, at least the political activists do, and there is a good deal of camaraderie and tolerance" (p. 82). This group spans partisan allegiances from liberal Democrats to moderate Republicans. They

approach the public interest through rational analysis and aim, in the historically Progressive sense, at combining democracy and efficiency.

Abbott describes three other social cultures in Portland: Albina, the Silicon Suburbs and the Metropolitan Borderlands. Albina, in Abbott's typology, represents the majority of north and northeast Portland by geography, and poor whites, racial minorities, and immigrants by social class. The Silicon Suburbs encompass the standard subdivisions, big box retail, and strip malls of surrounding counties that are being driven by the high tech workers in the electronics industry; an industry largely financed by outside sources. The Metropolitan Borderlands are the "blue collar foothills" of old forestry, mill, and farm towns whose residents value the natural environment as a source for jobs, as private property, and as a commons for individual use. It's a strongly individualistic pioneer culture that does not trust government and has played host to the tax revolts that have changed the face of Portland's social infrastructure, especially public education.

It is easy to see from Abbott's description that Portland's civic leadership and its dominant ideology spring from the values, expectations, and definitions of the good community of "progressive" Portlanders. It is more difficult to see what the competing ideologies of these other social cultures might be because they are rarely mentioned in the progressives' ideology. While these voices make a considerable impact overall on Portland's social ecology, economy, and physical infrastructure, they are virtually silent

in the ideological dialogues that sustain the civic leadership, except as problems to overcome.

Despite the value the "Portland way" places on dialogue and consensus and "a belief that the more inclusive the conversational circle the better," (Abbott, 2001, p. xi), Abbott worries that:

> "consensual politics leave little room for principled dissent, for they assume basic agreement on community goals. With all its virtues, the Portland style tends to muffle radically dissenting voices who are unwilling to work on the 'team.' Although advocates of the Portland consensus would disagree, it is possible that a pattern of co-optation stifles a serious hearing for good ideas by whittling away at genuine alternatives until they fit the mold" (2001, p. 208).

While studies have shown that Portland's citywide neighborhood association system and bureaucratized system of notification equalize access to decision-making in land use planning across class and education (White & Edner, 1981; Adler & Blake, 1990), once access is achieved, participation occurs within "the rules" (Abbott, 1994).

The conservative aspect of Oregon's political culture is reflected in efforts to preserve and protect against unwanted change what already exists. Abbott (1994) points out that, ironically, these preservation efforts are the driving force behind many of the innovative policies and programs on which Portland's progressive reputation is based. These include the urban growth boundary, which was designed to preserve and protect forest and farmland; the neighborhood association network, which was designed to preserve and protect neighborhood character; and environmental and historic preservation. Abbott suggests that a moralistic and conservative approach, especially through its urban

planning initiatives, has allowed Oregonians to be “community-minded without being revolutionary” (p. 210).

A moralistic and conservative political culture shapes not only the content of these policies and programs, but also the processes by which they are derived. Process values are strongly participatory, in line with Oregon’s populist history and its privileging of the public interest, and explicitly rational. There is an assumption that the best course of action is amenable to logical discovery and social scientific expertise is regarded as an authority (Abbott, 1994).

Commission Government: A conflation of political and bureaucratic processes

A moralistic and conservative political culture fits with Portland’s choice of a commission form of government. Portland first adopted a commission government in 1912 when it was a popular form across the country. Its popularity peaked around 1917 and most cities with populations over 50,000 have abandoned its use (Ross & Levine, 2001). Although the commission form of government has routinely been contested in Portland over the years, it has never been replaced or modified.

Portland elects four city commissioners and a mayor at-large on a non-partisan ballot. These are the members of the city council. The city council members also act as the administrative heads of all of the city’s bureaus, including the Office of Neighborhood Involvement. The mayor decides which city commissioner will manage which bureaus.

The strength of this system is that it allows elected officials a closer relationship with bureau managers in order to respond more quickly to citizens' needs. Additionally, power is concentrated in a small group to which there is direct citizen access.

The drawbacks, however, are considerable. Because commissioners tend to focus on the interests of the bureaus for which they are responsible, there is often a lack of overall leadership. Commissioners often act to safeguard the interests and independence of their bureaus; scrutinizing the bureau activities of other commissioners often results in retaliation. Commissioners' administrative skills are rarely taken into consideration in elections and, when mistakes are made, corrective action is difficult to initiate. Minority groups are often opposed to the at-large election feature because it dilutes minority voting power (Ross & Levine, 2001).

An important effect of a commission form of government, in which politicians also act as administrative heads of bureaus, is a conflation of the political with the bureaucratic. Bureaucratic governance should, by definition, be administered through self-controlling administrations that are neutral, rational, and uninfluenced by individual status or connections. When politicians serve in managerial roles, the locus of social action shifts and power and influence matter.

Abbott (1994) makes the case that Portland civic leadership routinely bypasses political debate by channeling discussions into bureaucratic negotiation processes. When this has

worked well, Abbott concludes, "strong community movements are brought into regular relationships with other economic and institutional interests" (p. 214). A broad community consensus can be formed ""by channeling high levels of public concern into accepted procedures" (ibid.).

The shifts, however, between political and bureaucratic processes and decision-making are most often not made transparent. As a result, it becomes difficult for citizens to identify the source of decision making or to determine appropriate situations for and effective forms of consensus building or resistance. For example, in their managerial role, city commissioners frequently appoint task forces to study problems facing their bureaus and charge them with recommending solutions to the City Council. Most often, the bureaucratic problems for which task forces are appointed are those which have a difficult political issue at their core; however, the political nature of the issue is often left unidentified.

The task force is typically appointed by the city commissioner in charge and consists of that commissioner's judgment about who should be at the table. This judgment is often made in consultation with others close to the issue but it is, in effect, a political appointment for what is, on the surface, a bureaucratic task. Typically, the task force consists of some mix of city staff, affected public and private organizations, and citizen activists. The commissioner does not participate in the task force activities. By placing the problem in the hands of a task force, the commissioner-as-politician is once removed

from the political issue in terms of direct accountability, yet retains control as the task force members have been politically appointed by the commissioner-as-manager.

Then, rather than designing task forces as deliberative forums in which to address public policy questions, task force members are usually charged with developing bureaucratic or regulatory solutions. Again, the politician separates her or himself from the difficult political issues while demonstrating that he or she is taking managerial action. The Public Involvement Standards Task Force, referred to in the newspaper text at the beginning of this chapter, is one such recent instance. In answer to complaints about the lack of consistent citizen participation in the city's public decision making processes, the commissioner-in-charge appointed a task force to study and recommend a set of bureaucratic standards to be implemented across city bureaus as opposed to initiating a deliberative forum in which to discuss the community's understandings of the appropriate role of citizens in public decision making processes.

Due to the charge that is often given to produce bureaucratic or regulatory solutions, task force recommendations often lack guiding policy statements. As a result, the City Council's debate centers on their managerial role to decide the appropriateness and effectiveness of bureaucratic and regulatory mechanisms rather than their political role to debate the underlying public policy directions and values for which they can be held politically accountable.

While a task force's process is open to the public, task force members are treated as "representative" in the sense that it is considered that they represent a broad spectrum of interests (that the commissioner has identified). They must consider general public input on their recommendations but they are the final decision-makers about what will go forward to the City Council. It is expected that support for and contestation of task force proposals beyond those of task force members will be heard at the final City Council hearing. However, because the force and weight of bureaucratic process are behind the task force recommendations, they become difficult for the average citizen to contest. On the other hand, years of work spent developing task force recommendations can be overturned with a quick phone call from more influential community members. As both managers and politicians, the commissioners are in a position to choose whether to privilege the bureaucratic or political process as suits them. These are only a handful of ways in which the commission form of government conflates the political and the bureaucratic and confuses citizen participation processes, especially in terms of accountability.

The Advisory Role of Citizens in Government Decision-Making: A national debate

Until the late 1960's, Portland approached citizen participation like most other American cities. Power in government was primarily within the domain of business leaders, civic leaders, professionals, and bureaucrats. Johnson (2002) reports:

> "Public policy deliberation was dominated by a narrow cast of citizens, a civic elite composed mostly of white males. The formal mechanisms for citizens to be involved in political decision making were limited to elite and professionally driven City commissions and boards, traditional political party organizations, and formal public hearing processes" (Introduction).

City services were predominantly bureaucratized; the government's effect on the average citizen went largely unremarked.

This common scenario was rooted in historical debates about the role of citizens in government dating back to the Enlightenment. At the framing of the United States Constitution, Hamiltonian Federalists argued for a centralized government controlled by a knowledgeable elite. Because citizens were not capable of deciding the common good, their proper role was to focus on their individual interests. The governance structure should keep citizens separate from each other so they would not institute rebellions and upset the economy. Jefferson countered this argument and pressed for a decentralized government by the people. He believed the average citizen could be educated to discern and make good judgments about the common good (Kemmis, 1990) The Federalists prevailed and, as a result, the institutional foundation was laid for a democratic republic.

In these early years of the Republic, however, citizen participation in forming local governance structures became a practical necessity. In the absence of a strong national state, town hall meetings and the kinds of civic associations witnessed by de Tocqueville became the foundation on which the country established itself and spread west.

In the shift from an agrarian to a mass industrial society, the question emerged again in the 1922 debates between Walter Lippmann and John Dewey. Lippmann thought people's opinions were shaped by political propaganda and the mass media; they were ignorant and not to be trusted. He supported a technocracy of government leaders guided by technical experts whose objectives and disinterested knowledge would transcend the narrow and parochial views of the average citizen. Dewey countered that while facts play a role in public deliberation, they must be rooted in community meaning. Like Jefferson, he believed citizens were capable of being educated to deliberate and make judgments about the common good.

As industrialization took hold, the concepts of bureaucracy, standardization, and professionalism began to emerge. These combined with the need to organize a growing population, the need to manage the influx of people coming to cities for work, and the work of progressive social reformers challenging machine politics in favor of politically neutral, objective, and efficient management by experts. As a result, technocracy prevailed in cities across America.

This technocratic agenda gave rise to professional public administration and public managers. A rational technical bureaucratic model was envisioned in which public professionals would exercise technical and managerial expertise to analyze and implement public policy with optimal efficiency and least cost. While this model was

only partially realized, one effect was that citizens were cast into the kind of advisory role experienced in Portland into the 1960's.

But the 1960's brought national political upheaval to which Portland was not immune. The Civil Rights Movement, the countercultural movement, the War on Poverty, resistance to the Vietnam War, and urban renewal all worked together to ignite a struggle for more citizen involvement in the decisions that were shaping people's lives. Governments began to recognize the necessity of including the public as a way of legitimizing public policy.

Despite the programs and policies initiated by the War on Poverty, such as Model Cities and the Community Action Program, and funding for citizen participation from the federal to the local level, the role of citizens in government decision making continued to be contested from both sides. On one side, government officials objected to federal money being used to help support poor communities in challenging the decisions of elected municipal officials. Edith Green, a Democratic Congresswoman from Oregon, introduced an amendment which gave local governments control over these programs, although few communities took advantage of it (Ross and Levine, 2001).

On the other side, citizen participation advocate and scholar Sherry Arnstein (1969) argued that participation did not necessarily lead to power sharing. She claimed it often focused more on informing and less on involving. She developed the "Ladder of Citizen

Participation" as a means for evaluating the level of joint decision making in citizen participation activities. Her eight rungs ranged from manipulation to citizen control, with a consultation or advisory role for citizens deemed as tokenism rather than power sharing.

Ross and Levine (2001) claim that bureaucrats and city officials generally engaged citizens at the bottom rungs of the ladder. They conclude:

> "Citizens are brought into the process and are given limited access and the illusion of decision-making power; they are thereby led to accept the agency's goals and plans as legitimate" (p. 201).

There is a sense of co-optation. Ross and Levine charge that, in many cities, "community action programs neutralized potential critics by giving activist citizens leadership positions on community boards or jobs with local action agencies" (ibid.).

Berry, Portney, and Thomson (1993) describe the Community Action Program as a relative failure, despite some noteworthy accomplishments. Yet, during the 1970's, demands for citizen participation continued to grow beyond the antipoverty programs and became a widespread mandate in a range of federal legislation and among the middle class. As private corporations and public agencies began to recognize the benefits of structuring more flexible actions in response to the demands of consumers, they became more open and accommodating to citizen participation processes. When the advantages of citizen involvement became recognized, it led to the institutionalization of citizen participation in city politics. By institutionalizing participation, corporations and

government entities were better able to contain its effects and avoid a real redistribution of power (Ross and Levine, 2001).

Despite their successes, proponents of citizen participation felt the effects of institutional containment and continued to be dissatisfied. Berry, Portney, and Thomson (1993) report:

> "Participants repeatedly claimed that the actual procedures used to involve them in government were a sham, designed only to fulfill an agency's obligation under its public participation requirement . . . officials dutifully present a plan, listen attentively to suggestions and complaints by those who attend, and then go ahead and carry out the plan exactly as they intended to do in the first place" (p. 37).

The fundamental conflict, according to Berry, et. al., was that:

> "citizens wanted not only to speak their minds at an open hearing, but also to have some control over policy outcomes. When participants did not get their way, they would often conclude that the process was rigged and that administrators had no intention of bending their plans to comply with citizen preferences . . . [they were] 'rituals,' in which everybody involved merely went through the motions of citizen participation" (ibid.).

They claim that, overall, relatively few administrators believed in participatory democracy and "participation was decoupled from authority over decision-making as public involvement opportunities were prevented from encroaching on the autonomy of agency personnel" (p. 38). This decoupling reconfirmed a fundamental commitment to the kind of procedural, technocratic, professionalized, democratic republic advocated by the Federalists, Lippmann, and others for more than 200 years.

Following national trends, Portlanders began to assert their right to participate in government decision making in the 1970's. This assertion played out most effectively in

relation to urban renewal and civil rights activism, which gave rise to Portland's neighborhood association structure. This development will be explored further under the fourth historical condition. Despite the somewhat radical departure at this point of Portland's approach to citizen participation, in comparison to many other areas around the country, the fundamental underlying question of citizens' role in government decision making continued to be contested there as elsewhere. While Portland's practices and structures of citizen participation evolved in important ways that were more deliberative, the same forces the rest of the country faced also challenged them. These forces, such as institutionalization, Reaganomics, and the decoupling of participation from authority over decision-making, tempered their success.

The Reagan administration's conservative backlash in the 1980's eroded the gains of many programs nationally. The fiscal conservatism of Reaganomics reduced resources available for citizen participation, and economic restructuring shifted decision making towards corporate actors who were not directly accountable to democratic controls. Also, Reagan renewed the view that it is local elected officials, as duly chosen representatives, that are the primary decision makers in government (Ross and Levine, 2001). It was also during the 1980's and into the '90's that an acknowledgement of public management implementation failures began to surface. In the quest to improve public management, concepts for reinventing government were borrowed from the private sector including the metaphor of customer service in which citizens were recast as clients or consumers of government services (Bramson, 2003).

Despite these changes, some programs managed to sustain themselves and thrive. While Johnson (2003) notes that there is evidence to show that investment in Portland's civic structure began to decline during this period, as well, Witt (2000) maintains that its neighborhood association program was able to sustain itself because of its strong liberal populist roots.

In the mid-1980's, Berry, et.al., (1993) began their study of citizen participation programs across the country. Portland's program was identified as one model among five. Berry, et. al. concluded in the early '90's that, in Portland, "citizens have a real and ongoing capacity not only to influence but also to shape policy outcomes in accordance with their stated preferences through participation in their respective neighborhood associations" (Witt, 2000, p. 8). Witt challenged this conclusion as insufficiently theorized in the abstract and as pre-dating important key events. He states that

> "Portland's commitment to citizen participation has been lasting and significant, but it has also been conflicted. This conflict has been over deriving a stable program identity and definition. Since the program's inception, there has remained unresolved the degree to which citizens, operating through their respective neighborhood associations, shall be granted predominant authority to shape and influence decisions and actions which impact their lives and communities" (ibid.).

In the later 1990's and into the 21st century, the debate over the role of citizens in government decision-making has continued. New challenges have arisen, especially in the form of globalization, technological changes, increasing diversity, questions of sustainability, and public distrust in government. There is a growing sense among a wide variety of scholars, public-sector professionals, public involvement practitioners, and

citizen activists that government alone cannot resolve these problems. There is a conviction that it is citizens, themselves, that need to be accountable, responsible and engaged in helping to solve these public issues, and that a meaningful role in deciding public policy directions, beyond advisory, is crucial to creating sustainable public policies (Bramson, 2003).

The two texts analyzed at the beginning of this Chapter demonstrate that the question of the role of citizens in government has not been successfully resolved in Portland. The dominant ideology casts citizens as active participants in decision making, while action is conceived of as advisory deliberation, voting, withdrawal, or litigation. Commissioner Francesconi and citizen activists have called this characterization into question, once again. What is the role of citizens in making the governance decisions that affect their lives and communities? Should we include citizens in *making* decisions as well as in discussions *about* decisions? These are questions that were at the heart of the United States Constitution and continue in democratic governance debates around the world today.

Land Use Planning and Citizen Participation: The rise of Portland's neighborhood association structure

The professional approach to planning in the bureaucratic environment of 1950's and 1960's Portland was, like its approach to citizen participation, similar to most other American cities. Planning professionals applied nationally accepted planning principles to neighborhoods without the inclusion of neighborhood groups or citizen involvement

beyond perfunctory national requirements (Abbott, 1983). Abbott claims that planning documents of this era were an expression of the planning priorities of governing elites and were written by city employees for their colleagues in City Hall. Among these priorities was urban renewal and it was the standard policies of urban renewal, in an era in which civil rights activism and the War on Poverty were gearing up, that ignited the controversies that would change the face of planning and citizen participation in Portland.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, a "neighborhood revolution" broke out across the city in response to the urban renewal plans of downtown professionals. Many of these plans focused on comprehensive redevelopment of low income and poor neighborhoods, which were considered to be blighted and unsalvageable (Abbott, 1983). The residents of these neighborhoods, however, sought to redefine this perspective and take control of their neighborhood's future. Structures deemed by planners as "obsolete," "dilapidated," and "warranting clearance" were recast by neighborhood activists as "affordable" and suitable for "rehabilitation" (Hovey, 2003).

In Northeast Portland, activists from neighborhoods slated for urban renewal were able to shift control of planning programs from downtown agencies to neighborhoods through the Community Action Program, Model Cities, and the federally mandated policy of maximum feasible participation. They criticized city government's focus on informing citizens rather than involving them. They created a Citizens' Planning Board, which was

given veto power over planning staff suggestions, and created their own Model Cities plan.

In Southeast Portland, neighborhood groups that were already organized for economic development and social service planning argued that their communities had the same problems and needs as the Model Cities area in Northeast. Southeast Uplift, which continues to serve as a neighborhood coalition office, was formed to develop neighborhood plans focused on housing, schools, and jobs. They challenged the environmental impact study for the Mount Hood Freeway in 1971 and stopped construction. In Southwest Portland, the residents of Corbett, Terwilliger, and Lair Hill formed a neighborhood council, which worked first to stop the city's plans for comprehensive clearance in Lair Hill and then to develop neighborhood plans that would preserve residential land in the area.

In Northwest Portland, the Portland Development Commission (PDC) initiated a Northwest District Association in response to federal mandates for participation. The intent was to encourage and coordinate citizen participation in "orderly rehabilitation and renewal" (Abbott, 1983, p. 197). Citizens, however, quickly took control of the NWDA and separated from the PDC in an effort to convince City Council to establish a comprehensive neighborhood plan before any urban renewal grants were applied for.

The urban renewal plans of downtown planning professionals for Northwest called for clearance redevelopment of the neighborhood surrounding Good Samaritan Hospital. The NWDA worked with the Portland Planning Commission and developed a response, the Northwest District Plan (NWDP). The NWDP became the "local exemplar of a concept of urban living that seems to animate contemporary planning practice in Portland" (Hovey, 2003, p. 142). They established a focus on higher densities, mixed uses, transit, walkable streets, local retail, and the importance of citizen participation. In this way, the NWDP played a formative role in setting the current New Urbanist agenda in Portland. Hovey (2003) states:

> " . . . the ideas the Northwest Plan celebrated, the vocabulary and concepts it developed, have permeated Portland planning since then. The importance of mixed uses, the possibility of mixed incomes, the importance of transit, the need for walkable streets and local retail services, the importance of density, the value of older buildings, and perhaps most important of all, the importance of strong citizen participation -–all of these ideas gained local currency in Northwest and went forward in practice, policy, and rule" (p. 147).

The successful cooperative efforts between NWDA and the Planning Commission were also at the heart of defining a formal role for neighborhood groups in city decision-making. A task force was formed to explore the role of neighborhood organizations in planning decisions, establish criteria for their recognition, identify funding needs, and describe channels of communication between neighborhoods and the council (Abbott, 1983). Through this process, citizen participation was institutionalized within the political sphere. It was established at this time that citizens would act in an advisory role in public decision making.

In addition to these contributions, many city leaders emerged from the ranks of the Northwest District Association. They carried the citizen participation and New Urbanist messages into the upper echelons of the government bureaucracy. They included Mary Pederson, the first director of the Office of Neighborhood Associations, and Vera Katz, who is currently serving a third term as mayor.

Although the activities of neighborhood groups across the city successfully challenged the values held by the city's planning elite and altered the content of neighborhood plans and the processes by which they were formulated (Abbott, 1983), neighborhood activists did not do it alone. The neighborhoods were successful in their challenges of the planning establishment, in part, due to changes in leadership that were occurring at the same time. Neil Goldschmidt was a rising young politician who was elected mayor in 1972 at the age of 32. He reshaped the city's approach to planning in an effort to preserve the downtown core and maintain Portland's dominance in the region.

Goldschmidt focused attention on rebalancing the transportation system, by promoting transit and limiting highway and parking construction; supporting downtown development and the regeneration of close-in neighborhoods, most of which were designated urban renewal areas; and improving the quality of life for residents as a means of attracting economic development, rather than more conventional forms. At the same time, Oregon Governor Tom McCall was introducing statewide mandatory land use policies through a series of legislation culminating in Senate Bill 100. McCall's focus

was on the environment and protecting Oregon from the kind of development that was laying waste to California.

The “tales of planning glory” that grew out of these policies shaped the city and its practices of planning. They became “parables to guide actors in the future.” (Hovey, p. 147) Some of the successes included stopping the Mount Hood Freeway; removing the Harbor Freeway and replacing it with a park; implementing the 1972 Downtown Plan; trading in highway funds to build light-rail transit; a grassroots campaign to build Pioneer Courthouse Square; and neighborhood planning. These became the “exemplars of right conduct” (ibid.).

Both McCall and Goldschmidt, however, recognized the importance of citizen participation in their ability to implement sweeping changes. Fortunately for them, their policies were relatively on message with the citizen activists of the day. They also recognized the advantages of institutionalizing participation in order to harness its effects. Citizen participation became Goal One of the Statewide Land Use Planning Goals with an attendant set of regulatory mechanisms for how citizen involvement would be integrated into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of land use in the state. Goal One recommended widespread and representative public involvement in land use planning; effective two-way communication between citizens and elected and appointed officials; opportunities for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process; accessibility to technical information; feedback mechanisms from policymakers; and

appropriate financial support for citizen involvement programs. These concepts have been inculcated at all levels of government from Metro, the regional governing body, to county and city governments, including the City of Portland.

In 1974, Goldschmidt struck a political bargain with neighborhood activists. He supported legitimizing their activities by "incorporating independent neighborhood associations as secondary participants in public decision making" (Abbott, 2001, p. 149). This was an attempt to strike a balance between the confrontational tactics of grassroots organizers and the top-down management of citizen participation from City Hall. The result was the Office of Neighborhood Associations (ONA) and Mary Pederson, an activist from the Northwest District Association, became its first director.

ONA's role was to assist communication between city bureaus and neighborhood associations; channel city funding and provide staff support for neighborhood associations; and to monitor organizations for open participation through contracts with District Coalitions (DC). The DCs consist of representatives from each neighborhood association in the coalition area. They submit yearly work plans to ONA and the plans are checked for compliance with citizen participation guidelines and priorities. The DCs are independent non-profit organizations and their Boards of Directors hire the DC staff. While ONA does not dictate issues or positions to DCs or neighborhood associations, the neighborhood groups are prohibited from political organizing, such as raising money for and endorsing political candidates (Berry, Portney, Thomson, 1993; Witt, 2001). This

structure has grown to include seven DCs and 95+ neighborhood associations; however, two of the DCs have disbanded themselves in the face of conflict and neighborhood associations elected to be managed by City of Portland staff. One other DC is operating as an independent non-profit while its city staff is being phased out.

In this way, citizen participation in Portland has become institutionalized and grounded in a rational technical planning model, which incorporates a procedural or bureaucratized model of citizen participation. The model conceives of the appropriate role for citizens in public decision making as "secondary participants" or advisory. Although citizen activists in neighborhood associations have retained a central and powerful focus on land use planning issues, the implementation of this model has resulted in an extensive system of citizen participation throughout all aspects of governance in Portland. A dense and active citywide system of neighborhood associations has been created on which citizens rely and city government supports (Hovey, 2003). Hovey claims, "The expectation that citizens will be involved in full and fair discussions about decisions that affect their city and their neighborhoods is pervasive and conditions a political life that is, in relative terms at least, open and deliberative" (p. 140).

This model continues to be successfully supported because it fits with the underlying moralistic and conservative political culture and values of the city and the state (Abbott, 1994). Hovey (2003) summarizes:

> "The Portland Way of planning is a robust and securely rooted cultural regime. It is far stronger now than the perpetrators of 1950's and 1960's orthodoxies ever were. It has foundations in law, politics, and the distinct cultures of bureaucracy, profession, and community. There are many challenges facing the regime: rising housing prices, endangered fish species, economic cycles. But so far, it has shown great resilience in responding to these, in absorbing challenge, in turning oppositional terms to its own advantage, and incorporating resistance. The weight of practices and the depth of organizational and institutional development all mean it will be difficult to overturn the regime. Yet things continue to change, and the levers are always linguistic." (p. 153)

Conflict

It has been demonstrated that the implementation of this model has not gone forward without conflict (Hovey, 2003; Witt, 2001). One primary source of conflict is that ONA is a city bureau under a commission government. The ONA director serves at the will of whichever City Commissioner the mayor has assigned to oversee the bureau at a given time. Each commissioner brings to the job his or her own understanding of the role of citizen participation in government and a political constituency which has one investment or another in how citizen participation is carried out. Because commissioners come and go as a result of the election process, and commissioners routinely change portfolios (the set of bureaus for which they are responsible), the focus of the bureau is regularly politically contested.

Witt (2001) explores conflict throughout the evolution of the neighborhood association structure. As mentioned earlier in this Chapter, he makes the case that the center of tension is the degree to which citizens, operating through their neighborhood associations, have authority to shape and influence public decisions. He maintains that the question of control has always been contested, across time and place; sometimes

dormant, sometimes rancorously challenged; sometimes “simmering at a constant level of measured distrust” (p. 9).

Witt further theorizes the tension in terms of “a fundamental ambiguity in the program [that] exists over how roles and responsibilities [in decision-making] are to be most equitably and prudently assigned . . . this ambiguity has served both to vitalize and threaten the program.” The ambiguity has vitalized the program by leaving room for a degree of innovation in defining the terms of engagement and flexibility in how it is carried out. On the other hand, the ambiguity threatens the program when some person or group perceives these innovations as inequitable or imprudent and initiates a strong and sometimes “misguided challenge.” In order to limit potential damage from outward conflict, Witt asserts that the “stakeholders within the neighborhood association program have adapted to a ‘control/counter control’ dynamic whereby outward displays of consensus punctuate ongoing power struggles” (p. 11).

Some themes around which these power struggles have been waged over the years include the suspicions of neighborhood activists that ONA was a front for City Hall control; the need to demonstrate to City Council broader support for ONA than from entrenched neighborhood groups; the lack of a standardized relationship between ONA and other city bureaus; ONA contract funding viewed as an entitlement; neighborhood boundary disputes; and the potential for ONA to drift towards a service delivery model and away from neighborhood support. These themes are important to understanding the

Summit dialogue as they continue to play a role in ongoing discussions about local concerns.

Change

In 1995, a Task Force on Neighborhood Involvement (TFNI) was charged with reviewing ONA guidelines. It recommended changing ONA's name to the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) to reflect a new direction for the bureau, at the behest of then-commissioner-in-charge Charlie Hales and Director Diane Linn. This new direction was an attempt to broaden ONI's scope and incorporate new stakeholder groups, especially the neighborhood business associations, in order to recapture a broader vision for citizen participation than entrenched and parochial neighborhood association perspectives that some believed had co-opted the DCs.

In the years since then, ONI has been increasingly challenged to incorporate growing racial and ethnic diversity into citywide citizen participation activities. It is for ONI's efforts in this direction that Sirianni and Friedland (2001) recognized Portland as a center for civic innovation. It remains to be determined, however, the degree to which this innovation, like other social experiments in Oregon, reflects a conservative culture which captures elements of change in an effort to preserve and control what already exists.

In 2002, at the time of the current study, Dan Saltzmann was Commissioner of ONI. His term was marked by efforts to reorganize the neighborhood association program to

continue the work begun by Linn. He dubbed his undertaking "Re-examine, Re-Connect." His stated goals were to reassess the neighborhood system to strengthen its structure, improve participation, and increase partnerships with other bureaus to improve Portland's livability. ONI director, David Lane, began the Summit meetings in 2000. Saltzmann's efforts ran aground when he attempted to open up the District Coalitions' contracting process to a more diverse group of organizations without first deliberating with neighborhood associations.

In 2003, ONI seems poised on the verge of yet another direction change. Having had three different Commissioners and two Directors in one and a half years, ONI has struggled to forge its identity. Current Commissioner Randy Leonard has ventured to refocus ONI on neighborhood service delivery; a recurring and highly charged conflict in the neighborhood association program. The conflict was brought to the fore at the 2003 Neighborhood Association Summit when neighborhood leaders offered a direct challenge to Leonard's vision. Three well-known civic leaders, Ethan Seltzer and Sumner Sharpe who participated in the Flatow interview, and Margaret Strachan, a former city commissioner and long time activist in Northwest, issued this charge:

> "The City of Portland's neighborhood program, once broadly recognized as a catalyst for civic innovation, has become a shadow of its former self. Rather than promoting and sustaining neighborhood organizing as a means for ensuring a steady flow of new participants into neighborhood association activities, and articulate and empowered neighborhoods, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement has become a top-heavy bureaucracy intent on defining performance in institutional rather than grassroots terms. What is needed is a new commitment to neighborhood organizing, a willingness to define performance goals in terms of community needs and processes, and a refocusing of effort on neighbor-to-neighbor interaction."

Leonard's vision was criticized by neighborhood activist as a return to the kind of elitist bureaucracy of the 1950's. Seltzer, Strathan, and Sharpe's proposal retains the important elements of community organizing upon which the neighborhood association program is built, including deliberation in public decision making. But it is also firmly rooted in the dominant ideology that undergirds this community's approach to citizen participation. They elaborate that

> "Neighborhoods associations must be viewed as vehicles for participation, not representation. The results of participation are important and should be viewed as more significant than simply another lone voice in the wilderness of public opinion. However, it is not fair, just, or reasonable to expect neighborhood associations to carry the burden of representation. That is . . the signature role that we charge our elected officials with, and for which they should be held accountable."

Yet, it is not elaborated as to how that special regard for the results of participation should be operationalized. This is the fundamental question that has plagued citizen participation in Portland and on which our democracy rests. As Portland's population grows, becomes more diverse, and incorporates more citizens who have not been inculcated within its dominant ideology, the values and practices that have guided answers to public decisions may become more hotly contested.

Abbott (1983) concludes that the importance of the neighborhood revolution of the 1970's was that it opened to public debate political choices that had previously been largely implicit in planning. Neighborhood groups successfully challenged the values held by the city's planning elite and altered the process and content of neighborhood plans. A similar challenge may be in store in terms of how citizens are involved in the public decision-making that shapes their lives and communities.

Summary

In this Chapter, the characteristics of the dominant ideology that shapes citizen participation in Portland were established. I reviewed four historical conditions out of which its ideology has grown and which continue to preserve and support it in practice: 1) a state-wide culture that is moralistic and conservative; 2) a local governance structure which conflates the political with the bureaucratic; 3) a national historical view of citizens' role as predominantly advisory in government decision-making; and 4) a strong relationship between land use planning and citizen participation. These characteristics and conditions will be used as the context for understanding deliberation at the 2002 Neighborhood Association Summit.

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