Public Participation and the Impact of Third-Party Facilitators

by

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ABSTRACT

Research suggests that a particularly important variable in determining success in public participation is the presence of a facilitator. Data from a study of 239 public participation case studies is analyzed using descriptive and statistical analysis to determine the impact on success of the participation efforts if a facilitator is present and whether or not internal versus external facilitators have a significant impact on success. The data suggest that facilitators have a positive impact on the success of public participation efforts and, in particular, that public participation efforts that use facilitators are more successful when the facilitator is a third-party intermediary (external) versus a member of the lead agency's staff (internal).

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father, David and Doreen Wastchak, who have passed away, but whom I wish could have been a part of this milestone event in my life. It is also dedicated to my three daughters, Acacia, Lauryl, and Sophia, each of whom has shown grudging patience with me as I've labored over the past many years to complete this project and who have anxiously awaited its conclusion so they can have more of my time. Sorry for all of the lost evenings and weekends while I worked on the computer or at the library; I hope someday this accomplishment will prove an inspiration for one or more of you to follow in my footsteps.

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I am truly grateful to Thomas Beierle and Jerry Cayford for sharing their data and making it possible to answer the research question for this dissertation. Thanks, in particular, to Thomas Beierle who spent several phone calls and emails walking me through the data files and helping to explain how to sort the data to recreate the figures and tables in his book which in turn made it possible to create my own subset of data to analyze.

A big thank you goes to Patricia Dustman for the detailed and thorough editing assistance on this paper, done on short notice and without hesitation. This dissertation is undoubtedly a better product because of her keen eye and excellent suggestions.

Appreciation goes to Judy Rosener for suggesting in her 1981 article, "User-oriented Evaluation: A New Way to View Citizen Participation," that a "third-party intermediary" may have been the difference in success between two Army Corps of Engineer's public participation workshops. The article, and her suggestion, were discovered in my first year of the doctoral program 16 years ago and have remained the focus of my study and research ever since. I'm glad that Thomas' data have ultimately proved you right.

Lastly, I want to thank the staff at the Arizona State University College of Public Programs, School of Public Affairs, and Graduate College for granting me two critical extensions of time to finish this dissertation. The extra time is greatly appreciated and your understanding and flexibility was an essential ingredient to making it to the end.

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Chapter 1

OVERVIEW

Public participation in government is primarily of two basic forms: (1) voting at the ballot box and (2) direct involvement in the governing process by the public through public meetings and other forms of direct participation. A great deal of research has been done over the past 40 years on the latter form of participation, including consideration of what makes a public participation effort or process a success or failure. Existing research suggests that a particularly important variable in determining success is the involvement of a facilitator in public participation efforts. More specifically, the question remains unanswered as to whether or not the facilitator, as a "third-party intermediary" in contrast to a member of the lead agency's staff, has a significant impact on the level of success of a public participation effort.

This dissertation will evaluate the primary research question: Do third-party, neutral intermediaries (facilitators) have a positive impact on the success of public participation?

To lay the theoretical groundwork for the study, literature from the fields of public participation, small group communication, group facilitation, and evaluation research will be examined in Chapter 2. This review of the literature will be aimed at developing a better understanding of the role facilitator's play in the success of public participation efforts. Additionally, the review will consider, more specifically, the impact public participation has, in general, on the quality of public participation and trust by participants in the institutions which sponsor public participation, namely governments.

The literature will show that facilitators have a direct impact on both the quality of public participation and participant trust in sponsoring institutions.

Existing literature shows that only one empirical study has been conducted to evaluate the impact of facilitators on the success of a public participation effort. The literature further shows that no empirical research has been conducted on the impact of internal versus external facilitators on the success of a public participation effort. However, the literature review revealed that data for Thomas Beierle's and Jerry Cayford's 2002 book, *Democracy in Practice. Public Participation in Environmental Decisions*, includes coding for the presence of a "facilitator" in each of the cases they studied, making it possible to conduct the necessary analysis to answer the research question for this study.

In Chapter 3, a description of the Beierle and Cayford data set is provided as well as the methodology for analyzing the data further to answer the primary research question as well as seven sub-questions. The Beierle and Cayford data were derived from several hundred published studies, from 1970 to 2000, covering 239 cases of public involvement in environmental decision making. Thomas Beierle shared the data set from the *Democracy in Practice* study which included all coded data for the 239 cases as well as numerous data tables containing statistical output from the analyses. The data tables were sorted to obtain the specific cases of interest to this study, then data for those cases were summarized into counting tables that allowed for both descriptive and statistical analysis.

In Chapter 4, an analysis of the data is completed to answer the main research question and seven sub-questions. The conclusions and implication of the study are summarized in Chapter 5, including a description of how the findings from Chapter 4 are tied back to the literature, suggestions for further research, and a discussion of the main contribution this dissertation makes to the literature of public participation and facilitation. The main contribution of this study is to show, through descriptive and statistical analysis of case study data, that facilitators have a positive impact on the success of public participation efforts and, in particular, that public participation efforts using facilitators are more successful when the facilitator is a third-party intermediary (external) rather than a member of the lead agency's staff (internal).

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> Those who harness [controversy] by including third parties rather than trying to vanquish them, will have the opportunity to consider new possibilities and to test out new ideas in the heat of dialogue. While others are mired in disputes and litigation, astute practitioners of public involvement will have hammered out an agreement and gotten on with the project. In short, they will have made better decisions and found a new source of competitive advantage – Peter Johnson, former head of the Bonneville Power Administration (1993, p. 66).

The topic of Christine Hogan's (2002) book, *Understanding Facilitation: Theory and Principles,* seems obvious enough from the title, yet her introductory chapter, and description of the "reasons for the increased focus on facilitation roles and skills across the world in the 20th century," reads much more like an introduction to a book about "public participation" (p. 11). Citing Heron (1993), Hogan notes that over the centuries, there was a "swing of the pendulum between participatory and autocratic ways of doing things," in governing, industry, religion, etc. (p. 11). However, in the 17th century, that pendulum firmly swung in the direction of increased public participation in decision making processes. The movement was led by the political philosopher John Locke who posited theories regarding the "natural rights" of man (known today as "human rights") and the idea that "people have a right to participate in decisions being made about them" (p. 11). This seeming miss-start to Hogan's introduction was no mistake. It was the increased level at which people were working collaboratively, in both private and public fora, that ultimately spawned a need for assistance and guidance in the group communication process addressed by "facilitation". Facilitators were not labeled as such in these earlier times, but the role was nonetheless filled by teachers, counselors, and

religious leaders. In more recent times, facilitation has been provided by professional social workers, urban planners, and during the past 20 years, often by professional facilitators such as those certified by the International Association of Facilitators (IAF).

Indeed, this literature review demonstrates that facilitation and public participation are tied closely together. Research shows that public participation done poorly often can be more damaging than if it were not done at all (Korff, 2007). However, the benefits of public participation have been so clearly accepted in today's society that using public participation in public decision making, and increasingly in private industry decision making as well (Johnson, 1993), no longer is a question of *if* it is to be used, but *how* it shall be implemented (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). The primary purpose of this study is to draw a connection between the success of a public participation effort and the presence of a designated individual performing the role of facilitator. Research cited includes fields of public participation, small group communication, and group facilitation along with the variables that are shared among the fields proven critical to successful public participation. A description of the role that professional facilitators can play is provided to ensure that the important variables are present not only in public participation group exercises, but also maximized, thus increasing the opportunity for public participation to be successful.

The literature suggests that the success of group outcomes is more often greater when facilitators originate from external sources rather than from within a group, or even within the larger organization from which a smaller group belongs. To clarify this point,

literature that applies to internal versus external facilitators is reviewed, making clear the differentiation and explaining the pros and cons of each.

From the 1960s onward, as public participation played a larger and larger role in governmental decision making, and the process garnered heightened visibility before policy makers and the general public, the function inevitably came under increased scrutiny, from both supporters and detractors. It was not until ten years after "maximum feasible participation" was codified in the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964 that practitioners of public participation, like Judy Rosener (1978), as well as those approving its inclusion in decision making (i.e. politicians, public administrators, non-profit leaders, and even private sector corporations) started asking questions in earnest about how well participation was working. Was it living up to the promise? Unfortunately, over 30 years later, understanding the merits of public participation, and how to evaluate it effectively, still remains somewhat of a mystery as noted by Walls, Rowe, and Frewer (2011):

> [V]arious reasons have been put forward to explain the recent increased popularity of stakeholder involvement. Although evidence for the merits of wider public engagement is equivocal, there are fewer disputes about the potential merits of involving directly relevant institutional stakeholders in appropriate policy development and implementation. However, empirical evidence regarding how and when to enact stakeholder involvement is lacking, and consequently there have been calls for additional, as well as more rigorous, exercise evaluations (p. 241).

In the next section of the literature review, the public participation evaluation literature is considered, starting with a discussion about why evaluation is important and what it has to offer those who choose to evaluate their programs. The foundations of the

current forms of evaluation are reviewed, including problems inherent in the evaluation of public participation, and what "good evaluation" looks like.

Public participation evaluation is based on a multitude of "frameworks" which serve as a template for evaluation of various participation techniques and methods. The key frameworks developed over the past 40 years by various authors and researchers are summarized next, specifically those considered to be the most important to the field of public participation and those most often cited in the literature. Finally, several of the most current public participation evaluation frameworks are summarized to bring the review of the evaluation literature up to the present.

Public Participation in Government

The term "public participation" is more or less synonymous with "citizen participation," with little differentiation specifically noted in the literature. Prior to the 1990s, the literature and professionals in the field of participation utilized the term "citizen participation." However, by the time of the founding of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) in the early 1990s, both the literature and terminology had migrated squarely to the term "public participation." While there may be instances in this dissertation where literature is cited using the term "citizen participation," because of the shift just described, the term "public participation" will be used almost exclusively to describe the public's participation in the governing process.

A review of literature supporting the theoretical basis for public participation has been undertaken by many authors in recent times. Thomas Webler's article, *The Craft and Theory of Public Participation: A Dialectical Process* (1999) serves as an excellent

example. Webler's brief but exhaustive overview of the literature reviews case studies, handbooks for practitioners, survey research, and works that add to and support the theory of public participation (see also Rowe & Frewer, 2000, pp. 8-9 for a concise list and description of the most widely implemented methods of Public Participation). In the arena of theory, Webler notes the particular role of urban planners, including Sherry Arnstein and her often cited article, *A Ladder of Public Participation* (1969), which explores the issue of public power and participation. Beierle and Cayford (2002) identify Arnstein as the founder of public participation evaluation (p. 16), a very specific area of theoretical focus for the field of public participation. Other theoretical areas identified by Webler (1999) influencing or interacting closely with public participation include participatory democracy, political theories of democracy, environmental siting and risk communication, the "Not In My Backyard" (NIMBY) syndrome, trust in regulatory government, social impact assessment, managerial theory, theory of communication, and even theories of international capitalist development.

Simply stated, public participation by citizens in government primarily is of two basic forms: (1) voting at the ballot box and (2) direct involvement in the governing process by the public through public meetings and other forms of direct participation. For the purposes of this study, primary attention will be on the latter, and will follow the more specific definition provided by James Creighton (2005):

> The process by which public concerns, needs and values are incorporated into governmental….decision making. It is two-way communication and interaction, with the overall goal of better decisions that are supported by the public (p. 7).

Background and historical context. Before the drafting of the United States Constitution, many colonial settlers, particularly in New England, exercised direct participation in governing their communities via town meetings, allowing each citizen to have a say in how the town government operated and the creation of laws by which they would abide. Even after the Constitution was ratified by the original thirteen colonies as a representative rather than direct democracy, the town meeting persisted in New England and remains at work in a surprising number of towns today, although the number is less than 1,000 in Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Maine (Barber, 1984; Bryan, 2004).

The framers of the Constitution were skeptical of direct democracy and the potentially damaging impact of the turbulent passions of the populace. Nonetheless, they drew upon the political philosophies of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rouseau in addition to the exalted examples of the democratic governments of Greece and the Roman Republic to provide for democratic participation of the nation's citizens in the governing process. This franchise, of course, was in the form of voting at the ballot box and, in reality, limited in many ways. Voting was restricted to those citizens who were white, male land owners. Only members of the House of Representatives at each Congress were directly elected by the citizenry. Senators were elected by state legislatures and the President and Vice President via an electoral college. However, over time not only did the voting situation improve (e.g. passage of the15th Amendment in 1870 guaranteed the vote of non-white Americans, the 17th Amendment to the Constitution in 1913 provided for the direct election of U.S. Senators, and the 20th

Amendment in 1920 gave women the right to vote), but a more complete realization of a democratic society started to take shape with increased opportunities for citizen participation in government.

On a national level, direct democracy such as that practiced in the town meeting did not spread much beyond New England. However, throughout the nation's history, citizens of the United States have shown an inclination to gather and demonstrate activism in the governing process. This activism is what Alexis de Tocqueville described in his famous 1835 treatise, *Democracy in America*, as American's proclivity to form "voluntary associations" and the power of those associations against the "traditional barriers to despotism" (Koritansky, 1986). According to John Stuart Mill, de Tocqueville attached "the utmost importance to the performance of as much of the collective business of society, as can safely be so performed, by the people themselves, without any intervention of the executive government, either to supersede their agency, or to dictate the manner of its exercise" (Mill, 2003, para. 5).

At the turn of the 20th century, the progressive or "populist" movement in the United States renewed the push for an increase in "direct democracy" in the form of voting tools such as the initiative, referendum, and recall. First used in Oregon in 1904, initiative, referendum, and recall moved citizens within a largely representative democratic system towards greater direct influence in the governing process (Smith & Lubinski, 2002).

> With the initiative, citizens collect a specified number of valid signatures in order to place either a statutory measure or a constitutional amendment on the ballot for fellow voters to adopt or reject. With the popular referendum, citizens petition their legislatures to place a disputed legislative action on the ballot for the voters

> to reconsider. The recall enables citizens to collect signatures to force a retention vote of an elected official (Smith & Lubinski, 2002, p. 374).

Direct democracy, as advocated by the "progressive movement" in politics, is credited with a flurry of important initiatives between 1910 and 1920, including "the direct primary, women's suffrage, prohibition, the abolition of the poll tax, home rule for cities and towns, eight-hour workdays for women and miners, and the regulation of public utility and railroad monopolies" (Smith & Lubinski, 2002, p. 349).

In addition to the progressive efforts to reform government through voting mechanisms, a more subtle movement was underway early in the twentieth century to clearly define the public's role in the policy implementation, if not the policy making, process. This movement was fueled by a realization that government, particularly at the federal level, was steadily growing larger, and bureaucracies were becoming more professional and controlling.

In the late 19th century, Max Weber (1946) noted in his *Essays in Sociology* the superiority of bureaucratic structures in administration and their great benefit to the efficient operation of, among other things, the public administration of government. Therefore, as government grew, along with the complexity of public administration, bureaucracy was a natural, rational response which gradually made it more and more difficult for the average citizen to hold any sway over the policy implementation function of government (Kweit & Kweit, 1979). Reflecting on the tension between public participation and public administration, Carl Stenberg of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations wrote, "The idea of 'clients' [i.e. citizens] having a voice in

the determination of such policies as service levels, staffing patterns, and budgetary priorities is often considered to be unacceptable to administrators" (1972, p. 190).

While Weber's idealistic view of bureaucracy and bureaucrats have clear merit, Kweit and Kweit (1979) debunk the simplistic view that governing officials are merely servants of the people, dispassionately focused on carrying out the functions of government with the public's best interests always in mind. They argue instead that "bureaucrats are only marginally responsible to citizens for their actions, since most of them are selected for their technical competence rather than for their sensitivity to the desires of the public. In addition, the job security provided by civil service regulations has reduced any incentive to become sensitive to the public interest and, in fact, such regulations have insulated bureaucrats from the public" (p. 648).

To combat the loss of citizen control over policy implementation, Lewis Mainzer (1973) suggests four means by which bureaucracies can be made more responsible to the public: (1) reduction in size; (2) increasing the rule of law that stipulates what they can and cannot do; (3) self-control through increased professionalism and expertise; and, (4) greater political oversight (pp. 13-14). While each of these means of control may be effective, a fifth, public participation, arguably is the most effective (Kweit & Kweit, 1979). Thus, starting in the 1930s, existing literature shows the beginning of a slow march towards greater and greater public participation in the operation of government outside of the voting booth and a more complete fulfillment of the democratic ideal that government should be answerable to the citizens, not just when formulating policy, but also in its implementation.

Direct participation by citizens in executive branch decisions in the United States first occurred at the federal level of government in the 1930s with soil conservation committees run by local farmers (Milbrath, 1981). The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), created by Congress in 1933, was a "public corporation" for the primary purpose of flood control, navigation improvement, and electricity and fertilizer production along the Tennessee River (Selznick, 1966). At the time, the TVA was considered a new experiment of government in "planning" that eventually gave rise to the idea that planning should utilize the input of the public, thus the ever present focus on public participation to this day in the area of urban planning (1966).

In 1946, according to Beierle and Cayford (2002), the Administrative Procedure Act (APA)

> systematized for the first time the process that federal agencies must use when making law through rulemaking. It requires that agencies provide public notice about the rules they are proposing, information on which the rules are based, an opportunity for public comment on those rules, and judicial review of the rulemaking process. The APA continues to govern all regulatory proceedings and is the cornerstone of public participation in administrative governance (p. 3).

Public participation took on greatest prominence in the U.S. starting in the 1960s with President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" (Rich, 1981) and the passage of the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964 which required "maximum feasible participation" of citizens in the public policy making process (Arnstein, 1969; Rosener, 1978; Wandersman, 1984). The 1970s saw a tremendous growth in government mandated public participation. According to the U.S. Federal Regional Council's Community Services Administration (1978), 61% of the 226 federal agency public participation

programs in operation by the late 1970s were created in that decade and 80% of the 155 federal grant-in-aid programs adopted in the 1970s mandated public participation.

In the 1990s, organizations whose focus was public participation, organizations such as “America Speaks” and the “International Association of Public Participation” (IAP2) were founded in response to the rising interest in the field. IAP2 grew from 300 members in 1992 to over 1,050 in 2007 (IAP2). The “core values” espoused by IAP2 and its membership are listed in Table 2-1. Irvin and Stansbury (2004) argue that today, the debates involving public participation are no longer about whether or not it should be a part of representative government but, rather, which public participation process is best for a given situation.

The pros and cons of public participation. With so much importance now placed on public participation in decisions that affect the public, far beyond the limits of the voting booth, it is worth taking into account some of the pros and cons of the franchise. To begin, consider the decidedly “pro” comments of Peter Johnson, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Prior to assuming the top position at the Bonneville Power Administration in 1981, Johnson was an executive in the private sector where he admits, “I viewed conflict with people outside the company as an annoyance I’d do almost anything to avoid. I had enough on my plate without environmentalists, politicians, special interests, or the general public second-guessing my decisions and interfering with my operations” (Johnson, 1993, p. 56). However, as a public servant at Bonneville, he came to appreciate the benefits of public participation in decision making processes.

Table 2-1

IAP2 Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation (IAP2, 2007a)

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

> I am more convinced than ever that public involvement is a tool that today's managers in both public and private institutions must understand. With external stakeholders now exerting substantial influence on organizations in every sector, conflict is inevitable. The only choice is whether to dodge the controversy or learn to harness it (1993, p. 66).

Sherry Arnstein (1969) states that "participation of the governed in their government is, in theory, the cornerstone of democracy— a revered idea that is vigorously applauded by virtually everyone" (p. 216). Irvin and Stansbury support this common belief, stating that "if citizens become actively involved as participants in their democracy, the governance that emerges from [the] process will be more democratic and more effective (p. 55).

Public participation in government has many positive effects for both citizens and government officials. Public involvement in the decision making process helps citizens feel a sense of control over what their government is doing, allows citizens to play a "watchdog" function in the governing process, and provides citizens with an opportunity to learn how government operates (Wandersman, 1984). Although many professional civil servants have an aversion to increasing opportunities for public participation, most find public participation to be positive if it can lead to improved decisions, public support for those decisions, and saving an agency and/or its programs from budget cuts or unpopular modification by politicians (1984).

James Creighton (2003), author of *The Public Participation Handbook*, lists the following benefits of public participation, clarifying that because research on the benefits of public participation is limited, the list is based less on empirical findings and more on his personal experience working as a public participation practitioner for over 30 years:

1. Improves the quality of decisions;
2. Minimizes costs and delay;
3. Leads to consensus based decisions;
4. Avoids "worst-case" confrontations;
5. Maintains credibility and legitimacy for decisions;
6. Anticipates public concerns and attitudes;
7. Leads to the development of a civil society (p. 18).

Along with their own list of benefits, Irvin and Stansbury (2004) offer a number of detractors that stem from public participation:

1. Added cost to decision making processes;
2. A typical lack of representativeness of the wider population affected by a decision;
3. The reality that a small group of citizens, even if truly representative, may in the end not be able to diffuse negative sentiments or perceptions about a policy decision;
4. If the public is complacent about how decisions are made in a particular area of policy, there is no real need, or benefit to, public participation;
5. Lack of authority or influence of the public participation effort over the final outcome or decision;
6. The possibility that selfishness and/or the self-interests of those participating could override decisions that may be truly in the best interest of the wider public (pp. 58-60).

The long history of public participation in the governing process in the United States pre-dates the founding of the nation. However, as noted in the literature, participation by the public did not begin to realize full potential or voice, if you will, until the early part of the 20th century, gradually gaining wider and wider acceptance and implementation until today, in the early part of the 21st century, when public participation has become a standard of practice at the local, state, and federal levels of government. The benefits of public participation and reasons for its popularity are many, but simply implementing public participation for the sake of saying it's been done is not sufficient. Public participation, done correctly, or successfully, ensures that the benefits are truly

realized and that all efforts put forth by implementers of a public participation program, the sponsoring agencies, and the participants themselves are not squandered. The next section considers two benefits of public participation, in particular, and how they contribute to the success of a public participation effort.

The Impact of Quality and Trust in Government on the Success of Public Participation

In their seminal study, *Democracy in Practice, Public Participation In Environmental Decisions*, Thomas Beierle and Jerry Cayford identified five (5) social goals accomplished when public participation is included as part of an organization's decision making process (2002). Those goals are:

Goal 1: Incorporating public values into decisions

Goal 2: Improving the substantive quality of decisions

Goal 3: Resolving conflict among competing interests

Goal 4: Building trust in institutions

Goal 5: Educating and informing the public (p. 6)

In an earlier article about the use of social goals to evaluate public participation in environmental decision making, Beierle (1999) distinguished between determinations of success of a public participation exercise realized in terms of the accomplishment of "social goals" and the more typical determinations of success (i.e. whether or not there was a substantive decision, conclusion, or recommendation made). He clarified that "social goals are those goals which transcend the immediate interests of parties involved in a decision. The benefits of achieving them spill over from the participants themselves

to [society] as a whole" (p. 81). In other words, evaluating the success of a public participation effort by use of social goals frames the outcome more in terms of global and societal benefits rather than limiting the outcome of the evaluation to a consideration of the narrower parameter of whether or not a decision was achieved.

Quality public participation leads to success. The variables that make one public participation effort higher in quality than another are many, but the existing literature demonstrates a general consensus that important variables include the quality of communication between parties and the prior experience of the participants with public participation, including experience with problem solving and negotiation. Of a more general nature is the idea that public participation, done properly or well, assuming some level of quality, is more likely to be successful.

As previously noted, James Creighton identified "improves the quality of decisions" as his number one "pro" argument and benefit of public participation (2005, p. 18). In speaking further about "quality", Beierle and Cayford (2002) noted that, "The public may improve the substantive quality of decisions in several ways, such as by offering local or site-specific knowledge, discovering mistakes, or generating alternative solutions that satisfy a wider range of interests" (p. 14, see also Beierle, 1999 and Peelle, 1990). Speaking specifically about the impact of a quality "public participation process," Beierle and Cayford state that their research shows a "moderate, positive, and statistically significant" relationship between "quality of communication and dialogue among participants" and the success of a public participation effort. "Criteria for good deliberation include the primacy of good arguments rather than overt power, the ability to

question claims and assumptions, and participant sincerity, honesty and comprehension" (Beierle & Cayford, p. 52; see also Halvorsen, 2003).

When considering factors that make public participation successful, Aronoff and Gunter (1994) identified the experience of the participants with public participation, including their background experience in problem solving and negotiation, as a key factor. The less experience participants have, the less effective they are at working within a public participation framework to assist the sponsor of the public participation effort to meet their objectives or to get the results for which they are hoping. Elizabeth Peelle's (1990) study of citizen advisory groups (CAG's) supports this conclusion. Peelle found that local experience with public participation, and the leaders that emerge from that experience, made a positive difference in the successful siting of a low-level radioactive waste facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. In contrast, the lack of experience with public participation in Wayne County, Illinois for a very similar siting proposal, and lack of leadership experience with public participation by the co-chairs of the Citizen's Committee, resulted in an unsuccessful effort (Peelle, 1990).

While it makes intuitive sense that the quality of communication will have an impact on the success of public participation efforts, Delli Carpini et al. (2004) point out that the impact of public deliberations are "highly context dependent," and that "deliberation, under less [than] optimal circumstances, can be ineffective at best and counterproductive at worst" (p. 336). In an evaluation of Delli Carpini's and other researcher's findings on this topic, Korff (2007) concluded that, "If done well, public participation has much potential, possibly as much as stipulated by theorists. When done

poorly, it might have dear consequences. Hence the importance of understanding how to do public participation well" (Korff, 2007, p. 10; see also Rowe & Frewer, 2004). In the "Stakeholder Engagement Policy Position Statement" posted on its website, the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM, 2006) similarly stated that, "it is important to recognize that if stakeholder engagement is not undertaken correctly, it may result in greater risks than if it was not undertaken at all" (para. 20).

In summary, current literature illustrates that public participation, in general, improves the quality of public decisions. Public participation that is done well and deemed to be a success includes, among other things, the attributes of good communication/deliberation between participants as well as participants with some level of experience with public participation, including problem solving and negotiation skills.

The impact of public participation on trust in government. A 1998 study by the Pew Research Center (1998) titled, *Deconstructing Trust: How Americans View Government*, found that 61% of the public did not trust the federal government (p. 5). The study concludes that distrust in government is linked much more to the leaders in government (i.e. politicians) than to those who carry out the day to day tasks of running the government (i.e. public administrators). The sentiment most closely associated with public participation in government (i.e. civic engagement) is clearly one casualty of this distrust (Putnam, 1995; 2000). The Pew study found that "distrust of the national government and low opinions of the state of the nation seem to weaken people's connections to civic life" (p. 12). Finally, in response to an open ended question about

why people dislike the government, the Pew study categorized responses into four areas: (1) "Political Leadership/Political System," (2) "Critiques of Government," (3) "Policy," and (4) "Government Doesn't Care/Unresponsive" (see Table 2-2). The final area, *government doesn't care and/or is unresponsive*, with its sub-points of "government doesn't pay attention to or care about people" and the "needs and opinions of people are not represented in government," are obvious areas that public participation aims to improve.

Table 2-2

Reasons people give for disliking government (Pew Research Center, 1998, p. 7)

Political Leadership/Political System (40%)
Politicians are dishonest/crooks
Only out for themselves/For own personal gain
Representatives say one thing and do another
Too partisan
Scandals
Critiques of Government (24%)
Too much government spending/Spend money frivolously
Federal government can't get anything done
Government is too big/Too much government
Government interferes too much/Too intrusive
Policy (15%)
Taxes are too high
Dislike government policies in general/Dislike specificpolicy
Spend too much on foreign countries
Government has the wrong priorities
Government Doesn't Care/Unresponsive (13%)
Government doesn't pay attention to/care about people
Needs/opinions of people not represented in government

Robert Putnam's well known book, *Bowling Alone* (1995, 2000), discussed an erosion of trust in public institutions that emerged during the 40 years preceding his study. Putnam attributed the shift in trust to reduced civic engagement by citizens or, in other words, reduced "social capital." Trends within the populace and the American way of life help to explain this shift, and the resulting impact on trust, including (a) greater participation by women in the workforce starting in the 1960s and 70s, (b) greater time spent watching television rather than attending civic and community meetings and events, exacerbated even more since the mid-1990s by the explosion in users of the internet, and, finally, (c) the gradual move from neighborhood restaurants and grocery stores to regional power centers that are less personal yet provide greater value to consumers (Putnam, 1995).

Research by Kathleen Halvorsen (2003) provided a bridge between Beierle's and Cayford's (2002) social goals of quality of decisions (and quality of the public participation process) and trust in government. Halvorsen's research tested "participatory democracy assertions that high-quality public participation can affect participants' beliefs in desirable ways" (p. 541), ultimately showing that quality public participation can positively affect citizen's perceptions of "trustworthiness and responsiveness of a public agency" (p. 535). Halvorsen defines "high-quality participation" as participation which is viewed by participants as "satisfying, accessible, and deliberative" (p. 536).

Beierle and Cayford (2002) explained the importance of "Building Trust in Institutions" as a variable in their evaluation framework by noting,

> As trust in the institutions responsible for solving complex….problems decreases, their ability to resolve those problems is seriously circumscribed. Research

> suggests that one of the few ways agencies can try to rebuild trust is through allowing greater involvement and influence [by the public] in decision making (p. 15).

Other researchers and public participation evaluation practitioners also have included "trust in government" as an important indicator of success for public participation in their evaluation frameworks. (Schweitzer, Carnes, & Peele, 1999; Baldwin & Twyford, 2007; Yang & Pandey, 2011).

Research conducted by Elizabeth Peelle (1990) found that, "without trust, people have little incentive to begin talking, much less agree to membership on a [citizen advisory group]" (p. 55). To help overcome public distrust and skepticism, Peelle notes that some agencies, like the U.S. Department of Energy, have been successful by making efforts to be more open and responsive as well as candid and forthcoming in their public participation processes (p. 55). This approach is counter to the norm described earlier in this chapter by Carl Stenberg where limiting public participation to the sharing of information was preferred and greater inclusion of the public in decision making was often considered "unacceptable to administrators" (Kweit & Kweit, 1979, p. 190).

Generally speaking, a drastic decline in public confidence in government has resulted from a widely held perception that government is "vast, remote, [and] inaccessible" (Checkoway, 1981). It is this distrust and lack of confidence in government by the public that has led administrative theorists to recommend greater citizen participation as one means of helping to regain trust (Bellone & Goerl, 1992). In fact, much social science research conducted within the past five decades clarified that shared power between government institutions and the public, including participation in decision

making processes, engendered greater trust by the governed in the government (McMillan, 1996). In her study of two U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's citizen workshops, Judy Rosener (1981) observed great skepticism by the participants about the Corp's sincerity and commitment to the public participation process. However, Rosener and others (Kolb, 2004; Lauber & Knuth, 1999) reported that public participation that included a facilitator helped to ameliorate this distrust.

The next section will review the literature on facilitation as well as small group communication with special emphasis on what the literature has to say about the role of facilitators in making groups, including groups formed for the purpose of public participation, function successfully.

The Impact of Facilitation on Public Participation

> The word "facilitate" comes from the Latin word "to make easy." Thus, the job of the small group facilitator is to make the group's task easier – to help a group improve its internal functioning (process) so that its job, whether it is to make a decision, solve a problem, or perform a task, can be accomplished. – Judith A. Kolb (2004, p. 207)

Facilitation is a broad categorical name for a number of sub-fields, including organizational learning and development, group and system dynamics, collaborative technology, negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution to name just a few (Fuller, 1999). Generally speaking, the focus of this study is on facilitation which assists or guides a group through a discussion process that ultimately results in a decision. For example, a local municipality may be in the process of deciding whether or not to change the city's garbage collection from a government to a private function. If it is to remain public, important issues needing to be addressed might include the quality of the service

and what change, if any, to the fees assessed to homeowners and business may be necessary. In this example, the group may obtain the assistance of a facilitator to help in the selection of the proper decision-making procedure, facilitate the discussion that takes place, and, ultimately, help the group to develop the highest quality decision possible.

"Facilitator" is defined by Anson, Bostrom, and Wynne (1995) as "someone from outside [a] group who is trained in skills for assisting the group interaction while remaining neutral as to the content of discussions" (p. 189). A more detailed and popular definition of the process of facilitation is offered by Schwarz (2002):

> Group facilitation is a process in which a person whose selection is acceptable to all members of the group, who is substantively neutral, and who has no substantive decision-making authority, diagnoses and intervenes to help a group improve how it identifies and solves problems and makes decisions, to increase the group's effectiveness (p. 5).

Both definitions include the attribute of "neutrality", but Anson et al. (1995) are explicit in stating that the facilitator is from outside the group, a distinction warranting further consideration which is explored in a later section.

In recent years, the field of facilitation has evolved to include not just the traditional, face-to-face participation of a facilitator as a participant in a meeting, but also an electronic form of facilitation which is often referred to as "Group Support System", or GSS, facilitation. Much research has been done on GSS (Griffith, Fuller, & Northcraft, 1998; Mcaulay, Alabdulkarim, & Kolfschoten, 2006; Nan & Johnston, 2009). Anson et al. (1995) specifically studied the differences in impact that traditional facilitation and GSS have on "group meeting" outcomes. For the purposes of this study, emphasis is exclusively on traditional, face-to-face facilitation.

Research suggests that a particularly important variable in determining success of public participation efforts is the presence and quality of a facilitator (Anson et al., 1995; Hirokawa & Gouran, 1989; Rowe et al., 2005; Rowe & Frewer, 2000, 2004; Young, Williams, & Goldberg, 1993). Judy Rosener (1981) first postulated that there was a connection between participant's perceptions of a successful public participation exercise and the presence of a "third-party intermediary" (facilitator). Success was determined by Rosener via a "user-oriented evaluation" framework which considers participant goals and objectives and how well those goals and objectives are met. Although the testing of the user-oriented evaluation methodology was the primary objective of her study of two public participation workshops run by the Army Corps of Engineers in Florida in the late 1970s, she discovered that one workshop, which did not include an outside facilitator, was ultimately deemed unsuccessful, whereas a similar workshop, which included a facilitator, was deemed successful. Rosener summarizes the successful workshop (in Sanibel) as follows:

> [The facilitator] acted as a "third party intermediary" between the Corps and strong environmentalists who were skeptical of the Corps and the GP [general permit]. She convinced environmentalists that the Corps was committed to the workshop process and that the district engineer would use the product of the workshops. This motivated them to participate, and the product (which turned out to be a GP with conditions) was claimed by the participants as their own. This produced "good will" for the Corps and support for the GP that the district engineer issued. A survey of Sanibel participants was made by the Corps a year after the issuance of the GP to see if they were satisfied with the GP. They were. The permit process had been streamlined and the wetlands remained protected (1981, p. 586).

Margerum's (2002) research of 20 public participation case studies in the U.S. and Australia clearly demonstrated that the presence of a facilitator ("coordinator" in her

terms) ranked very high (second on a list of eighteen, p. 241) by many participants as a contributing factor to the success of public participation efforts. Margerum comments that

> participants described their coordinator with phrases such as "the glue that holds the committee together." They were not simply there to facilitate a process, they were like program managers—an integral part of the institutional history and institutional structure created for consensus building and implementation (p. 246).

In a selective evaluation of several hundred public participation exercises that were part of the "GM Nation?" public dialog, which took place in Great Britain in 2003, Rowe et al. (2005) found that, unlike the exercises that did not include a professional facilitator, those exercises that included facilitators (a total of 15) received the most positive responses from participants (i.e. they were "enjoyable for participants, and generally perceived to be fairly and competently run by the organizers") (p. 338).

In an evaluation of U.S. Department of Energy public participation programs, Young et al. (1993) found that the use of "impartial facilitators" tied for first place among workshop participants as a preferred characteristic of the DOE public participation workshops studied (p. 22). The authors noted the following regarding participant's thoughts about the use of facilitators:

> In terms of increasing the fairness of the meeting format, respondents were in favor of two-way communication, impartial facilitators, time to talk, clear objectives, and diverse viewpoints as elements in DOE workshops and meetings.….Most respondents were satisfied with the use of impartial facilitators to run the workshops and the meetings, [and recommended that DOE] continue the use of impartial facilitators (p. 27).

Aronoff and Gunter (1994) completed an examination of seven case studies with the objective of "clarifying the factors that contribute to more effective public

participation" (p. 235). In doing so, they ultimately developed a comprehensive participation process including key elements from the dispute resolution processes, both in their study and external to their study, which lead to more successful public participation. Among the list of key elements identified was the use of a neutral facilitator or, in the author's words, a "neutral evaluator" who assisted all stakeholders but, in particular, citizens of a community who may often be unable to effectively communicate their concerns.

> With the assistance of a neutral evaluator, residents are helped to articulate and communicate the perceptions of community risk that are so frequently ignored by outsiders. The process presented here exceeds many existing participation strategies in its commitment to work extensively with laypersons to help them develop their distinctive concerns and articulate them as issues to be considered in the negotiation process (p. 249).

Aronoff and Gunter's (1994) study described the positive impact of a facilitator on public participation as an enhancement of the public's ability to communicate their ideas. The literature focusing on Small Group Communications supports these findings, suggesting that facilitators can have a positive impact on, among other things, the quality of communication in small groups which, by extension, positively impacts the success of outcomes for which the groups were created to address. The next sections will summarize the Small Group Communications literature as well as the literature that specifically addresses the role of group facilitators on the success of group deliberations.

Small Group Communication.

> Old adage: "A committee is a group that keeps minutes and wastes hours" (quoted in Hirokawa & Keyton, 1995, p. 425)
>
> Nietzche suggested that whereas madness is the exception in individuals, "it is the rule in groups" (quoted in Hackman & Kaplan, 1974, p. 459)

Research and theory building in the field of small group communication experienced real growth and development only in recent times. Although one of the earliest and most important theories about group communication was developed by Bales and Strodtbeck (1951) in the 1950s, it was not until the 1980s that authors like Poole (1981; 1983a; 1983b; Poole & Roth, 1989a and 1989b) and Hirokawa (1980; 1982; 1983a; 1983b; 1985; 1988; Hirokawa, Ice & Cook, 1988; Hirokawa & Pace, 1983; Hirokawa & Rost, 1992) pushed the limits of knowledge about small group communication and developed new hypotheses and theories that have resulted in a greater understanding of the basic principles which make groups successful or unsuccessful.

The most formative research in the field of group communication from the 1950s through the 1970s was on the topic of "phases" in group problem-solving, also known as group development (Bales, 1950; Bales & Strodtbeck, 1951; Scheidel & Crowell, 1964; Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977; Fisher, 1970). The goal of this research, originally pioneered by Bales and Strodtbeck (1951), was to determine whether or not all problem-solving groups followed a set order or progression of steps in their deliberations. They identified three phases, "orientation, evaluation, and control" (p. 391), in what has become known as a "unitary sequence model" (Poole, 1981).

Bruce Tuckman (1965) gained popular recognition in the late 1960s and 1970s with his own hypothesis that groups go through four defined stages of interpersonal development in problem solving known by a catchy set of names: "forming", "storming", "norming", and "performing". Tuckman's hypothesis was developed from

his analysis for the Naval Medical Research Institute in Bethesda, Maryland of 55 articles written between 1932 and 1964 which dealt with stages of group development. In a subsequent article written in 1977, Tuckman and Jensen conducted an empirical evaluation of 22 studies based on the original 1965 article by Tuckman. Through these secondary analyses, they determined that a fifth stage of development could be added, "adjourning" (see Table 2-3).

Table 2-3

Tuckman's five stages of group development (Tuckman, 1965, Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

	Group Structure The pattern of interpersonal relationships; the way members act and relate to one another.	Task Activity The content of interaction as related to the task at hand.
Forming: orientation, testing and dependence	Testing and dependence	Orientation to the task
Storming: resistance to group influence and task requirements	Intragroup conflict	Emotional response to task demands
Norming: openness to other group members	Intragroup feeling and cohesiveness develop; new standards evolve and new roles are adopted	Open exchange of relevant interpretations; intimate, personal opinions are expressed
Performing: constructive action	Roles become flexible and functional; structural issues have been resolved; structure can support task performance	Interpersonal structure becomes the tool of task activities; group energy is channeled into the task solutions can emerge
Adjourning: disengagement	Anxiety about separation and termination; sadness; feelings toward leader and group members	Self-evaluation

In slight contrast to the phase models developed by Bales (1950; Bales & Strodtbeck, 1951) and others, which focus more strictly on "tasks" for problem solving, Tuckman's (1965) model was focused more on interpersonal relationships, "the way the members act and relate to one another as persons" (p. 385).

> The proposed distinction between the group as a social entity and the group as a task entity is similar to the distinction between the task-oriented functions of groups and the social-emotional-integrative functions of groups, both of which occur as simultaneous aspects of group functioning (p. 385).

Refer to Table 2-4 for a comparison of task and interpersonal relationship phases/stages of group development.

Table 2-4

Phases of problem-solving activities typical of most decision-making groups and comparison to Tuckman's Stages (Hirokawa, 1983a, p. 291-292; Tuckman, 1965, 1977).

Phases of Group Development	Task Activity	Tuckman's Comparable Stages
Orientation	Group focuses on familiarizing themselves with the task or problem presented to them. They attempt to analyze the parameters of the problem and suggest ways to go about solving it.	Forming, Storming
Problem Solving	Group focuses on trying to complete the task or problem presented to them. They share ideas and information, and offer solutions to the problem.	Norming
Conflict	Group disagreement over what the best solution should be. They criticize and evaluate each other's ideas and suggestions, and attempt to justify and support their own positions.	Norming
Decision-emergence	Group attempts to come to an agreement on one of several alternatives. They focus their attention on elaborating on details of the solution and how it will be implemented, as well as make a conscientious effort to convince themselves that their solution is the most appropriate alternative available.	Performing Adjourning * *Adjourning not as easily comparable

Literature suggests that professional group facilitation practitioners find Tuckman's interpersonal relationship model to be more relevant to the practice of facilitation than the group communication task models. The International Association of Facilitators' *Group Facilitation: A Research & Applications Journal* calls Tuckman's 1965 article on the forming, storming, norming, and performing model "required reading for every group facilitator" (Schuman, 2001, p. 66). Hirokawa and Goran (1989), emphasizing the importance of interpersonal relationships in groups, stated that, "As frequently as problems of a substantive or procedural nature appear to interfere with a group's ability to meet the requirements of a decisional task, the occurrence of difficulties in the relational domain is probably even greater" (p. 83).

Poole (1981) and Poole and Roth (1989a) challenged the original unitary sequence model in favor of a "multiple sequence model" which assumes that "different groups follow different sequences" in their decision development process rather than a set order of stages (p. 1). Like Poole and others, Hirokawa (1983a) did not believe that the unitary, *one size fits all*, phase model for group decision-making provided sufficient insight into how groups operate, discovering instead through his own research that "groups take their own unique 'paths' to solving their problems, perhaps depending on the conditions and circumstances present at critical points in the problem-solving process" (p. 291).

Hirokawa's particular contribution to theory building is his focus on variables affecting the quality of a group's decisions. In a 1983 study, he attempted to determine if a particular phase order leads to "greater success" (i.e. higher quality decisions, by a

group). "Success" was determined by a panel of judges who applied a set of critical evaluation standards to the solutions small groups developed for the same hypothetical problem, resulting in a score (Hirokawa, 1983a, p. 294). Stating his agreement with Poole's arguments for an increased number of phases, Hirokawa evaluated the groups in his study with his own "Task-Achievement Function Coding System" which uses eight phases rather than the typical three or four identified by unitary models (p. 297). His preliminary research indicated that although there was no particular sequence of phases associated with "successful" or "unsuccessful" groups, successful groups tended to begin their discussions by attempting to analyze the problem, then generate solutions, and, finally, attempt to evaluate the possible solutions. These findings were backed by later research by Poole and Roth (1989a) and Hirokawa (1985, 1988).

Hirokawa and Pace (1983) continued the search for variables to predict "successful" or "effective" groups by looking at communication-related characteristics of various groups. In their 1983 study, "effective" and "ineffective" groups were "determined by external 'experts' to have produced a decision which is of low- or high-quality as evaluated on a set of pre-established evaluative criteria" (p. 364). The evaluation process was based on a grading scale of 1 to 7 for appropriateness, warrantedness, reasonableness, and fairness of the decision (p. 365). The study posited four propositions, all of which were supported by the data as valid predictors of an "effective" group. The propositions were:

Proposition 1 – The quality of a group's decision may be dependent upon the manner in which group members examine and evaluate the validity of opinions and assumptions introduced into the discussion by fellow members.

Proposition 2 – The quality of a group's decision may be dependent upon the manner in which group members evaluate alternative choices.

Proposition 3 – The quality of a group's decision may be dependent upon the accuracy of the premises which serve as the basis for the group's decision.

Proposition 4 – The quality of a group's decision may be dependent upon the nature of influence exerted by influential members of the group (p. 369-373).

In 1988, Hirokawa completed three contiguous studies solidifying his decisional functions model as a true predictor of quality decisions generated by a group. Building upon the findings from the first and second studies, the third and final study successfully demonstrated that "groups that satisfy critical functions tend to arrive at high-quality decisions because of the satisfaction of those functions, while groups that arrive at low-quality decisions tend to do so because of their failure to satisfy those same functions effectively" (1988, p. 508). The four "functions" Hirokawa identified as critical are refinements of the four propositions originally developed by Hirokawa and Pace (1983) (Hirokawa, 1988):

1. Appropriate understanding of the problematic situation;
2. Appropriate understanding of the requirements for an acceptable choice;
3. Appropriate assessment of the positive qualities of alternative choices; and

4. Appropriate assessment of the negative qualities of alternative choices (pp. 489-490).

Prior to Hirokawa's study, the researchers Hackman, Weiss, and Brousseau (1974) addressed the concepts identified by Hirokawa's four propositions more broadly as "strategizing." To follow the four propositions posited by Hirokawa requires thoughtful discussion prior to beginning a task and, indeed, throughout the process of task solution. Unfortunately, Hackman and Kaplan (1974) noted that groups under natural operating conditions, "rarely engage in discussions of strategy on their own initiative as an adaptive way of dealing with the group task" (p. 468). The authors cited additional research by Shure (1962) who found that

> "planning" activities in groups tended to be generally lower in priority than actual task performance activities, even when group members were well aware that (a) it was to their advantage to engage in planning before starting actual work on the task, and (b) it was possible for groups to plan their task performance activities without much difficulty or inconvenience (Hackman et al., 1974, p. 464).

In a 1974 study of the impact of strategy-planning activities on the quality of group output, Hackman et al. (1974) evaluated the impact of direct intervention into a group's activities, requiring one group to take time before task performance to discuss strategy. This group was known as the "intervention" group. An "experimental" group in the study was instructed to take no time discussing strategy and a "control" group was provided no instruction on how to operate. The study found that the intervention group reported higher quality output, but only in conditions when coordination and sharing amongst members was critical. According to the authors, this condition would exist when there was greater complexity to a task and where individual members of the group

had special knowledge or skills that, when shared with the group, helped the group to perform better. In contrast, the study found that more straightforward tasks, involving group members with a shared knowledge about the problem to be addressed, benefitted much less from a preliminary strategy discussion about how best to approach a task. Under circumstances of very limited time to complete a task, it was even found that strategy-planning could have a detrimental impact on performance whereas immediately addressing a task, with less time devoted to initial discussion, led to better performance. Hackman and Kaplan (1974) suggested that the same activities with longer time horizons may ultimately result in improved performance by groups that employed strategy-planning over those that did not (p. 468).

Group communication and facilitation. Facilitation has been referred to as both an "art" and a "science" (Fuller, 1999). As an "art", the field of facilitation has been driven for most of its short life as a discipline by a-theoretical concepts which are the result of best practices arrived at by experts who are facilitating groups every day in real world situations. Through trial and error and a strong sense of what works and what does not, facilitators have been able to guide groups toward improved decisions and greater success in achieving their goals. However, with a hope for greater effectiveness and a more informed understanding of how to assist groups in their decision making processes, the facilitation field has recently been moving towards a greater emphasis on "science". In 1999, the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) launched their own research journal, *Group Facilitation*, designed as a "repository of knowledge of use to facilitators" and a publication with an emphasis on "examining the 'science' side of the 'art and

science of facilitation'" (Fuller, 1999). Additionally, and without apparent direct solicitation or coaxing, the facilitation field has benefited from increased theoretical attention from other fields such as small group communication.

The fields of small group communication and facilitation share a number of goals, but the most prominent of these is the goal of making small groups more "effective" or "successful". More specifically, group communication is working to build understanding for what *makes* a group successful, whereas facilitation is working to help groups *become* more successful. Anson et al. (1995) summarized a number of group process interventions that group communication researchers have found to be effective at positively impacting small group meeting outcomes (see Table 2-5).

Table 2-5

Successful group process intervention structures (Anson et al., 1995, p. 190).

1. Provide instructions to group members (Hall and Watson, 1970)
2. Extend problem formulation (Volkema, 1983)
3. Extend idea generation (Ball and Jones, 1977)
4. Separate idea generation from evaluation (Van de Ven and Delbecq, 1974)
5. Delay solution adoption (Hoffman, 1979)
6. Discuss task procedures (Hackman and Kaplan, 1974)
7. Apply explicit criteria (Hirokawa and Pace, 1983)
8. Use factual information (Hirokawa and Pace, 1983)
9. Maintain focus on task goals (Dalkey and Halmer, 1963)
10. Encourage broad participation and influence (Hoffman and Maier, 1959)
11. Manage conflict constructively (Putnam, 1986)
12. Emphasize consensus acceptance over majority votes (Hall and Watson, 1970)
13. Apply active listening techniques (Bostrom, 1989)
14. Discuss interpersonal processes (Hackman and Kaplan, 1974)

Considering the issue of phases or stages that decision-making and problem-solving groups follow, specifically steps and procedures argued in the unitary versus multi sequence model debate, Hirokawa and Goran (1989) pointed out that, "the procedural domain (of group problem solving and decision making) poses special difficulties for those who would facilitate group interaction" (p. 82). However, the lack of a direct connection between the path a group follows, along with the procedures it employs in pursuing that path, and the outcomes achieved does not mean that group processes can be completely indiscriminate. Hirokawa and Goran note that

> For any given task, there exists undoubtedly a finite and limited number of paths to the same end. For the group facilitator, then, a knowledge of what these paths may be, as well as the ability to keep group members traversing on one of them, would appear to be critical facilitative attributes (p. 82).

In "An Experiment Assessing Group Support System and Facilitator Effects," Anson et al. (1995) cited the specific research of Hackman and Kaplan (1974), Poole (1991), and Hirokawa and Gouran (1989) when summing-up the important role that facilitators can play in making groups successful, stating the following:

> Typical behavior patterns in groups are often counterproductive to achieving effective task and interpersonal outcomes. Thus, [these researchers] suggest that interventions which provide structured communication and decision making procedures are needed to promote constructive behaviors and counteract dysfunctional ones. Improving group interaction processes, in turn, effectively harnesses the knowledge and skills brought to the group by its members in order to achieve higher quality outcomes (p. 190).

Looking back to Schwarz's (2002) definition of facilitation, we find the Anson et al. description to be in perfect harmony with the role of the facilitator as an intervener who helps a group "improve how it identifies and solves problems and makes decisions, to increase the group's effectiveness" (p. 5).

Research of 48 groups of students (groups consisting of 6 and 7 members each) evaluated two hypotheses specific to the role of a facilitator in small group performance:

1. Groups provided structures by a facilitator or GSS (computerized Group Support System) will achieve significantly better outcomes than groups relying solely on their own members;
2. Groups provided structures by a facilitator will achieve significantly better outcomes than groups without a facilitator (Anson et al., 1965).

"Better outcomes" were determined by an evaluation of the dependent variables of group performance (task accomplishment), cohesion (group maintenance and relationships), and process (perceived quality of group interaction processes) using a statistical analysis of the measurements of these three variables (p. 194, 197). The data supported both hypotheses, confirming the findings of prior research that "groups acting on their own, i.e. where group members are the only source of structures, tend to engage in less functional interaction behaviors than groups supported by external sources," such as facilitators (p. 200).

Anson et al.'s (1995) research went one step further than simply evaluating the impact of a facilitator on the success of a group, their research considered the "quality" of the facilitator, based on a survey of the group participants, allowing them to understand the impact of "high quality" versus "low quality" facilitators. As might be expected, they found that "a higher quality facilitator could significantly improve outcomes compared to no facilitator at all, whereas a lower quality facilitator had little effect" (p. 201). Although the survey was limited to only 13 questions about facilitator skills, and thus not

representing all the possible skills that participants might have found to be important to quality or success, the skills found to be most important included "preventing individual domination, encouraging listening, facilitator listening, and constructively using conflict" (p. 201). These findings correlated with Hirokawa and Pace's fourth proposition, "the quality of a group's decision may be dependent upon the nature of influence exerted by influential members of the group" (1983), as well as interventions 10, 11 and 13 on Table 2-5, "Successful Group Process Intervention Structures."

Thus, prior studies show that specific group characteristics and behaviors are important to the success of a group, and may be influenced by a facilitator. Additionally, the literature illustrated that the mere presence of a facilitator was not sufficient to make a group successful; the facilitator must possess a minimum level of skill or competence in leading groups or the group likely may be unsuccessful. The next section looks closer at the general facilitation skills that have been identified as important to successful, quality working groups.

Facilitator skills important to success. The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management's "Stakeholder Engagement Policy Position Statement" provides testament to the importance of engaging public participation correctly, or risk negatively impacting the participants and process (CIWEM, 2006). The full Policy Statement also addresses the importance of facilitator skills:

> Engaging with the public requires specific skills. There are specific skills associated with getting the best results from stakeholder engagement initiatives, and there is a need for training in, and wider awareness of, these [skills]. Currently, few resources are targeted at optimizing such expertise, although a number of consultancies specialize in conducting stakeholder engagement for

> clients. It is important to recognize that if stakeholder engagement is not undertaken correctly, it may result in greater risks than if it was not undertaken at all. For this reason, it is important that facilitators have the necessary skills to get the most out of the process (para. 20).

Clawson and Bostrom (1995) completed two studies with the objective of identifying critical role behaviors, or skills, of facilitators who use Group Support Systems (GSS) in face-to-face meetings (first study) and then ranking those roles/skills from most to least important (second study). The first study included 50 professional facilitators who use GSS technologies regularly for facilitation and the second study included 45 from the original fifty. Table 2-6 summarizes the 16 critical role dimensions, or skills, identified by the first study and the final ranking of importance by professional

Table 2-6

Sixteen (16) critical role dimensions, or skills, ranked as important by professional facilitators that utilize GSS technologies (Clawson & Bostrom, 1995, pp. 182, 185).

1. Plans and designs the meeting
2. Listens to, clarifies, and integrates information
3. Demonstrates flexibility
4. Keeps group outcome focused
5. Creates and reinforces an open, positive and participative environment
6. Selects and prepares appropriate technology
7. Directs and manages the meetings
8. Develops and asks the 'right' questions
9. Promotes ownership and encourages group responsibility
10. Actively builds rapport and relationships
11. Demonstrates self-awareness and self-expression
12. Manages conflict and negative emotions constructively
13. Encourages/supports multiple perspectives
14. Understands technology and its capabilities
15. Creates comfort with and promotes understanding of the technology and technology outputs
16. Presents information to group

facilitators in the second study. Anson et al.'s (1995) 14 successful group process intervention structures (see Table 2-5) are additional skills important to facilitators in both traditional and GSS facilitation settings.

Kolb and Rothwell (2002) completed a study polling 63 members of the International Society for Performance Improvement experienced with facilitation of small groups. The poll prompted participants to identify facilitator competencies most frequently used and viewed as important. The top five competencies were to be identified from a list provided to the participants and included the following:

1. Listen actively;
2. Use questions skillfully;
3. Monitor small group dynamics effectively;
4. Paraphrase short segments of content;
5. Stimulate group insights and creativity (p. 201).

When given an opportunity to add additional competencies not provided in the list, responses were generally grouped into the following two broad categories:

1. Training and development activities that help facilitators learn to prepare, plan, and organize;
2. Experience and knowledge in a variety of decision-making/problem-solving techniques so that s/he is not "forcing" a technique that does not fit the situation (p. 202).

Richard Margerum (2002) completed a study of 20 land-use and urban planning stakeholder groups in the U.S. and Australia to determine the common obstacles faced by

these groups during the direction-setting, or consensus building, phase of the planning process. He found that the facilitators themselves openly admitted to a need for training and enhancement of their skills, stating the following:

> Some of the paid coordinators involved in the projects did not have the process skills necessary to facilitate the group. At least fifteen of the twenty case study coordinators had their primary training in natural science or engineering, and many of them cited group process skills among their greatest needs. For example, a 1994 survey of coordinators in New South Wales indicated that they wanted more training in process skills such as facilitation, mediation, and communication (p. 247).

Elspeth McFadzean's (2002a) two-part series in *Management Decision*, "Developing and Supporting Creative Problem-Solving Teams," discussed the relationship between team development, facilitation and creative problem solving, with the aim of presenting "guidelines for the development and support of high-performing, creative problem-solving groups" (p. 463). Part 2, in particular, brought together significant research from multiple fields of inquiry to create a detailed list of general competencies useful to a wide range of facilitators to do their job well. McFadzean's (2002b) list is summarized in Table 2-7.

Finally, in 1995, the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) and the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) collaborated to develop a "Facilitator Competency Model" based on a review of a very large body of information from within and external to the field of group facilitation documenting "skills, knowledge, and attitudes that facilitators and clients found to be effective" (Pierce, Cheesebrow, & Braun, 2000, pp. 25, 26). In many ways, this model is very similar to, and contains essentially the same elements of, the list of facilitator competencies noted by other authors. Where the IAF/ICA Model differs is in its appeal to the higher purpose of the profession of

Table 2-7

Five main areas of general competencies for facilitators (McFadzean, 2002b).

1. Planning
    a. Develop working partnerships with clients
    b. Use time and space to support group processes
    c. Understand the client's problem and develop a process to meet the client's needs
2. Group Dynamics
    a. Honor and recognize diversity ensuring inclusiveness
    b. Facilitate group conflict
    c. Demonstrate behaviors that support team values and processes
    d. Facilitate group self-awareness
    e. Encourage trust and neutrality
    f. Encourage optimism and enthusiasm
3. Problem-solving and Decision-Making Processes
    a. Evoke group creativity, blending all learning and thinking styles
    b. Employ multi-sensory processes
    c. Guide the group with clear methods and processes
    d. Guide the group to consensus and desired outcomes
    e. Ask in-depth questions of the group participants
4. Communication
    a. Assess/evaluate client satisfaction
    b. Demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills
    c. Teach the client team the appropriate skills, tools and techniques, for effective meetings
5. Personal Growth and Development
    a. Maintain a base of knowledge
    b. Contrast facilitation methods
    c. Maintain professional standings
    d. Approach situations with self-confidence and an affirmative manner
    e. Be aware of professional boundaries – know what can and cannot be done

facilitation rather than simply the hard and fast listing of skills. This higher purpose is exemplified in the model with competency categories such as "engage in personal growth," "orchestrate a group journey," and "commit to a life of integrity."

In summary, although there are more than 130 skills noted by the various lists in the literature, the following are skills commonly mentioned as important to effective group facilitation:

1. Planning and designing the meeting;
2. Creating an open, positive and participative environment;
3. Keeping the group outcome focused;
4. Managing conflict and negative emotions constructively;
5. Promoting ownership and encouraging group responsibility;
6. Encouraging and supporting multiple perspectives;
7. Guiding the group to consensus and desired outcomes;
8. Being a good listener, clarifying what has been said, and integrating information;
9. Actively building rapport and relationships with the group.

The literature shows that a facilitator who generally does a good job of facilitating group discussions possesses and/or implements all or most of these nine skills/functions. These items do not directly correlate with the list of key elements that Hirokawa (1988) and others have identified as key to a group being successful, namely:

1. Appropriate understanding of the problematic situation;
2. Appropriate understanding of the requirements for an acceptable choice;
3. Appropriate assessment of the positive qualities of alternative choices; and
4. Appropriate assessment of the negative qualities of alternative choices (pp. 489-490).

However, the literature also shows that it is the combination of a skilled facilitator and careful attention to these four key elements which greatly increase the success of group decision making. According to these authors, the presence of a skilled facilitator also

increases the quality of a group's performance and, in terms of public participation specifically, improves its quality. Finally, the literature demonstrates that when facilitators are included in public participation, they can have a positive impact on the view that participants have towards the agency sponsoring the public participation effort, thus helping to ameliorate the element of distrust in the minds of the public towards government and large corporations in the private sector that has developed in recent years. The next and final section regarding facilitator influence specifically reports how the existing literature views the impact and importance of facilitators who originate either from within an organization or are a third-party from outside the organization.

Internal vs. external facilitators. The literature does not show any research on the impact of internal versus external facilitators on the quality of small group outcomes, let alone public participation. However, in her book, *Understanding Facilitation, Theory and Principles*, Hogan (2002) provided a list of both the pluses and minuses of internal versus external facilitators (see Table 2-8). Where the topic of internal versus external facilitators is addressed elsewhere in the literature, it involves four primary concepts including: (1) the importance of neutrality; (2) the detriment of bias from internal facilitators; (3) the benefit of an outside perspective, and, specific to public participation, (4) the impact on trust that comes from neutrality.

A review of the literature completed by Griffith et al. (1998) indicated a general consensus that "facilitators should be impartial; that is, facilitators should make only indirect contributions to the final solution through neutral enhancement of the processes of communication and information processing by the group," and that "this assumed

Table 2-8

Comparison of the pluses and minuses between external and internal facilitators (Hogan, 2002, p. 54).

Pluses	Minuses
External Facilitators: • Less biased, fewer initial stereotypes • Easier to stay out of content • Easier to concentrate on process • Is not part of the political structure of the group • Prevents proceedings being dominated by individuals and/or minority groups • Can confront where necessary without fear of retaliation • Can use apparently innocent 'naive observer' questions • Results have more credibility both with participants and outsiders	External Facilitators: • Must be well briefed beforehand • Must be chosen with care, not all facilitators facilitate well • More expensive • May be difficult for some participants to accept an outsider • Needs to learn the language or concepts of the group • Needs to learn the history of the group /organization • May not confront if only thinking of return work or wanting 'good' evaluations
Internal Facilitators: • Less expensive • Often quicker to brief because knows the history, the situation, politics and the people involved	Internal Facilitators: • Harder to stay out of content • Harder to concentrate on process • Harder to stay objective • May be difficult to confront individuals higher in the hierarchy • May be biased towards some individuals • May be put under pressure to manipulate the process

impartiality is a foundation of facilitation" (p. 23). This "consensus" about neutrality, however, is not without challenge. In an evaluation of Schwarz's definition of facilitation, Judith Kolbe (2004) stated that "the phrase 'substantively neutral and has no decision-making authority' is quite clear but often violated in practice. A true facilitator should neither be concerned about the issues under discussion by the group nor have a

vested interest in the outcome" (p. 208). Yet even the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), in its Code of Ethics, treads lightly on the issue of neutrality. As noted in the following excerpt, the organization uses the word "impartiality" in lieu of neutrality, even as it describes the benefits of being neutral, (i.e. "we are vigilant to minimize our influence on group outcomes"):

> We practice stewardship of process and *impartiality* [emphasis added] toward content. While participants bring knowledge and expertise concerning the substance of their situation, we bring knowledge and expertise concerning the group interaction process. We are vigilant to minimize our influence on group outcomes. When we have content knowledge not otherwise available to the group, and that the group must have to be effective, we offer it after explaining our change in role (para. 12).

The use of the word "impartiality" rather than "neutrality" in IAF's Code of Ethics was no accident. Hunter and Thorpe (2005) shed light on this word choice, pointing out that when IAF was developing the Code of Ethics, there were a number of members who were uncomfortable with using the term "neutral" or "neutrality" to describe the role of the facilitator. They believed that "the facilitator is not and never will be" neutral and, further, that "the neutral facilitator is a myth" (p. 550). This push and pull within the facilitation profession demonstrates the hazards of neutrality for any facilitator, regardless of origination, from within or from outside the deliberative group being facilitated.

Jay (2007) provided some context from which a more careful consideration of the issue of neutrality could be made. He first pointed out that most group activities can be divided into the two overarching categories of "content" and "process" (p. 23). Jay cited

the following description from Dick (1991) that clarified the difference between the two activities.

> Content is the task which a group is working on. It includes the particular task goals a group pursues, the information relevant to these goals, the decisions made, and the plans or recommendations which emerge from the meeting or activity. Process is the means by which the group addresses the task. It includes the formal and informal structure of the group, the way leadership is exercised, and the way the group's functioning is managed (p. 244).

With the distinction above for content and process in mind, Jay (2007) postulated that it is the content realm where facilitators are in tricky waters, where direct involvement and influence is most likely to cross the line, or traverse the questionable grey area, that moves the facilitator away from the hallowed position of a true neutral actor in group discussions. Process, on the other hand, is where facilitators should focus the bulk if not all of their energy as they assist the group towards the development of content and the resulting products of decisions and recommendations. But the question remains: Is it easier to focus on process rather than content for a facilitator if they are from outside the group or sponsoring organization? Jay (2007) argued that "when a group member is appointed to the role of facilitator," it "creates role ambiguity that makes it very difficult for the facilitator to refrain from contributing to content or to remain content neutral" (p. 26). Margerum's (2002) research of 20 public participation case studies in the U.S. and Australia confirmed this challenge. He found that when a facilitator was provided by one of the agencies participating in an inter-jurisdictional stakeholder committee, the facilitator, being an employee of the agency, raised concerns by the other stakeholders about bias and control on the part of the facilitator, resulting in favor of the funding agency (p. 246).

Niederman and Volkema (1999) added the following:

> [While] it may be difficult for the same person as leader to champion visions of [an] organization's future direction while also encouraging open discussion and consideration of a wide range of views as a facilitator, ….using an external consultant to facilitate [a meeting] can allow all members to participate fully in the content discussions of a meeting while avoiding the impression of control and manipulation that can come from a formal leader's facilitation (p. 335; see also Raimond & Eden, 1990).

Furthermore, the authors argue, outside facilitators have the advantage of being freed from the internal "organizational biases and sociopolitical influences" that are baggage with which representatives from within an organization must contend (p. 335). The logical counter points to these advantages include the reality that "an external consultant may not have the benefit of knowing the culture and climate of the organization, knowing the history of the group or organization, or being able to anticipate the roles and personalities of the participants" (p. 335).

Little literature specifically addresses the advantage of "outside perspective" that external facilitators bring to group discussions, although this interjection of information almost always would be considered an influence by the facilitator on the "content" side of the ledger. However, returning to the IAF Code of Ethics on this point, is recommended that facilitators only offer input once it has been made clear to the group that a role change is being made, even if only briefly. Additionally, as pointed out by IAF, this change in role should be restricted to times when the facilitator has "content knowledge not otherwise available to the group" (para. 12).

Aronoff and Gunter's (1994) research determined that "outside perspective" provided for more realistic expectations on the part of the participants in public participation, particularly deliberations that involved technical issues such as the siting of

hazardous waste repositories or utility infrastructure. External facilitators can help a group to understand more clearly "the political-economic forces that affect the playing field, the resources they may practically hope to obtain from outside sources, and the opposition they might expect to encounter to locally supported resolutions" (p. 247). Aronoff and Gunter's research findings showed that "extra-local actors" (i.e. external facilitators) in a dispute resolution process can "help local groups develop perspective on their own place in the range of stakeholder groups affected by [an environmental issue, for example], and to modify their own concerns, demands, and strategies in light of this knowledge", thus increasing the odds of the group reaching a positive outcome, often defined as consensus (p. 246).

Judy Rosener's (1981) study of the Army Corps of Engineer's workshops revealed the importance not just of the role of a facilitator, but also the impact of the facilitator as a "third-party intermediary" (i.e. from outside the Corps) on the success of the public participation process. As noted previously in this chapter, this success was due in part to the trust that the outside facilitator brought to the public participation process. A trust that originated from, first, the Corps' choice as the facilitator for the Sanibel workshops, of all people, an environmentalist. Second, the facilitator's ability to explain with sincerity that "the Corps was committed to the workshop process and that the district engineer would use the product of the workshops" rather than disregard it when all was said and done (p. 586).

In the next section of the literature review, the public participation evaluation literature is considered, starting with a discussion about why evaluation is important, then

on to a review of the challenges with doing evaluation of public participation exercises, defining "success criteria," and what "good evaluation" looks like. Finally, the important "frameworks" for evaluation are reviewed, from the first one proposed by Sherry Arnstein in the 1960s, to the framework by Thomas Beierle and Jerry Cayford which this research relies on so heavily, to the most recent framework found in the literature by Yang and Pandey published in 2011.

Overview of the Public Participation Evaluation Field

Why evaluation is important. The need to evaluate the effectiveness of citizen participation in government is vitally important because citizen participation can be both an improvement to the democratic process and a hindrance to efficient government. With the understanding that citizen participation is rarely one or the other, the search for ways to garner as many positive outcomes as possible from the public's participation in decision making, while minimizing the less positive outcomes, will continue as long as citizens and government strive for improved democracy. However, even though "public participation is hardly a new social phenomenon, and the use of evaluation as an input to program and policy delivery has had a long history within government and academia," according to Abelson and Gauvin (2006), "there seems to be widespread agreement about the need for more work to be done before we are in a position to be able to make any conclusive statements about public participation's impacts on public policy or any other outcome of interest" (p. 4). Abelson and Gauvin (2006) further state that:

> Despite decades of documenting public participation experiences, the practice of public participation evaluation is still in its infancy. Modest progress is being made in the form of evaluation frameworks and criteria that are being applied more routinely and consistently. More work is needed, however, to reach

> agreement about a common set of evaluation criteria, the defining features of public participation mechanisms and how to categorize and evaluate the crucial role of contextual variables in shaping and influencing public participation (p. 37; see also Sewell & Philips, 1979).

The authors listed the following reasons why public participation should be evaluated (see also Rowe et al., 2005):

1. Establishing accountability, "to ensure the proper use of public or institutional resources, including citizens' time and effort;"
2. Determining whether a particular public participation intervention works;
3. "Learn[ing] from past experiences for the purposes of making future improvements either in the intervention itself or in the way that it is implemented;"
4. Establishing whether or not a fair process was constructed; fair for all participants including the program sponsor, the public in general, and those most directly affected by the policy(s) under consideration;
5. Establishing "whether the views of participants were accurately and fairly represented in a decision process;" and
6. "Describing, explaining and predicting human behavior and social processes" (p. v).

According to Rowe, Marsh and Frewer (2004), "To ensure that public participation is not perceived by those involved to be tokenism…, some formal evaluation of how [participation] exercises are conducted, and their impact on policy, is

necessary" (p. 90). In an expansion of Abelson and Gauvin's (2006) list, Rowe and Frewer (2004) provided the following additional justification for evaluation:

> Evaluation is important for financial reasons (e.g., to ensure the proper use of public or institutional money), practical reasons (e.g., to learn from past mistakes to allow exercises to be run better in the future), ethical/moral reasons (e.g., to establish fair representation and ensure that those involved are not deceived as to the impact of their contribution), and research/theoretical reasons (e.g. to increase our understanding of human behavior). As such, few would deny that evaluation should be done wherever and whenever possible (p. 516).

Finally, Chess (2000) cited a study by Judith Innes (1995) on the indirect impact of evaluation on actions taken by public agencies, suggesting that evaluation in and of itself can play an important role in influencing the use of public participation in decision making. According to Chess, Innes found that "the process of collecting information, not the information itself, may change institutional practices and perceptions of policy makers" (p. 779). Chess also cited an example where decisions by stakeholders and agencies to collect data on biodiversity as an environmental indicator, lead to a focus by the agencies on biodiversity, thus causing a shift in how the agencies perceived the environment (p. 779). Based on Innes' theory, Chess concluded that there might be a positive impact from the evaluation of public participation, suggesting that a failure to evaluate public participation programs may have the negative effect of "inattention to public involvement" by an agency whereas a commitment to evaluation may increase the agency's focus on involving the public in decisions (p. 779).

Evaluation research. According to Chess (2000), "most of the discussion of the evaluation of….public participation has been grounded in literature other than that of evaluation, such as critical theory (Webler, 1995), risk communication (Rowe & Frewer,

2000), public participation (Fiorino, 1990; Webler, 1995; Rowe & Frewer, 2000) and democratic theory (Fiorino, 1990)" (p. 770). However, Judy Rosener (1978) was the first to identify "evaluation research" as a model for the evaluation of public participation exercises. Rosener stated:

> It is my contention that evaluation research methodology can provide a conceptual frame of reference which will make it possible to assemble some evidence [that public participation makes for better public policy]. The use of such a conceptual scheme will also allow us to generate case studies about citizen participation from which we can generalize, thus improving our ability to understand and predict the effects of involving citizens in the making of public policy (p. 457).

In the book, *Evaluation Research*, Clarke and Dawson (1999) stated that evaluation research relies heavily upon existing social science research methodologies for obtaining information, with an emphasis ultimately "placed on ascertaining cause-and-effect relationships between program activities and outcomes" (p. 2, 4). Rosener (1978) describes the field of evaluation research as follows:

> Evaluation research is nothing more than the application of certain kinds of research methods to the evaluation of social programs. Its purpose is to measure the effects of a program against the goals it sets out to accomplish as a means of contributing to subsequent decision making about the program…. Evaluation research is a "scientific" process which attempts to control as much as possible for the intrinsic subjectivity of the evaluative process. It does not purport to eliminate subjectivity, but rather to acknowledge it, and correct for it as much as possible (p. 459).

Chess (2000) identified three primary "forms" of evaluation used in social programs as well as three general "types" of evaluation. They are as follows:

Forms of evaluation:

1. Summative – A retrospective evaluation of whether or not public participation led to any improvement, e.g. improved public acceptance of

a given policy, the water or air got cleaner, or, in general, participants in a public participation effort were satisfied with the outcomes.

2. Formative Evaluation – "Aimed at improving programs in progress, and is analogous to medical testing that takes place before treatment and periodically after initial treatment and diagnosis."
3. Impact Evaluation – "Used for accountability, impact evaluation focuses on long-term results of programs and has the potential to inform major policy decisions and track social learning" over an extended period of time (p. 773).

Types of evaluation:

1. User-based evaluation – Consideration of participant goals, similar and different, and participant satisfaction with the public participation process;
2. Theory-based evaluation – Criteria for evaluation are based on theories and models that provide "a lens for understanding public participation," e.g. normative criteria that can be applied universally to any public participation effort (p. 775);
3. Goal-free evaluation – The aim is to "safeguard against undue bias that might result from evaluators focusing on vague or politically driven goals articulated by evaluation sponsors, managers or stakeholders. Instead, goal-free evaluation assesses needs and effects, seeks 'payoffs from well-designed research aimed at problem-solving' and is 'policy-oriented'

rather than ‘theory-oriented’” (Scriven, 1986, p. 56–57 as cited in Chess, 2000, p. 776).

Challenges with evaluation. Laurian and Shaw’s (2009) survey of 761 planning professionals revealed that about a quarter of the public participation processes undertaken by those surveyed were formally evaluated, ten percent were planned to be evaluated when they were completed, and two-thirds would not be evaluated at all. Of particular interest is the finding that public participation processes that the authors found to be least effective (i.e. public hearings) are the least evaluated (only 10%) whereas the most evaluated are those deemed most effective (i.e. workshops, taskforces and public meetings) (p. 300). Laurian and Shaw explained that a lack of resources “in time, staff, or expertise to support evaluation,” may be to blame. Furthermore, they cited the reality that in government, public administrators and elected officials may “find it more rewarding to launch new programs than evaluate past activities” (p. 295), for the reason that “organizational culture and political constraints can….limit the incentives to evaluate participation as evaluation can increase accountability and present political risks if it reveals inadequacies” (p. 295). If evaluation reveals inadequacies, failures or weaknesses, Laurian and Shaw pointed out that “change may be necessary, and change-averse organizations can thus see evaluation as threatening” (p. 295). While these challenges are predominantly logistical, other challenges are inherent to the actual task of evaluation.

Rosener (1981) listed the following challenges to the evaluation of public participation: “the participation concept is complex and value laden, there are no widely

held criteria for judging success and failure, there are no agreed-upon evaluation methods, and there are few reliable measurement tools" (p. 583). Rowe and Frewer (2000), who have championed the call for more rigorous evaluation of public participation in more recent times, had the following to report about why evaluation of public participation remains so challenging:

> The paucity of experimental results (e.g., from systematic comparisons of methods using validated methodologies to see which is the most "effective") reflects the difficulties in implementing controlled experimental studies in [the field of public participation]. This arises as a consequence of the great number of variables that need manipulation and control—from design aspects of the procedures to contextual or environmental aspects of the situation in which the participation exercise takes place. Indeed, the contextual/ environmental factors will interact with method type, such that there will be no one universally effective method. Difficulties also arise from the sheer variety of ways any one method may be implemented (partly a consequence of loose procedural definitions), which means that a particular method might prove either effective or ineffective, depending on how it is formulated and conducted. A further problem in evaluation comes from the lack of standardized measurement instruments (pp. 10-11).

In an assessment of the field of public participation evaluation, Abelson and Gauvin (2006) identified a number of "research gaps" that they believed were important to both policy makers and public participation practitioners for understanding "the impacts of public participation on political discourse and/or democratic participation" (p. v). Those gaps included:

1. Evaluate the context more rigorously;
2. Define and categorize public participation mechanisms more consistently;
3. Link empirical research studies more closely with well-articulated hypotheses;
4. Use multiple disciplinary perspectives and methods in evaluation design;

5. Make better use of real-world deliberative experiments to advance process and outcome evaluation;
6. Explore decision makers and their organizations more fully as context and outcome variables (p. v).

The existence of these "gaps" in the theoretical foundation of the field of public participation evaluation exacerbates the challenges identified by Rosener (1981), Rowe and Frewer (2000) and others.

In a small but informative study, Abelson and Gauvin (2006) were interested in the perspectives of policy makers and public participation practitioners regarding, among other things, the barriers to evaluating public participation exercises. While the authors were pushing hard "to shift current views toward public participation evaluation from 'frill' to 'essential'" (p. 37), one respondent in the study "referred to evaluation as a 'luxury' that they simply couldn't afford" to do with the budgetary resources available to them, relegating them to "conducting 'quick and dirty' evaluations" (p. 28). Regardless of this negative comment, the fact that evaluation, even "quick and dirty," continued to be accomplished, rather than a complete abandonment of evaluation all together, remained a positive indicator. The authors found that "lack of time, resources and expertise topped the list" of those surveyed and "were the barriers most frequently cited" to doing evaluation of public participation exercises (p. 28; see also Laurian & Shaw, 2009). In addition to these barriers, the respondents also identified "a lack of commitment to evaluation from senior management within their organizations" as a stumbling block to evaluation, due in part to "a lack of appreciation for evaluation or

recognition of its relevance to the work of the department" (p. 28). Lastly, those surveyed expressed ambivalence about participating in evaluation when they were quite certain that senior management was not likely to do anything with the findings.

In the capacity of the official evaluators of the "GM Nation?" public dialog, which took place in Great Britain in 2003, Rowe et al. (2005) identified a number of "difficulties in evaluating public engagement initiatives" which, although specific to the "GM Nation?" project, are more broadly applicable to all or most public participation evaluations (p. 339-348). They included the following:

1. Because evaluation of the public engagement process was not an identified priority to the principles organizing the national "GM Nation?" dialog, it was not included in the budget and, therefore, would not have been done had it not been for the volunteer services offered by the authors;
2. A lack of proper upfront planning and commitment to evaluation led to jurisdictional issues with the professional consultant managing the public engagement programs, i.e. they were leery about having their work scrutinized by a third-party. This reluctance led to reduced access to relevant processes and information;
3. While for the "GM Nation?" evaluation the authors were ultimately able to obtain agreement from the principal organizers on evaluation criteria early in the participation process, they noted that selection of criteria made *after* participation is completed, which is a frequent reality in public participation evaluation, poses "serious questions about the reliability and

validity of [the] findings," creating a situation where "any party disagreeing with the assessment may (perhaps justifiably) question the conclusions" (p. 340);

4. Because data collection is often limited by the sponsor of an exercise (e.g. not wanting evaluation to be too bothersome to participants, including the sponsor), data gathered by the evaluation instruments does not allow for an effective evaluation of the reliability or validity of the instrument;
5. Data quality often suffers because of insufficient staff time and budget to do a thorough job of collecting the data and/or, in the case of "GM Nation?", too large of a geographic area and number of meetings and events to cover.

Process vs. outcome evaluations. Generally speaking, public participation evaluation focuses on either the process or the outcome of public participation when determining success, although Baldwin and Twyford (2007) have identified "output" and "impact" as two additional assessment criteria (see Table 2-9). There are pros and cons to both approaches, presenting further challenges to how the evaluation of public participation is conducted.

According to Weiss (1998), "Process evaluations focus on the study of what goes on while a program is in progress and relate to the phase of the program being studied (i.e. program implementation). Outcome evaluations assess whether or not the program has produced the intended program effects and, thus, relate specifically to the end result of the program." (pp. 334 and 335 as cited in Abelson & Guavin, 2006, p. 12).

Table 2-9

Categories of assessment criteria in the evaluation of public participation and related collaborative planning and consensus-building processes (Baldwin & Twyford, 2007, p. 4-5).

Process criteria tend to include

- The nature and extent of involvement by appropriate stakeholders;
- The existence and strength of rules supporting the effective sharing of views;
- The introduction of participation early in the decision-making process;
- Commitment of the agency to the process and its responsiveness to public input.

Output criteria (sometimes referred to as "short-term outcomes") tend to include

- The extent of agreement on some or all key issues;
- Adequacy of the information stakeholders can understand and accept as accurate;
- The making of feasible proposals.

Outcome criteria, also referred to as second- and third-order effects, can be categorized as direct and indirect. They include

- An agreement that serves the interests of all stakeholders;
- An agreement that is flexible enough to be adapted to new conditions;
- The success with which public values are incorporated into decision-making;
- Resolution of conflict;
- Improved working or personal relationships (e.g. increased trust in public agencies);
- The widespread perception that outcomes are just or serve the public interest.

Impact (or influence) criteria might include

- The degree to which the public influenced the final decision;
- The extent to which decision-making is delegated;
- Commitment to implementing the outcome.

Rowe and Frewer (2000) differentiate process from outcome criteria as “procedural” verses “substantive” (p. 10), using somewhat pejorative terminology, implying that process evaluations lack substance.

A survey of planning professionals conducted by Laurian and Shaw (2009) indicated that more evaluations are focused on process (45.7%) than outcomes (37.2%) (p. 301). “Consistent with the rational-adaptive planning model and the notion that evaluation is important to improve practice,” (p. 301) the authors found 52.4% of planners evaluated participation to improve future process and 38.2% evaluated to improve ongoing process. Only 9.4% evaluated participation to assess the impacts or outcomes of participation. In contrast, Rowe and Frewer’s (2004) evaluation of 33 evaluation frameworks indicated that two of the frameworks (6%) relied on process criteria for evaluation, twelve (46%) used outcome criteria, while ten (30%) used both process and outcomes. Nine (9) of the reports (27%) did not indicate any criteria for evaluation; or evaluation protocols were not discernible from the description or example application of the framework. With such a range of application data, it is difficult to assess which form of evaluation is most prevalent. However, because there are pros and cons to both forms of evaluation, the literature recommends that doing both process and outcome based evaluation at the same time is preferable.

Abelson and Guavin (2006) noted that “process evaluations are often used as surrogates for outcome evaluations with the justification that if the process is found to be effective by whatever criteria it is judged against, then the outcome is likely to be ‘better’ than one that was informed by a bad process” (p. 13). If you trace this logic further,

"decision makers would be expected to ignore recommendations arising from a poorly run public participation process," (p. 13) even though there is no empirical evidence to support this claim (see also Rowe et al., 2005). It may be that the same participation exercise which fails on an evaluation of process criteria could be deemed highly successful if also evaluated against outcome criteria. However, in a world where immediate feedback from an evaluation may be preferable or even necessary (e.g. to allow policy makers to decide budgetary or policy matters as part of an annual process), evaluation of technical and/or relatively straightforward process criteria may represent the most practical means for evaluation. The reality of longer time frames required to properly assess many outcomes (e.g. a superfund clean-up program where the time horizon between decisions using public participation and clean-up implementation can be many, many years) helps to further explain the disparities found in Laurian and Shaw's (2009) study between the use of process compared to outcome evaluations (see also Mazmanian, 1976).

In the "GM Nation?" evaluation, Rowe et al. (2005) raised the important question for outcome evaluation of, "When is the evaluation exercise complete?" (p. 347; see also Rowe & Frewer, 2004). Again, the authors noted that while evaluation of "process" can be completed relatively quickly following the conclusion of a public participation exercise because the criteria are most often a judgment of quality provided by the participants, evaluation of "outcomes" or "impacts" typically takes a longer period of time to judge. Adding to the difficulties of an assessment of outcomes is the evaluator's capacity to clearly understand the level of impact directly attributable to the public

participation exercise as opposed to other factors that may have occurred at the same time or later than the public participation process. Abelson and Guavin (2006) tend to agree, stating the following:

> [T]he task of defining the end-point of a participation exercise for purposes of measuring effectiveness is often unclear. The ability to measure the institutional and societal impacts of the process, which can take many years, and may be difficult to disentangle from other events that are influential to the policy process, may be limited (p. iii).

Challenges with controlled experimental studies. Rowe and Frewer (2000) were quoted earlier in this section describing "the paucity of experimental results" (p. 10) in public participation evaluation as a particular challenge for the field, with numerous examples presented as to why this is the case. Kweit and Kweit (1981) made a similar observation, noting that one of the most fundamental flaws of the public participation evaluation literature was a lack of experimental research, "the ultimate way to gather data on the impacts of any policy because it permits control of several factors that could threaten the internal validity of the research" (p. 83). The reason more true experimental, even quasi-experimental, research is not done, they point out, is the "lack of clear goals" for what participation is supposed to accomplish, which "make it impossible to design measures to test for goal achievement," as well as the lack of a clear baseline for the "current state" of participation against which to compare experimental findings to determine impacts (p. 84).

Rowe and Frewer (2004) provide the following summary of "research difficulties" for evaluation of public participation:

1. "An absence of precise and coherent definitions of the important concepts (public participation, effectiveness, the different mechanisms, etc.);
2. A lack of adequate instruments and processes for measuring aspects related to the conduct and outcome of participation exercises;
3. A high number of potentially confounding variables and a commensurate lack of ability to exert experimental control during evaluative studies;
4. The tendency for exercises to result in quantitatively poor data that might hinder appropriate analysis; and
5. The need to conduct multiple evaluations of each mechanism (or rather, mechanism class) in each situation (or situation class) over a range of applications that vary in the quality of applications" (pp. 552-3).

Abelson and Gauvin (2006) noted that while the use of experimental research methodologies would improve the quality of public participation evaluation, a "control group", i.e. a group that did not receive a particular treatment, is almost always absent. In particular, they point out the following:

> An experimental study might determine that the decision made in a community where public consultation was held was more acceptable to participants than the decision that was made in the control-group community. But this result would be plagued by questions about the comparability of these communities, their expectations and other perceptions toward decision makers and public participation more generally (p. 14).

Ultimately, "the highly context-dependent nature of public participation would, in most cases, argue against" an experimental study (p. 14).

Building baselines and comparability. As noted by Kweit and Kweit (1981) and others, one of the challenges faced by the field of public participation evaluation is the lack of a baseline against which to compare evaluation results. They elaborate this concern further by stating the following:

> Since the advent of the participation programs in the sixties, a prodigious amount of literature has accumulated that attempts to evaluate citizen participation. The confusion surrounding citizen participation has, however, been mirrored in the research findings, making these findings incomparable and/or contradictory. It is, therefore, impossible to draw definitive conclusions about the impact of participation (p. 82).

In 1978, Judy Rosener was perhaps the first to voice the same concern when she proposed her own evaluation framework which would allow public participation evaluators to begin the process of generating case studies about citizen participation "from which we can generalize, thus improving our ability to understand and predict the effects of involving citizens in the making of public policy" (p. 457). Since that time, many more frameworks for evaluation, all with the similar goal of "establishing a baseline" for future "comparability of studies," have been proposed within the public participation evaluation literature (Beierle & Konisky, 2000; Chess, 2000; Godschalk & Stiftel, 1981; Rowe & Frewer, 2000, 2004; Sewell & Philips, 1979; Young et al., 1993). Yet it is clear from the literature that the field of public participation evaluation has never rallied around any particular framework of the dozens that have been established. Each author seems intent on designing a framework personalized to a specific perspective; that one, then, being superior to all others. However, if every evaluation is completed with a different framework, save those few where the same evaluator has applied a framework

of original design (Rowe et al., 2004, 2005, 2008; Walls et al., 2011), then comparability will remain elusive.

Rowe and Frewer (2000, 2004) have spoken out most fervently about the problems of comparability and baselining, offering several suggestions for improvements to the field. They recommend that the details of an evaluation process or instrument, including the methodologies employed, must be fully described and made available by evaluators in order for studies to be replicated and, therefore, comparability to be established for reliability and validity of a particular process or instrument (p. 547). Additionally, it is important that "specific reference is made to how the reliability and validity of measures have been ascertained, citing all appropriate evidence" (p. 547). By doing so, it is their hope that researchers "may selectively adopt instruments or processes of demonstrated quality, which will improve comparability of research findings" (p. 547). Finally, the authors state that it is important to establish typologies of mechanisms and contexts (e.g., public participation) so that results from one study to another may be compared more accurately, adding to the building of theories and norms for establishing which exercises "work best when" (p. 550).

Given that consistent and uniform evaluation of public participation exercises had not occurred, Chess (2000) suggested that a starting point for building data for evaluation researchers to study could be simple data collection as part of all evaluation efforts that includes "short case descriptions of one or two pages in length, ….using a template, [that] could describe the goals of the public participation program, the methods of agency outreach and involvement and problems encountered, etc." (p. 281). Even this small

amount of evaluation data, if consistently applied to all or most public participation, would lend itself to an improvement of the field and to achieving at least some of the benefits from both public participation and its evaluation.

Defining success or effectiveness criteria for public participation. Judy Rosener (1978) observed the following when describing challenges with defining "success" or "effectiveness" in public participation:

> Calling for effective public participation assumes that there is agreement as to its meaning, which is not the case. There is no widely acceptable scheme for conceptualizing and measuring its effectiveness; and it is, in part, this lack of agreement which prevents us from making effective citizen participation the bottom line for government (p. 462).

In more recent times, Rowe and Frewer (2000) made a similar observation, indicating that the challenge of defining success or effectiveness for evaluation persisted 20 years later, "The main problem in the evaluation of participation methods is the absence of any optimal benchmark against which they might be compared and measured, which arises in part because of confusion as to what we mean by 'effectiveness'" (p. 24). Sewell and Philips (1979) noted that the definition of "success" for a public participation exercise appears to really be in the eye of the beholder, with the authors identifying the following varied, but not unexpected, perspectives from the various affected parties:

- "Agency personnel tend to measure success in terms of the extent to which a program is accepted by those involved in it and by the extent to which the image of the agency has been improved;"
- "Citizen groups generally appraise programs in terms of the success they have had in preventing or modifying a proposed course of action or the

attainment of a broader recognition of the group or the public at large in the decision-making process;"

- "Independent observers generally focused upon the extent to which the program met its objectives, the degree of representation and the accuracy of the information gathered" (pp. 352-353).

Rowe and Frewer (2004) clarified the first step in evaluating public participation effectiveness as "define what is meant by the term effectiveness (or success, quality, or whatever synonym one wishes to use). Unless there is a clear definition of what it means for a participation exercise to be effective, there will be no theoretical benchmark against which performance may be assessed" (p. 517) or the current exercise being evaluated and/or for comparison of the current exercise against future exercises. Kweit and Kweit (1981) agreed, placing primary blame on those implementing and, more importantly, documenting an evaluation effort. Evaluators must be specific about establishing criteria for success and also about other factors that may impact the interpretation of results such as the setting where a participation exercise takes place (e.g. a small town or large city) or for whom the public participation effort is targeted (e.g. elected officials, a government agency, or a private corporation). Failure to include these specifics makes comparability difficult (if not impossible) and even interpretation of results becomes a challenge between multiple evaluators because "although the same impacts may have been observed by two researchers, they may draw opposite conclusions about the success of a program because of their different standards" (Kweit & Kweit, 1981, p. 83).

Another challenge associated with the definition of effectiveness or success relates to the point in time when criteria are established, and by whom. It is sometimes difficult to establish criteria at the beginning of a participation program because evaluation is rarely a top priority for program sponsors and even for many (if not most) public participation practitioners. Godschalk and Stiftel (1981) noted that because public participation is often "subsidiary" to a functional program, such as improving water quality, it is typically an afterthought and, therefore, "rarely has formally specified goals" (p. 598-99). However, Rowe and Frewer (2004) noted that, "It is particularly important that evaluations state effectiveness criteria *a priori*, not only from a research perspective but also from a practical perspective to prevent dispute with those who disagree with the evaluation result and subsequently take issue with the nonagreed criteria" (p. 522). According to Rowe et al. (2005), this situation arises from a struggle between the "different values and perspectives of those involved (from the sponsors and organizers to the various participants themselves) each of whom may have different rationales for involvement" (p. 340). Without established evaluation criteria at the beginning of a public participation exercise, as pointed out previously, "any party disagreeing with the assessment may (perhaps justifiably) question the conclusions" (p. 340). Rowe et al. suggest a sports analogy, likening evaluation without predefined success criteria to "a game of football in which invisible goal posts are only revealed at the final whistle. If effectiveness is defined beforehand (the goal posts are evident) then there can be less cause for complaint" (p. 340). Even so, establishing evaluation criteria *a priori* is not always easy to do, or even possible in some instances.

In the "GM Nation?" public engagement process, Rowe et al. (2005) struggled throughout because they were brought in late to do evaluation. While they ultimately did help the program sponsors to develop evaluation criteria, they learned "an important lesson….that evaluation should be a fundamental part of the participation process. Preferably, proper contractual arrangements should be established, setting out, for example, the bounds of the evaluation and extent of evaluator access to relevant processes and information" (p. 339). These changes would have greatly improved the evaluation that they completed for the "GM Nation?" program.

Lastly, Rowe et al. (2005) have also noted some challenges with establishing criteria *a priori*. The *a priori* approach, "typically uses qualitative rather than quantitative research techniques" which Chess (2000) noted is the subject of "heated debate" in the public participation evaluation literature (p. 778). According to Chess, "Researchers suggest that the evaluation of public participation would ideally incorporate both quantitative and qualitative research that complemented each other. For example, surveys can yield more useful information if based on the results of qualitative research that provides an understanding of subjects' concerns, values and perceptions, etc." (p. 778; see also Mazmanian & Nienaber, 1979). However, Rowe et al. (2005) point out that setting criteria *a priori*,

> is particularly apt in new environments where little is previously known, where quantitative data are difficult to obtain and where hypotheses are difficult to generate. This position generally leads to "evaluations" that take the form of case studies, in which results are based upon the evaluators' subjective interpretations (p. 340).

The particular challenges, noted by Rowe et al., include a constraint on the data collected because definitions and a framework are established ahead of time which focus the

evaluation, to the exclusion perhaps of data that may be considered by some to be important or relevant. According to Rowe et al., evaluations with criteria established *a priori*, and are qualitative in nature, can create "limitations as to the extent to which results may be replicated or generalized, and pose serious questions about the reliability and validity of [the] findings" (p. 340).

In many evaluations, participant satisfaction is used as a proxy for measuring success. Coglianese (2002) cites "two conceptual limitations on the use of participant satisfaction, namely that (a) satisfaction does not necessarily equate with good public policy, and (b) participant satisfaction is at best an incomplete measure because it excludes those who do not participate" (p. 3; see also Cook & Jacobs, 1998). Additionally, participant satisfaction is internally at odds in most public participation situations because there are almost always competing interests involved. If success is judged by high levels of satisfaction, it would presumably be highest if all parties judged the participation exercise successful. However, all groups being satisfied goes against the old adage that if everyone hates a decision, it probably was a good decision. Coglianese (2002) observes the following along these lines:

> As the principal target of regulation, business firms are usually well-organized and participate regularly and intensively, and in greater numbers, in public policy making. If these targets of regulation come away satisfied with a policymaking process, it may well be that the resulting policy decision has not been as effective as it needs to be (p. 12)….. [I]t might very well be best to secure a level of satisfaction that is simply "good enough" among….participants, or even in many cases to create outright dissatisfaction on the part of some or most of those who participate in a regulatory process. Regulatory officials may well be correct to believe that if they displease both sides of a policy dispute, then "we must have done the right thing" (p. 15).

A general consensus on success criteria. It is clear from the literature that there is great variability between evaluation processes regarding the definition of success or effectiveness for a public participation exercise. In "Evaluating Public-Participation Exercises," Rowe and Frewer (2004) looked intently at the possibility of a "universal" definition/set of criteria for success or effectiveness. The authors determined that universal criteria coupled with "local", more limited, criteria may be most likely and appropriate for evaluating public participation exercises, leading to a more "systematic acquisition of knowledge" (p. 512). Universal criteria allow for comparison of effectiveness results between all exercises, whereas local criteria (i.e. criteria considered specific to a type or "subgroup" of evaluation) such as those that only look at process or those that focus on outcomes, allow for comparison of results within that subgroup (p. 518). With this understanding of the relevance of both universal and local criteria, Rowe and Frewer recommended that "specific aims of individual participation exercises….be phrased in terms of more general classes of aims that will allow comparative analysis" (p. 519). They clarify that,

> [t]his is not to say that researchers should accept a single universal definition, or a single set of local definitions that are independent and mutually exclusive…, but simply that a more general phrasing of what is meant by effectiveness is necessary if we are to acquire findings that are comparable (p. 519).

Yang and Pandey (2011) pointed out that "an uncritical reader of the literature is likely to have an impression that all success factors are equally important, without differentiating their relative importance or recognizing their potential tensions" (p. 882). Even so, there are some major themes in the literature about success or effectiveness,

ones repeatedly identified by the various evaluation frameworks as informative, and around which there is agreement.

From a review of the public participation literature, Chilvers (2008) compiled the following list of "at least seven effectiveness criteria…in which considerable consensus exists" (p. 425):

1. Representativeness and inclusivity – "be representative of all those interested and affected by a decision or action and remove unnecessary barriers to participation;"
2. Fair deliberation – "allow all those involved to enter the discourse and put forward their views in interactive deliberation that develops mutual understanding between participants;"
3. Access to resources – "provide sufficient resources (information, expertise, time) for effective participation;"
4. Transparency and accountability – "be transparent to all those inside and outside of the process about objectives, boundaries, and how participation relates to decision making;"
5. Learning – "enhance social learning of all those involved, including participants, specialists, decision makers, and wider institutions;"
6. Independence – "be conducted (managed and facilitated) in an independent and unbiased way;" and
7. Efficiency – "be cost-effective and timely" (p. 425).

Table 2-10

Goals of participation (Laurian & Shaw, 2009, p. 297)

Process-Based Goals

- Mutual Learning
- Increase public awareness
- Increase agency awareness of public views
- Democratic Process
  - Transparency
  - Inclusiveness
  - Fairness and power sharing

Outcome-Based Goals

- Issue-Related Outcomes
  - Meet statutory requirements
  - Find solution, reach consensus
  - Improve quality of decision
- Governance Outcomes
  - Increase legitimacy of agency
  - Increase legitimacy, acceptability of decisions
  - Avoid or mitigate conflict
  - Facilitate implementation of solution
- Social Outcomes
  - Build institutional capacity, resilience
  - Increase trust in planning agencies
  - Build social networks, mutual understanding among participants, social capital, sense of citizenship
  - Improve outcomes for the most disenfranchised
- User-Based Goals
  - Participants satisfied
  - Other goals defined by participants

Table 2-10 lists a number of very common evaluation criteria identified by Laurian and Shaw (2009) which they described as "goals of participation."

Abelson and Gauvin (2006) provided the information for Table 2-11 from a study of participant focus groups indicating that many of the consensus criteria listed by Chilvers (2008) were also thought to be important by citizens involved in public

Table 2-11

Comparison of industry professional design principles and citizens' views on consensus criteria for effective public participation (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006, p. 10).

Industry Professional design principles	Citizens' views
Clearly communicate: • the purpose of the consultation • its procedural rules • the relationship between the consultation and the decisions taken	Communication • clear communication about the purpose ofthe consultation, and its relationship to the larger decision-making process • identifiable links between the consultation and the decision outcome (through the presence of someone in a decision-making role)
Represent views, interests and constituencies: • by carefully considering whose input should be considered • by providing opportunities for all participants to contribute fairly	People • careful recruitment of the appropriate mix of people for the issue being discussed Process
Develop procedural rules: • that promote power-sharing and mutual respect among participants and between participants and decision-makers • that allow for adequate time for questions, clarification, listening and understanding • that promote trust, credibility and legitimacy	• promote power-sharing and mutual respect among participants and between participants and decision-makers through neutral, impartial facilitation • use a flexible structure to allow for meaningful contributions
Provide information: • that is accessible (e.g. understandable, appropriate amount) • presented in a way that informs discussion • that can be discussed and interpreted • from credible and trusted sources	Information exchange • information sharing in a context of trust • information to be presented clearly, honestly and with integrity (by neutral facilitators) • needs to ensure participants' comfort with the topic and to build the confidence for meaningful participation • lay views and experiential expertise should be listened to and considered

participation. Early in the evaluation literature, Sewell and Philips (1979) argued for "three basic parameters or objectives" that are "ideally desired in a public involvement program: a high degree of citizen involvement, a high degree of equity among the public, and high cost efficiency for the agency" (p. 354). However, because "it is not possible to

attain a maximum level on all three parameters simultaneously," the authors suggest that "tradeoffs" are necessary, a reality that is broadly applicable to the numerous evaluation criteria that many argue are key to determining success or effectiveness for public participation programs (p. 354).

While there exist many challenges to the evaluation of public participation, not only is there a general consensus on the criteria for defining successful evaluation, there is strong agreement that doing evaluation is important, for all the reasons listed in the literature. Therefore, as long as there continues to be a place for public participation within the decision making process in the public and private sectors, so too will evaluation of public participation endure. Evidence of this is the continued development of public participation evaluation frameworks, with the most current framework being recommended by Yang and Pandey as recently as 2011. This framework and others will be discussed in the next section.

Evaluation Frameworks

Very early in its history, the field of public participation evaluation attempted to create structured approaches to the evaluation of participation exercises. These approaches are known by the industry as "evaluation frameworks" or simply as "frameworks." The earliest, most popular, and most widely recognized framework cited in the literature is Sherry Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Participation." Beierle and Cayford (2002) go so far as to anoint Arnstein "the founder of public participation evaluation" (p. 16), although she does have one predecessor in Edmund Burke (1968). Arnstein cites Burke in her 1969 article as does Judy Rosener in 1978, noting that

Burke's was one of "a few studies which do focus on participation in terms of effectiveness" (p. 457). However, Burke did not propose a structure which could be used by others to evaluate the success or effectiveness of public participation exercises. Therefore, the distinction bestowed on Arnstein by Beierle and Cayford and others seems well deserved.

Since formulation of the famous "ladder of participation" in 1969, many researchers and practitioners fashioned their own frameworks. In some cases, the creation was one of practicality, with little regard for or appreciation of other frameworks already in existence. These frameworks relied on evaluation criteria that the authors believed to be most appropriate to the circumstance and not to the higher cause identified by Rowe and Frewer (2004) and others as being comparable to evaluations in other parts of the country or the world. In other cases, researchers, and sometimes astute practitioners, relied on evaluation frameworks developed by their colleagues or predecessors as the foundation from which to build new frameworks. These frameworks often aimed to improve the evaluation process and focused on creating a singular evaluation framework around which all public participation practitioners, researchers, and evaluators could rally so that the fields of public participation and public participation evaluation could move forward towards greater credibility, respect, and legitimacy in the eyes of the public, policy makers, and public administrators.

Derrick Sewell and Susan Phillips (1979) undertook an early assessment of the "state of the art" of public participation evaluation frameworks, focusing attention on four specific frameworks they believed to "represent the range of sophistication evident

in" the public participation evaluation field" (p. 338). Interestingly, while Sewell and Phillips mentioned Arnstein (1969), they did not mention Burke (1968) or the more contemporary and widely recognized public participation evaluation framework established by Judy Rosener in 1978. Nonetheless, their discussion of evaluation frameworks in general, and the four frameworks scrutinized in particular, provided early recognition of the challenges and opportunities provided by the structure of an evaluation framework.

A more recent and well documented analysis of the public participation evaluation field and its frameworks was completed by Gene Rowe and Lynn Frewer in 2004. Their summary provides an excellent analysis which, according to the authors, "is more comprehensive" than any analysis completed by earlier authors, including a definition of the "type" of evaluation (process/outcome, universal/local/specific), the evaluation criteria measured, and a description of the evaluation instrument(s) used.

The next section will consider what the literature has to say about the elements of a good "evaluation," derived from the suggestions and recommendations of the leading authors in the field of public participation evaluation. Note that these criteria are not to be confused with criteria identified in the previous section regarding what makes for good "public participation." Next, because Sewell & Phillips (1979), Rowe & Frewer (2004), and others have already completed the work of summarizing and analyzing many, if not most, of the evaluation frameworks for public participation, a summary of only the most widely cited, popular, and perhaps comprehensive, frameworks identified in the

literature will be reviewed. Finally, several of the newer frameworks added to the literature since 2004 will be summarized.

What makes for "good evaluation"? Beierle and Cayford (2002) stated that, "Finding a definitive answer to the question of what is the 'right' way to evaluate public participation is neither likely nor desirable. Each approach to evaluation poses – and hopefully answers – interesting questions that collectively inform our understanding of this complex social process" (p. 17). Even so, there are indications in the literature that a set of general criteria could be identified for determining what makes for good evaluation.

In Laurian and Shaw's (2009) survey of 761 planning professionals, twenty-four planners who they considered "the most knowledgeable" because they "often evaluate participation," collectively recommended the following as "the best way to evaluate public participation":

1. "Participants should be the center of any evaluation of participation;"
2. "'One size doesn't fit all' and evaluation criteria and methods should be developed for each process based on its objectives;"
3. "The evaluation of processes and outcomes should be explicitly separated;"
4. "Both informal and formal evaluation tools should be used;"
5. "Planners should pay attention to local media coverage to verify that the information was conveyed correctly and clearly, and that the process is recognized as democratic;"

6. "Evaluation instruments should avoid eliciting only positive responses but also allow negative views to be expressed" (p. 304).

In an earlier study by Sewell and Philips (1979) of 22 public participation exercises (that had some type of evaluation done on their effectiveness), authors analyzed evaluation frameworks used in each, noting the strengths and weaknesses of those frameworks. From this analysis, they developed a basic set of criteria that define "good evaluation," even as they observed at that time that the field of public participation evaluation is "still some way from the development of a 'magic formula'" for measuring success (p. 346). Table 2-12 lists a number of the quality criteria from Sewell and Philips for evaluation framework procedure and implementation success, but also from other authors in the field, creating a relatively comprehensive list around which there is general consensus.

A summary of frameworks.

Sherry Arnstein. At the time of her now famous article published in 1969, Sherry Arnstein was the "Director of Community Development Studies for The Commons, a non-profit research institute in Washington, D.C. and Chicago. She [was] a former Chief Advisor on Citizen Participation in HUD's Model Cities Administration and…served as Staff Consultant to the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of HEW, and Washington Editor of *Current Magazine*" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 216).

In 1969, "maximum feasible participation," as dictated by the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964, was still new. Those tasked with determining what this requirement really

Table 2-12

Quality criteria for evaluation framework procedure and implementation success.

Quality Criteria for Evaluation Framework Procedures

1. Clear and specific definition for "success" or "effectiveness," established at the beginning rather than middle or end of participation process (Kweit & Kweit, 1981; Rowe & Frewer, 2004; Baldwin & Twyford, 2007)
2. Consideration of both sponsor and citizen goals in the definition of success (Sewell & Philips, 1979)
3. Measurement of both public participation process and outcomes when determining success (Laurian & Shaw, 2009; Baldwin & Twyford, 2007)
4. The procedure or instrument should be of "quality", meaning that it meets minimum acceptable levels of validity, reliability, and usability (Rowe & Frewer, 2004, p. 543)
5. Easy to compare evaluation results to other evaluation findings via well documented evaluation processes, procedures, and context (Sewell & Philips, 1979; Rowe & Frewer, 2004; Laurian & Shaw, 2009; Baldwin &Twyford, 2007)
6. Easy to implement, not overly complex or data intensive (Sewell & Philips, 1979; Rowe & Frewer, 2004)
7. Evaluation framework should not be overly expensive to implement (Sewell & Philips, 1979)

Quality Criteria for Evaluation Framework Implementation

8. Decision to evaluate is made early in participation process to adequately measure important variables (Rowe et al, 2005; Baldwin & Twyford, 2007)
9. Evaluation is implemented throughout the public participation process rather than at one point in time, i.e. at the end (Sewell & Philips, 1979)
10. Use of independent evaluators rather than the sponsor's staff (Sewell & Philips, 1979)

meant, and the extent to which it was to be carried out, were searching for processes and avenues to include the public in decision-making that matched the intent and spirit of the law. Arnstein indicated that the questions of the day were: "What is citizen participation?" and "What is its relationship to the social imperatives of our time?" (p. 216) She answered those questions by stating:

> [The] answer to the critical *what* question is simply that citizen participation is 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).

Arnstein's article was critical of the public participation being carried out as part of the 1,000 or so federal Community Action Programs (and promised "to be repeated in the vast majority of the 150 Model Cities programs"), calling it an "empty ritual of participation" that involved little or no power sharing (p. 216). To illustrate her conception of the power sharing realities in public participation programs or exercises, Arnstein laid out a relatively simple graphic, shaped like a "ladder," where each rung corresponded "to the extent of citizens' power in determining the end product" (p. 217) (see Figure 2-1). At the lowest levels of power sharing, "manipulation" and "therapy," there is no real participation, but rather Arnstein's "empty ritual of participation." The uppermost rungs, i.e. "partnership," "delegated power," and "citizen control," is where empowerment of the public is greatest and real public participation occurs. Thus, the criteria for success or effectiveness of a public participation program using Arnstein's

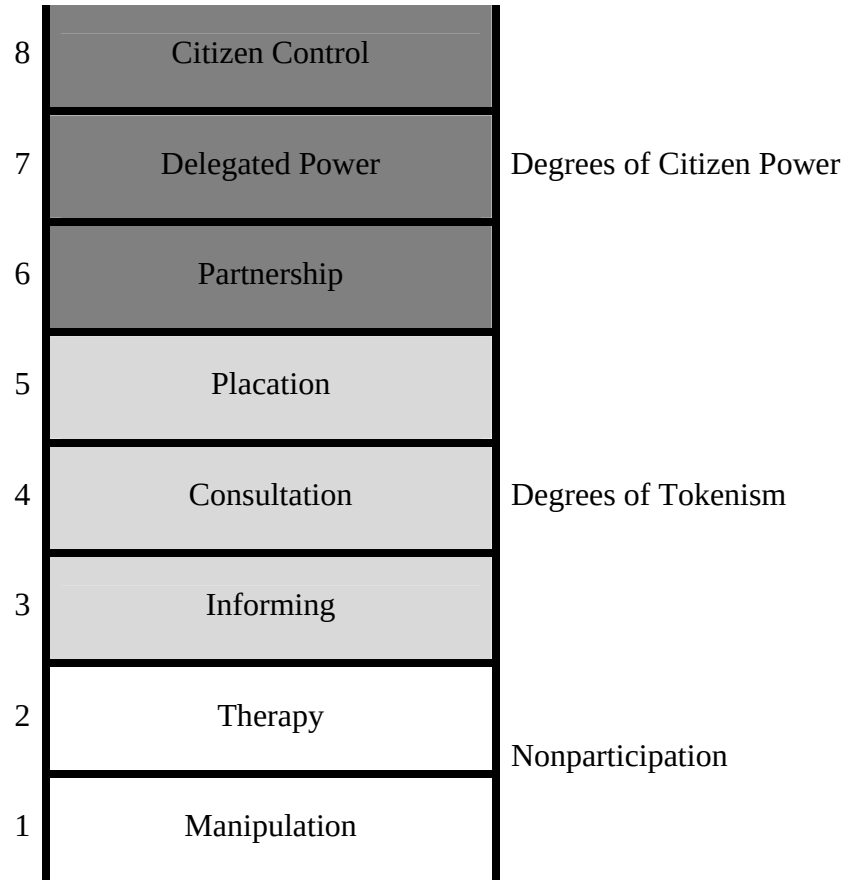


Figure 2-1. Arnstein's eight rungs on a "Ladder of Citizen Participation" (1969).

evaluation framework is simple, shared power/decision making. The higher a public participation program ranks on the ladder, the greater the power given to the public, the more successful it is or, in Arnstein's words, the more "genuine," "legitimate," or "full" the participation (p. 217, 220).

The idea of a hierarchy of participation, which ranks techniques and methods, from those that provide the public with little or no power to those that reserve significant or ultimate decision making power to the public, has endured since the late 1960's. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) (2007) created a "Spectrum of

Public Participation" listing the "increasing levels of public impact" associated with different forms of participation. IAP2's Spectrum (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower) is a scale very similar to Arnstein's. Although not specifically citing Arnstein, Rowe and Frewer (2000) provided the following description of the various ways the public can be involved in decision making, concepts very similar to Arnstein's ladder of participation:

> [A]t the lowest level, the public may be targeted with enhanced information…. At higher levels, public views may be actively solicited through such mechanisms as consultation exercises, focus groups, and questionnaires. At still higher levels, members of the public may be selected to take part in exercises that provide them with a degree of decision-making authority (p. 3).

Judy Rosener. In 1978, Judy Rosener was a member of the faculty of the Graduate School of Administration at the University of California, Irvine where her research focus was in the area of citizen participation and evaluation research. She was also serving as chair of the South Coast Regional California Coastal Commission (Rosener, 1978, p. 457).

Rosener's framework was perhaps the first detailed and comprehensive framework specifically developed for evaluating public participation exercises. She was the first author to use the term "framework" to describe her evaluation structure and one of the first to make clear the usefulness of techniques and processes developed in the field of "evaluation research" to public participation evaluation (p. 459). Finally, many of the researchers and authors in the field of public participation and public participation evaluation continue to cite her framework as part of articles and conclusions in their own work and in the development of their own evaluation frameworks (Abelson & Gauvin,

2006; Chess, 2000; Laurian & Shaw, 2009; Rowe & Frewer, 2000; Rowe et al. 2004; Yang & Pandey, 2011).

For the evaluation of public participation, Rosener (1978) pointed out that it is important to distinguish the approach to participation as either a "means to an end" or, alternatively, an "end in itself" (p. 459). The latter is "process" focused and is fairly easy to evaluate by gathering statistical information about the program such as number of participants, who participated, how frequently they participated, and perhaps their attitudes about their participation experience. The former approach, a "means to an end", is "outcome" focused and requires a more detailed look at "the causal relationship between a participation program or activity and some desired end" (p. 459). Rosener's framework is based on this outcome approach, focusing specifically on goals and objectives defined by both the participation organizer and participants in the public participation program in addition to an evaluation of the extent to which those goals and objectives have been achieved.

Figure 2-2 shows Rosener's evaluation framework as a four quadrant matrix. She offered the following description for the matrix and how it works:

> For a participation program to fall in quadrant I (the 'healthiest' evaluation environment), there would have to be agreement on goals and objectives, and an indication of whose goals and objectives they were. There would also have to be fairly complete knowledge of a cause and effect relationship between some specified participation program [referred to as A], and the achievement of the agreed upon goals or objectives [referred to as B] (p. 459-460).

An example of a public participation program that falls into quadrant I might be one where the goal (B) is to slow down traffic through residential neighborhoods to make the streets safer. The objective of the participation process is to ensure that the needs and

Agreement on program goals and objectives (B), whose goals and objectives they are, and the criteria by which success or failure will be measured.	Knowledge of a cause/ effect relationship between a participation program or activity (A) and the achievement of specified goals and objectives (B)	
	Complete	Incomplete
Yes	I	II
No	III	IV

Figure 2-2. Judy Rosener's Participation Evaluation Matrix (1978, p. 459).

concerns of the citizens are taken into consideration in determining the best way to accomplish the goal. The City convenes a series of workshops (A) where citizens can express their opinions and it is mutually agreed that speed humps are the best solution to meet the goal. It would not be difficult to determine the impact of A on B if the City implemented a program that constructed speed humps in a manner that was agreed upon in the public participation workshops.

Rosener points out that because most public participation programs do not identify mutually agreed upon goals and objectives at the beginning of the process, "nor are ways for measuring cause and effect stipulated,….few participation evaluations are conducted in the most desirable assessment environment represented by quadrant I of the matrix" (p. 460).

At the other extreme are participation programs that reside in quadrant IV. Rosener provides the following description of such a program:

> An example of a quadrant IV program would be one where a traditional public hearing [A] is held because it is perceived by administrators as "citizen participation" and by citizens who feel it is a way to shape policy. There is no agreement on the part of administrators or citizens as to what specific function [i.e. goal, B] the hearing is supposed to perform. It would not be clear what constitutes B, and thus it would not be possible to know if A produces B. Under these circumstances, participation is probably considered an end in itself by administrators, and they play the "numbers game." If a large number of citizens turn out for the hearing, the hearing is termed a success. If no one shows up, the hearing is considered a failure (p. 460).

In 1979, Rosener had an opportunity to test her "user-oriented" evaluation framework on two participation workshops in Florida (one in Sanibel and one in Miami) for the Army Corps of Engineers. In 1981, she described the benefits of the "user-oriented methodology," stating that her framework "reveals the complexity of the participation concept. It tells us who wins and who loses, and it identifies areas where conflict is difficult to resolve. This is its main contribution. But it can also be used to produce an overall participation measure" (p. 593). Rosener's (1978) goal for creating her framework was that it be used by others so that, over time, results could be accumulated, compared, and from which generalized conclusions could be made about public participation exercises (i.e. "what 'works' and what does not") (p. 462). Unfortunately, as appears to be the case for so many of the evaluation frameworks created in the years since Rosener's "user-oriented evaluation framework", the literature shows that her framework has rarely, if ever, been used by other public participation practitioners.

Rowe and Frewer. Gene Rowe and Lynn Frewer hail from the United Kingdom, both having graduated from the University of Bristol's psychology program. Rowe completed his Ph.D. from the Bristol Business School at the University of the West of England and in 2000 was a senior researcher at the Institute of Food Research in Norwich, UK. Frewer completed her Ph.D. in applied psychology from the University of Leeds and in 2000 was the acting head of the consumer science group at the Institute of Food Research (Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

Rowe and Frewer are the contemporary equivalent of Judy Rosener in the field of public participation evaluation. They approach the subject with a focus on the singular issue of how to do good evaluation and the goal of building an evaluation framework that would specifically bring greater rigor to the evaluation process. In doing so, they hope for greater comparison of evaluations and theory building based on those comparisons.

Rowe and Frewer's (2004) evaluation framework includes nine evaluation criteria divided into two categories of "acceptance" and "good process" (see Table 2-13). When describing the importance of these two categories, they state the following:

> An exercise that has good acceptance, but poor process, is unlikely to be implemented by exercise sponsors (and if implemented, might prove objectively damaging to both public/stakeholders and sponsors), while an exercise that has good process but poor acceptance is likely to be met with public/stakeholder skepticism, dispute, boycott, and so on (Rowe et al., 2004,p. 92).

Rowe and Frewer's evaluation methodology uses a participant questionnaire as well as an "evaluator checklist" that "attempts to establish the reality of whether the exercise fulfills the criteria in terms of how it is objectively constructed, and takes into account the views

Table 2-13

Evaluation criteria definitions (Rowe et al., 2004, p. 93)

Criteria	Definition
Acceptance criteria	
Representativeness	The participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the affected population.
Independence	The participation process should be conducted in an independent (unbiased) way.
Early involvement	The participants should be involved as early as possible in the process, as soon as value judgments become salient.
Influence	The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy.
Transparency	The process should be transparent so that the relevant population can see what is going on and how decisions are being made.
Process criteria	
Resource accessibility	Participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfill their brief.
Task definition	The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined.
Structured decision making	The participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process.
Cost-effectiveness	The procedure should in some sense be cost-effective from the point of view of the sponsors.

of organizers and sponsors (as filtered through the evaluators), as well as participants (it provides added value to the participant questionnaire)" (p. 96-97).

Using their evaluation framework, in 2000, Rowe and Frewer completed an analysis of many of the most formalized public participation techniques or methods (2000, pp. 19-20). Although the participation methods may perform better on individual criteria when customized for a particular circumstance, and/or crafted to address some of their weaknesses, the analysis nonetheless provides a general idea of which methods are more likely to both demonstrate better process and be acceptable to the participants and

sponsor. A final consideration expressed by Rowe and Frewer is that the "intrinsic features of any one participation method will not act alone…. in determining whether that method will be effective. Rather, a variety of contextual and environmental factors will interact with the characteristics of a method to determine effectiveness" (p. 25)

Beierle and Cayford. At the time of writing *Democracy in Practice, Public Participation in Environmental Decisions* in 2002, Thomas Beierle and Jerry Cayford were both Research Associates in the Center for Risk Management at the environmental and natural resource research and policymaking organization, *Resources for the Future*, based in Washington, DC. The two primary objectives of their research as well as for the book were (1) "to develop an understanding of the social value of public participation, that is, its 'value added' for society," and (2) "to understand what makes some [public participation] processes successful and others not" (pp. 1-2).

The evaluation framework and methodology employed in *Democracy in Practice* was piloted two years earlier in a study by Beierle and Konisky (2000). The pilot evaluated 54 case studies. For the book, Beierle and Cayford expanded the data set to include 239 case studies spanning the course of 30 years, from the early 1970s to 2000.

The five social goals for Beierle's and Cayford's (2002) evaluation framework are:

Goal 1: Incorporating public values into decisions

Goal 2: Improving the substantive quality of decisions

Goal 3: Resolving conflict among competing interests

Goal 4: Building trust in institutions

Goal 5: Educating and informing the public (p. 6)

The Beierle and Cayford framework (see Table 2-14) goes one step beyond an evaluation of the typical process and outcome (they use the term "results") success criteria, and includes "context" as an important determinant of success. Context refers to "all the features of a given situation that a public participation process confronts," broken down by the authors into subcategories of (a) type of issue, (b) preexisting relationships, and (c) the institutional setting (2002, p. 10).

The authors note that the participation mechanism (i.e. public hearing, consensus conference, workshop, etc.) is the most important element of process for determining success because the participation technique or method ultimately determines "how participants are selected, the type of people who participate, what kind of output the

Table 2-14

Conceptual model of public participation: Categories and attributes of public participation exercises (Beierle and Cayford, 2002, p. 10). Adapted with permission.

Context	Process	Results
Type of Issue • Policy level vs. site specific • Pollution vs. natural • resource • Topical category Preexisting Relationships • Conflict among public • Mistrust of government Institutional Setting • Level of government • Identity of lead agency • Lead agency's level of • involvement	Type of Mechanism • Selection of participants • Type of participant • Type of output • Use of consensus Variable Process Features • Responsiveness of the • lead agency • Motivation of participants • Quality of deliberation • Degree of public control	Output Relationships • Among public • Between public and agency Capacity Building

participants will produce, and whether the participants will seek consensus" (p. 12). In addition to the type of participation mechanism, four "variable process feature" success criteria are identified, including " the responsiveness of the lead agency, the motivation of the participants, the quality of deliberation among participants, and the degree of public control over the process" (p. 12). These criteria are referred to as "variables" because their influence is dependent on the participation process and, therefore, will vary from one participation mechanism to another.

The authors define "results" not only as the specific outcome of the public participation process, but also as any resulting change (positive or not) in relationships among interest groups and between the public and the lead agency. For Beierle's and Cayford's framework, "success" of a public participation effort is defined as the extent to which the effort achieves the five social goals (or attributes) identified under the results component of the author's Conceptual Model of Public Participation (see Table 2-14). The results component (see Table 2-15) is evaluated in terms of output, "the extent to

Table 2-15

Social goals evaluated in the "Results" category of Beierle's and Cayford's Concept Model (2002, p. 10). Reprinted with permission.

Output
• Incorporating public values into decisions
• Improving the substantive quality of decisions
Relationships
• Resolving conflict among competing interests
• Building trust in institutions
Capacity Building
• Educating and informing the public

which public values were incorporated into decisions and whether the substantive quality of decisions was improved," relationships, "the extent to which conflict was resolved among competing interests and trust was built in the lead agency," and capacity building, "whether the public became better educated and informed about environmental issues" (p. 13-14).

Summary of newer frameworks. Claudia Baldwin and Vivien Twyford (2007) completed a study of "13 projects related to dams and development in 12 countries on 6 continents" for the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) (p. 1). The aim of their research was to "identify relevant practices of stakeholder participation in policy-making" and recommend a "comprehensive framework to improve the *evaluation* of participation practices" (p. 2).

The evaluation criteria for Baldwin and Twyford's framework were developed from a number of sources, but primarily the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) "Core Values" and guidelines (2007). Additional criteria were developed based on priorities identified by UNEP's Dams and Development Project (DDP) group and from "guidelines generally accepted in the literature and/or used by World Bank, EU, and other agencies" (P2) (p. 8). Table 2-16 lists the individual criteria from each of these three sources.

Evaluations for the study were based on available data from the evaluations completed for each of the 13 projects as well as Web-based sources, such as reports and media interviews, and questionnaires administered to "participant managers" and various stakeholders involved in the participation for each case study (p. 6). Their findings, after

Table 2-16

Criteria for evaluation of case studies (Baldwin & Twyford, 2007, p. 8).

	Process	Output	Outcome	Impact
IAP2 Core Values				
• Stakeholders have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives	X			
• Stakeholders' contributions genuinely influence decisions				X
• Achieving sustainable decisions by meeting the needs of all participants including decision-makers		X	X	
• Seeking out and facilitating the involvement of those potentially affected	X			
• Involving participants in defining how they participate	X			
• Providing stakeholders with the information they need so they can participate in a meaningful way	X	X		
• Communicating to stakeholders how their input influenced the decision as a result of their participation				X
DDP Key features of stakeholder participation				
a) Stakeholder identification and enabling	X			
b) Access to and dissemination of information	X	X		
c) Informed stakeholder participation in decision making	X	X		
d) Public acceptance of outcomes				X
Key characteristics of informed P2				
• Stakeholder analysis and participation plans	X			
• Techniques and tools appropriate to the purpose and Stakeholders	X			
• Financial commitment	X			
• Timing	X			
• Regulatory commitment	X			X

applying their evaluation framework, were that "a wide range of effective and cost-effective [participation] techniques are being employed to engage the community in efforts to improve decisions on dams. Yet it is also clear that these techniques are not being widely or consistently applied, either globally or within dam projects" (p. 15). The authors concluded that, "To foster continuing development of stakeholder participation practices, evaluation measures need to be identified early in the process, and both process

and outcomes (if not output and impact) of participation need to be documented, evaluated, and made publicly available so that others can learn from the experience" (p. 15).

Jason Chilvers (2008) developed an evaluation framework relying on the perspective of participatory appraisal experts to better address the "actual realities of complex and uncertain science-policy contexts" existing in public engagement specific to science-technological related issues (p. 424). A higher goal for the new framework was the creation of public engagement mechanisms in science which are truly democratic, fair, and competent and also engender social learning (p. 447).

Chilvers's framework relies on 14 specific "principles" (see Table 2-17) which he described as follows:

> [T]he principles….stress the importance of opening up appraisals through ensuring: highly critical and interactive *deliberation* that exposes differences, dissent, uncertainties, and underlying assumptions; *analysis* that is open to wider framings, meanings, and concerns and is transparent about uncertainties and assumptions; and access to an inclusive and diverse range of *information and specialist expertise*" (p. 444).

One environmental risk study and one workshop, both in the area of radioactive waste policy options, were the subject of Chilvers's study in which he conducted in-depth (2-3 hour) interviews of three different actor types (i.e., participatory process experts, scientific experts, and decision makers) in the public participatory process. The main themes derived from the interviews covered, "the overall shape of the analytic-deliberative process; the role of scientific analysis; access to information and expertise; and the nature of deliberation." (p. 432). From these broad themes, the author derived the 14 principles framework shown in Table 2-17.

Table 2-17

A Summary of the Fourteen Principles of Effective Participatory Appraisal (PA) Emerging from Practitioner Deliberation (Chilvers, 2008, p. 442).

In *the analytic-deliberative process* publics/stakeholders should be actively engaged:

1. as early as possible in the framing stage to define the problem, alternative courses of action and, acceptability criteria;
2. in the framing stage to shape and guide scientific analysis conducted throughout the process;
3. in scientific assessment and evaluation where they demand to do so or where science supporting the decision process is particularly contentious or uncertain.

Scientific analysis relating to the PA process should:

4. support deliberation and be accessible, relevant, and usable to participants within the process;
5. be responsive to the needs, issues and concerns expressed by participants in an iterative way;
6. be transparent to participants within the process and make underlying uncertainties and assumptions explicit.

In relation to *access to information and specialist expertise*:

7. information provided should be appropriate, meaningful and understandable from the perspective of those participating;
8. information provided within the process should faithfully represent the range/diversity of views that exist on the issue being considered;
9. information provided within the process should be responsive to the needs of participants;
10. participants within the process should have access to specialist expertise and control over who provides this assistance.

Deliberation conducted within the PA process should:

11. ensure a highly interactive, symmetrical, and critical relationship between participants and specialists;
12. emphasize diversity and difference through representing alternative viewpoints, exploring uncertainties and exposing underlying assumptions;
13. allow enough time for participants to become informed and develop competent understandings;
14. ensure that facilitators have adequate substantive understanding of the issues while remaining independent and impartial as to the outcomes of the process.

The study identifies a "technocracy of participation" in which public participation is subject to "the same problems, deficiencies, and critiques" faced by approaches to policy development that are based primarily on scientific evidence (p. 443-444). Another phrase cited from Cooke and Kothari (2001, as cited in Chilvers, 2008) which describes this same condition is the "tyranny of participation" which leads to disempowerment and exclusion of participants (p. 444).

In conclusion, Chilvers stated: "Through novel perspectives on competence and citizen-science relations, the [fourteen] principles….provide process design measures, and possible evaluative criteria, that guard against the technocracy of participation" (p. 446). The author warned that the principles framework could result in a "radical reworking of existing consensual approaches to scientific analysis and participatory deliberation," advocating, for example, inclusion of the public in "core appraisal tasks" and doing away with "a strict separation between (scientific) analysis and (public) deliberation" (p. 446).

Yang and Pandey (2011) have developed more of an evaluation "model" rather than a "framework" and, as such, their evaluation process does not lend itself directly to the purpose of evaluating participation mechanisms as other frameworks do. However, their study is important because it seeks to analyze the impact of participation criteria using a more quantitative rather than qualitative methodology, "integrating public organizational theories with the citizen participation literature, testing a multivariate model, and starting to address the complex relationships among some typical success factors" (p. 889).

Yang and Pandey's model breaks the criteria for explaining involvement outcomes into four categories: (1) involvement mechanisms/tools, (2) characteristics of participants, (3) characteristics of target organizations, and (4) environment" (p. 882). From these categories, they developed the following hypotheses about specific evaluation criteria:

1. Elected official support is positively associated with better participation outcomes;
2. Bureaucratic red tape is negatively associated with better participation outcomes;
3. Hierarchical authority is negatively associated with better participation outcomes;
4. Transformational leadership is positively associated with better participation outcomes;
5. Using multiple involvement mechanisms is positively associated with better participation outcomes;
6. There is an interactive effect between transformational leadership and variety of involvement mechanisms so that the latter's impact on participation outcomes is likely to be enhanced by the former;
7. High levels of participant competence are positively associated with better participation outcomes;
8. High levels of participant representativeness are positively associated with better participation outcomes;

9. There is an interactive effect between participant competence and participant representativeness so that higher levels of representativeness reduce the impact of competence.

To test these hypotheses, Yang and Pandey used an on-line questionnaire to survey 1,097 senior level "functional" managers (e.g. department heads rather than executives such as City Managers or Assistant/Deputy City Managers) in local government jurisdictions with a population of more than 50,000. Therefore, the study "relies on managers' evaluations of outcomes, capturing whether citizen participation increases department influence, facilitates decision making, helps develop consensus, and brings new ideas" (p. 884). Although the findings from their study "have strong theoretical support and are consistent with other studies," the authors recognized the shortcoming to their methodology in that "managers' judgments may be different from those of citizens" (p. 889) (see Abelson & Gauvin, 2006).

In the analysis of findings, Yang and Pandey determined that "public management matters in citizen participation" with four public management variables found to be significant, including "elected official support, red tape, hierarchical authority, and transformational leadership" (p. 889). Additionally, they found "a trade-off between participant competence and representativeness in the short term, as well as a reinforcing relationship between involvement mechanisms and transformational leadership" (p. 889).

The authors accepted that the findings "require further validation using different methods such as case studies, interviews, and time series designs" (p. 888). However, they also concluded that the results of the study might "help public managers prioritize

their actions when they are usually constrained by resources, mandates, and situations, shedding light on questions such as: "Can strong leadership and commitment overcome the limitations on resources and techniques?" and "Should we simultaneously push for participant competency and representativeness to the greatest extent possible?" (p. 882)

Summary of the Literature

Public participation in government is a cherished value in the United States based on the 17th century political philosophy that there exists a set of "natural rights" of man and among these rights is the fundamental idea that people have a right to participate in decisions that affect them. Although at the founding of the United States, focus was mostly on representative government, citizen participation in government has always been held as important, with increases in direct democracy of citizens in the formulation and implementation of public policy beginning with the progressive era in the early 20th century and reaching new heights at the beginning of the 21st century.

The literature shows that public participation in and of itself is not sufficient, it must be done effectively to garner the benefits that come from the franchise. Benefits include (a) education of the public about important decisions that affect them, (b) reduced confrontation between government/private organizations and the public, and (c) inclusion of public concerns in decisions. On a broader scale, public participation leads to a more civil society, overall improved quality of communications and decisions, and a building of trust in government and private institutions.

The literature provides evidence of why evaluation of public participation is important, describes some of the foundations underpinning the evaluations that are being

done, derived significantly from the field of evaluation research, and enumerates many of the barriers or challenges to doing evaluation of public participation programs. Literature also shows many of the shortcomings are being addressed by thoughtful practitioners and researchers who have worked hard over the course of the past 40 years. Their collective efforts have led to the development of evaluation "frameworks" which serve as templates for organized and systematic evaluation of public participation exercises.

The most popular and well thought out frameworks, particularly those that built on the work of others who came before them, use a more or less common set of criteria for judging the success of a participation program. To the extent that these frameworks are publicized and made available to those evaluating public participation programs nationally and internationally, there can be consistent data accumulated about what participation techniques work best in which circumstances.

The literature illustrates how this information can then be used to improve public participation, leading to clearer indications of success. As the authors report, positive results derived from quality evaluation, and resulting from a public participation exercise done well, can lead policy makers, managers, stakeholders and the public at large to feel confident that continued support for public participation is not only worthwhile but worth the extra effort and expense required to see that both public participation and its evaluation is an integral part of the public decision making process.

Chapter3

RESEARCH METHODS

Over the past 40 years, a great deal of research has been conducted on the subject of public participation, including consideration of what makes a public participation effort or process a success or failure. The research suggests that a particularly important variable in determining success is the involvement of a facilitator in a public participation effort. More specifically, a question remains unanswered as to whether or not the facilitator, as a "third-party intermediary" or, rather, as a member of the lead agency's staff, impacts the level of success of a public participation effort differently (Rosener, 1981).

The field of Group Communication has shown that specific group characteristics and behaviors, which research indicates are important to the success of a group, can be influenced by a facilitator. In "Facilitation of Group Communication, A Critique of Prior Research," Hirokawa and Gouran (1989) stated that it would be beneficial to know "the relative effectiveness of groups with and without [a facilitator]" and that "reasonably well-controlled investigations" could be developed to gather data which would help to better understand this relationship (p. 85). Furthermore, when considering whether a facilitator of public participation efforts should come from inside or outside the sponsoring agency, the literature indicates that there are particular benefits to the success of a public participation effort, in terms of quality and trust in the sponsoring agency, when the facilitator is a true third-party intermediary. However, the specific relationship

of internal versus external facilitators on success of a public participation exercise does not appear to have been directly evaluated in any previous research.

Data

Research for this dissertation utilizes the data set created by Beierle and Cayford (2002) for their book *Democracy in Practice. Public Participation in Environmental Decisions*. The authors described the sources of the 239 case studies of public involvement in environmental decision making as follows:

> Case studies were published in journals, books, dissertations, conference proceedings, and government reports. They cover diverse planning, management, and implementation activities carried out by citizens and agencies at many levels of government. Each case involves a participation process specifically designed to engage people outside of government in helping to make decisions concerning the environment (e.g., public hearings, advisory committees, negotiations, or mediation) (p. 7).

The authors further clarified that the initial search for cases started with a review of abstracts from over 1,800 publications to determine if the reference (a) involved public participation, (b) occurred in the United States, and (c) concerned the environment (p. 78). Abstracts meeting these criteria totaled 531. These documents were screened further to ensure that the cases they described included a minimum set of data points necessary to accomplish the research goals set out by Beierle and Cayford, resulting in a total of 205 cases. These cases were added to the 34 cases from Beierle's and Konisky's (2000) initial pilot study to make the final total of 239 cases in the data set (Beierle & Cayford, p. 79). Figures 3-1 and 3-2 describe the types of participation mechanisms included in the final data set and the distribution of the cases by region of the United States.

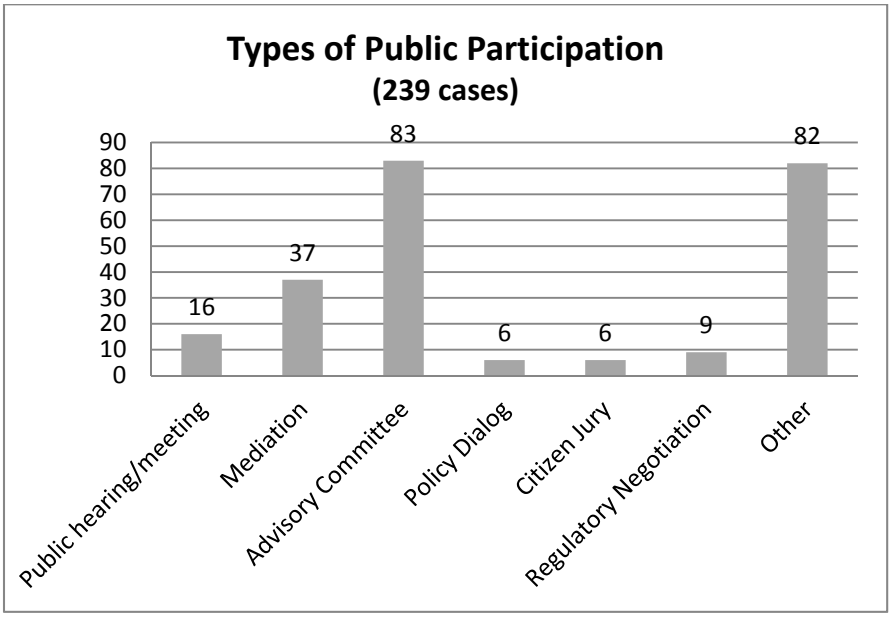


Figure 3-1. Types of participation included in Beierle's and Cayford's (2002) data set and number of cases for each type.

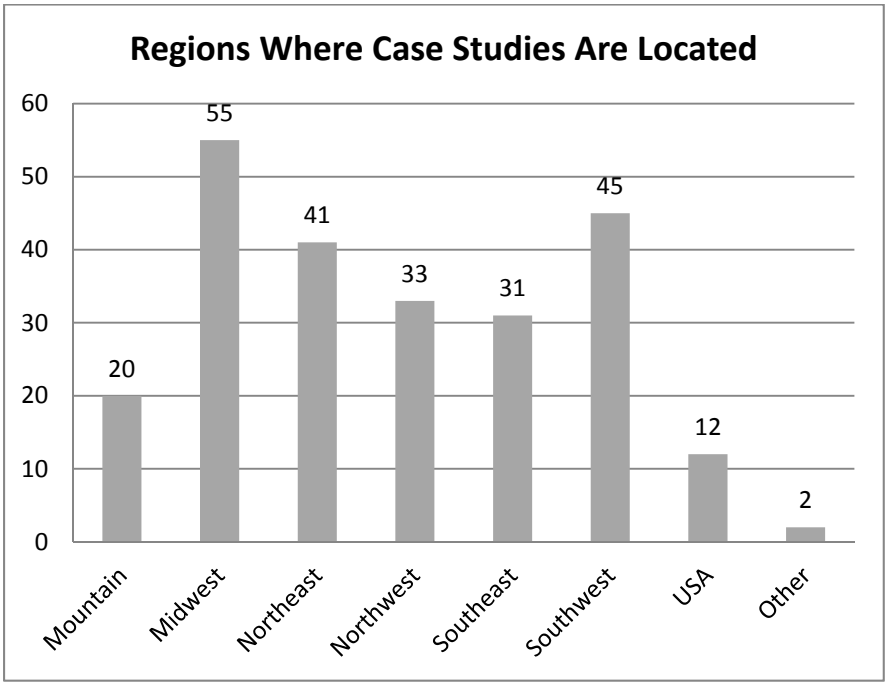


Figure 3-2. Regions where case studies are located for Beierle's and Cayford's (2002) study and number of cases for each region.

Beierle and Cayford (2002) stated that public participation has the benefit of accomplishing five (5) social goals. "Success" of a public participation effort or process is defined as the extent to which public participation efforts achieve these social goals. Figure 3-3 shows the five social goals and how cases scored on each goal relative to a high, medium, and low scale of "aggregate measure of success." Table 3-1 provides a description of how Beierle and Cayford scored each of the social goals as "high," "medium," or "low."

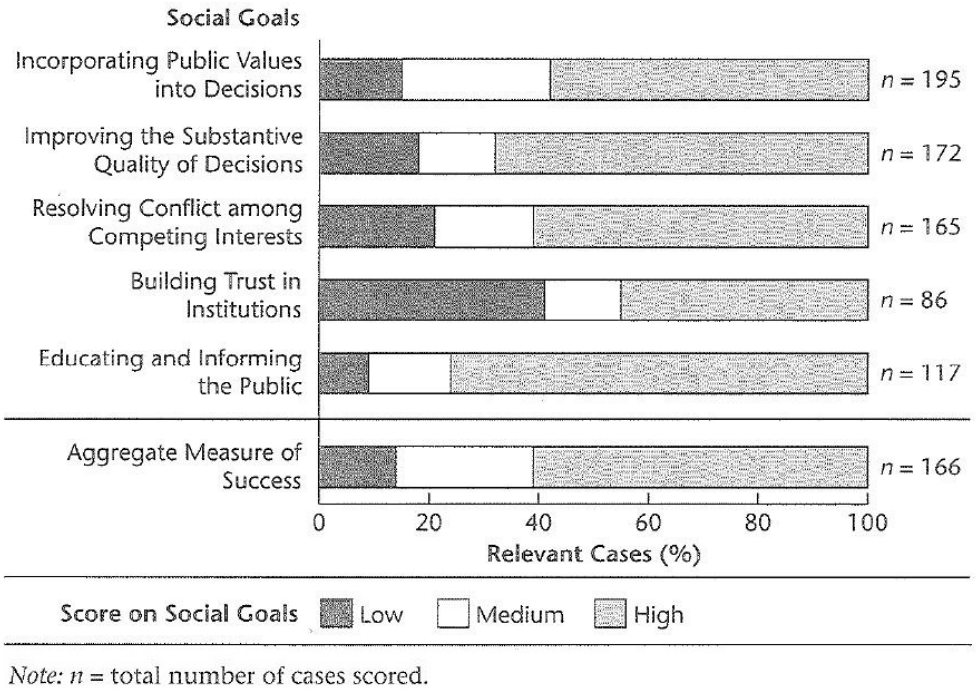


Figure 3-3. Social Goals of Participation (Beierle & Cayford, 2002, p. 23). Reprinted with permission.

The data set was derived using a "case survey" methodology, which the authors describe as follows: "A case survey is analogous to a normal closed-end survey, except that a reader-analyst 'asks' a standard set of questions of a written case study rather than of a person" (p. 17). As pointed out by the authors, each of the cases studied "occurred in

Table 3-1

An explanation of how Beierle's and Cayford's five "Social Goals" were scored (2002, p. 25-26). Adapted with permission.

Scoring the Social Goals

We scored the five social goals on the basis of the following descriptive information. Also included are some other questions that should be considered in assigning meaning to the social goals scores. Future evaluations can use these goals as a starting point.

Goal 1: Incorporating Public Values into Decisions

How much influence is the public having on decisions made? We defined the scores as follows:

- high - Public input made or substantially changed decisions.
- medium - Public input may have informed analysis but did not significantly affect the decisions made.
- low - Public input had little impact on analysis or decisions.

When asking questions about public values, we need to know whose values we are talking about. Are the participants socioeconomically representative of the wider public? Are all the interests at the table? Are processes in place for soliciting input from the wider public?

Goal 2: Improving the Substantive Quality of Decisions

Are stakeholders improving decisions through creative problem solving, innovative ideas, or new information? We scored this goal based on eight criteria, divided into two sets. The first set measured whether decisions were superior to likely alternatives in terms of cost-effectiveness, joint gains, the opinions of participants, or other measures. We defined the scores for this set as follows:

- high - Quality increased.
- medium - Quality did not change.
- low - Quality decreased.

The second set of criteria measured whether participants added information, provided technical analysis, contributed innovative ideas, or contributed a holistic perspective. We scored these criteria as "yes" or "no." The first and second sets of criteria were combined into a single measure of substantive quality.

Table 3-1 (continued)

An explanation of how Beierle's and Cayford's five "Social Goals" were scored (2002, p. 25-26). Adapted with permission.

Scoring the Social Goals
continued

Goal 3: Resolving Conflict among Competing Interests

Was conflict that was present at the beginning of the process resolved by the end? Scoring this goal required combining information about the preexisting level of conflict with information about conflict at the end of the process. We defined the scores as follows:

- high - Preexisting conflict was resolved, or good relationships were maintained.
- medium - Conflict was resolved only on some issues or only among some participants.
- low - Preexisting conflict was not resolved, or conflict was made worse.

To interpret the significance of the conflict resolution score (but not to influence the score itself), we asked two more questions, which helped us understand whether conflict was resolved or simply avoided: Was conflict avoided by avoiding contentious issues? Was conflict avoided because certain parties were excluded or chose not to participate?

Goal 4: Building Trust in Institutions

Was mistrust of agencies that was present at the beginning of the process lessened by the end? Like resolving conflict, this goal required combining information about preexisting trust with information about the level of trust at the end of the process. We defined the scores as follows:

- high - Trust was built by the process, or a state of high trust was maintained.
- medium - Trust was improved only moderately or only among some participants.
- low - Trust decreased, or a state of low trust was not improved.

Many instances of declining trust stem from society-wide mistrust of institutions. It is crucial, then, to determine how broadly trust formation extends beyond participants to the wider public.

Goal 5: Educating and Informing the Public

Did the public learn enough about the issue to actively engage in decision-making? We defined the scores as follows:

- high - Participants learned a great deal about the issue under debate, enabling them to be effective partners in decision making.
- medium - Participants learned about the issue, but not enough to feel effective in the process.
- low - Participants learned little about the issue.

The importance of educating and informing the public, like that of building trust, extends beyond the participants. We should ask, then, about the extent and effectiveness of educational outreach to the wider public.

Table 3-2

Conceptual model of public participation: Categories and attributes of public participation exercises (Beierle and Cayford, 2002, p. 10). Adapted with permission.

Context	Process	Results
Type of Issue • Policy level vs. site specific • Pollution vs. natural • resource • Topical category Preexisting Relationships • Conflict among public • Mistrust of government Institutional Setting • Level of government • Identity of lead agency • Lead agency's level of • involvement	Type of Mechanism • Selection of participants • Type of participant • Type of output • Use of consensus Variable Process Features • Responsiveness of the • lead agency • Motivation of participants • Quality of deliberation • Degree of public control	Output Relationships • Among public • Between public and agency Capacity Building

a particular context, used a particular process, and produced a particular set of results" (p. 9) (see Table 3-2). Of these three main categories (context, process, and results), the presence of a "facilitator" attribute (variable) may be found under the "process" category (p. 87).

Data analysis conducted by Beierle and Cayford was based on bivariate correlation (i.e. the examination of the relationship between two variables) (p. 18), and multivariate analysis (i.e. an explanation of the variation found in a dependent variable based on the variation in a series of independent variables) (p.19). Research for this dissertation was based primarily on the author's bivariate correlation analysis conducted using the software package *Stata, release 5*.

Concepts

Beierle and Cayford provided the following explanation for how a particular case was determined to have a "low," "medium," or "high" measure of success score on each of the five social goals.

> A correlation of 0 means that there is no relationship between the variables, and a correlation of 1 means that the variables are perfectly correlated. The type of ordinal data used [for the study] (e.g., low, medium, and high scores) required the use of a nonparametric correlation technique. Calculating correlation coefficients involved the use of contingency tables—essentially, cross-tabulations of the results for two attributes—and counts of the numbers of matching and nonmatching pairs of results. The social science literature has no fixed standard for what level of correlation should be regarded as high or low. We considered correlations above 0.45 as "high," correlations between 0.3 and 0.45 as "moderate," and correlations below 0.3 as "low" (p. 18).

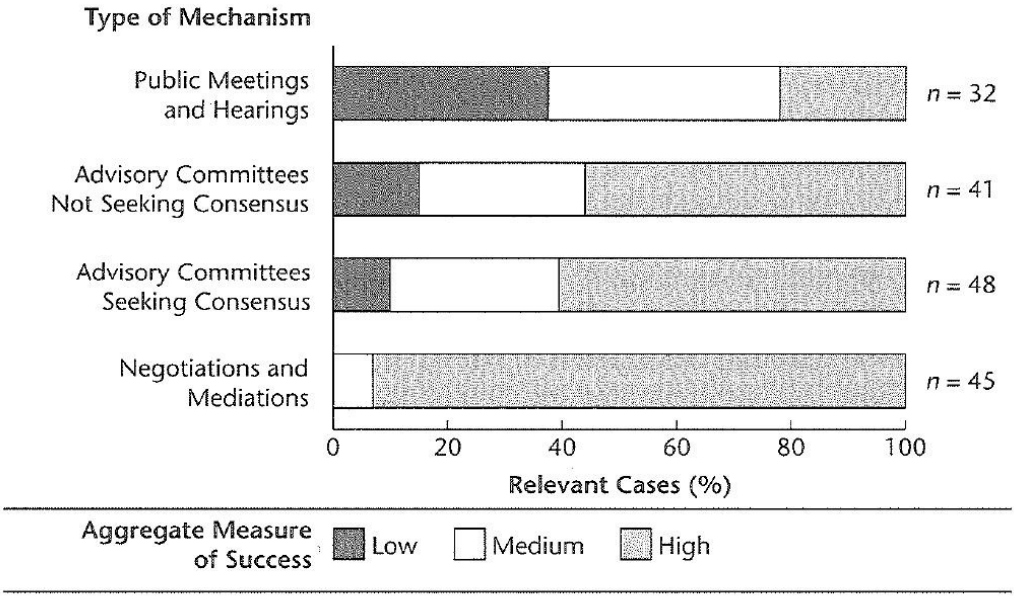
The authors clarified that an "aggregate measure of success" score was derived for each case by averaging the five social goal scores for each case (p. 94). Because all five social goals could not be evaluated for every case, only those cases that were scored for three or more social goals received an aggregate measure of success score (p. 94). For the final data analysis only those cases with an aggregate measure of success score were included; a total of 166 of the original 239 cases (p. 23).

Beierle and Cayford identified four types of public participation mechanisms and rated each in terms of "intensity" of participation and inclusion, from low to high, including: (1) public meetings; (2) advisory committees not seeking consensus; (3) advisory committees seeking consensus; and, (4) negotiations and mediations (see Table 3-3). In their research, they demonstrated that "success" was significantly linked to the level of intensity of a mechanism, specifically that with greater intensity there follows higher levels of success (see Figure 3-4). Beierle and Cayford also noted that more-

Table 3-3

Four types of participatory mechanisms, ranked from least to most intense public involvement, which categorize Beierle's and Cayford's data set (2002, p. 45). Reprinted with permission.

	Feature			
Mechanism	*Selection of participants*	*Type of participant*	*Type of output*	*Seek consensus?*
Public meetings and hearings	Usually open access; group size ranges widely	Average citizens	Information sharing	No
Advisory committees not seeking consensus	Small group of participants selected based on characteristics	Average citizens, interest group representatives	Recommendations to agency	No
Advisory committees seeking consensus	Small group of participants selected based on characteristics	Average citizens, interest group representatives	Recommendations to agency	Yes
Negotiations and mediations	Small group of participants selected based on characteristics or specific interests	Interest group representatives	Agreements among parties	Yes



Note: n = total number of cases scored.

Figure 3-4. Aggregate measure of success, by type of mechanism (Beierle & Cayford, 2002, p. 47). Reprinted with Permission.

intensive mechanisms use facilitators because there is greater funding and staff support. "For example, whereas only 18% of public meetings and 18% of advisory committees not seeking consensus use a facilitator, 34% of advisory committees seeking consensus and 70% of negotiations and mediations do so" (p. 47). Although these data indicate a correlation between success of a mechanism and the use of a facilitator, Beierle and Cayford did not specifically consider the level of success between mechanisms with and without facilitators. Additionally, for those mechanisms that used facilitators, the analysis did not consider any impact on success that may result from mechanisms in which the facilitator was a third-party intermediary versus a member of the lead agency's staff.

Beierle and Cayford cautioned that although negotiations and mediations are shown to be more successful than less intensive mechanisms, primarily because participants "have more experience with the issues under discussion, more experience influencing public decision making, and more experience with participatory efforts," they have the undesirable characteristic of being less inclusive of the wider public. Therefore, this dissertation posits the question: Can we make a case for greater use of facilitation with less intensive mechanisms because it is more important for inclusion? That is, the more intensive mechanisms have participants with greater capacity, therefore they may benefit only incrementally from the presence of facilitators, whereas less intensive mechanisms may benefit much more because of the lower civic capacity of participants.

A stronger understanding of the role of facilitation in public participation, especially for public meetings and advisory committees which are more inclusive of the

wider public, may help to make the case that the use of, and funding for, facilitators, as is done with the more intense mechanisms, is critical to successful public participation efforts. In fact, determining whether or not facilitators may be more important to the less intensive mechanisms would be particularly informative and provide sound policy arguments for proper funding of public participation efforts that are traditionally less intensive. Finally, a clearer understanding of the impact of the type of facilitator on success (i.e., a third-party intermediary versus a member of the lead agency's staff) may help those designing public participation efforts consider the consequences of the decision, especially with regard to investing in third-party facilitators.

Data Analysis Plan

Utilizing the data set created by Beierle and Cayford (2002), this dissertation evaluated the research question: Do third-party, neutral intermediaries (facilitators) have a positive impact on the success of public participation?

The Access database file containing all of the coded data for each of the 239 cases studied was shared by Beierle and Cayford for the purposes of this dissertation. Additionally, numerous Microsoft Excel spreadsheet files containing the statistical output data from the original analyses using the *Stata* software were included in the data set loan. These data were sorted to recreate the various tables and figures in the Beierle and Cayford book. Of particular importance for this study were Beierle's and Cayford's Figure 3-1 (p. 23) as represented by Figure 3-3 in this dissertation, and Figure 5-1 (p. 47) as represented by Figure 3-4 in this dissertation. Knowing the specific cases that made up Figures 3-1 and 5-1 allowed for a cross analysis of those cases to determine which

ones included a facilitator and which ones did not. Furthermore, the process served to determine the correlation between the presence of a facilitator and the level of success of each case. Of the 239 total cases in Beierle's and Cayford's study, 159 were coded for the "facilitator" variable. Eighty-three (83) of these cases (52%) were coded as having a facilitator, 28 of the cases (18%) were coded as not having a facilitator, and 22 of the cases (14%) were coded as "maybe," meaning there existed some evidence that a facilitator may have been utilized, but evidence was not conclusive or verifiable using the case study information. Finally, for the remaining 26 cases (16%), there was "no evidence" in the case study information to indicate if a facilitator was or was not utilized.

Beierle and Cayford had not coded the data as to whether or not facilitators were a member of the lead agency (internal) or a third-party (external). For this reason, it was necessary to evaluate the information in the original Access database file to make this determination in order to code the data even further. This additional coding was completed only on cases Beierle and Cayford identified as having a facilitator, with no attempt to second guess the author's coding of the cases as either "yes", "no", "maybe", and "no evidence" regarding the presence of a facilitator.

Using the data set, the following sub-questions were answered, leading to the answer of the major research question of the study: Do third-party, neutral intermediaries (facilitators) have a positive impact on the success of public participation?

Sub-question 1: Evaluate if the public meetings, advisory committees not seeking consensus, advisory committees seeking consensus,

and negotiations and mediations that use facilitators are more successful than those that do not.

Sub-question 2: For those cases that did use facilitators, evaluate if success is greater in the less intensive mechanisms when a facilitator is present than for the more intensive mechanisms.

Sub-question 3: For those cases that did use facilitators, evaluate if success is greater when the facilitator is a third-party intermediary (external) versus a member of the lead agency's staff (internal).

It is hypothesized that analyses will show that success is greater in the less intensive mechanisms when a facilitator is present because, in addition to the facilitator, Beierle and Cayford note the following influences on the process:

> Participants in more intensive processes have a greater degree of what might be called *capacity* than participants in less-intensive processes. They have more experience with the issues under discussion, more experience influencing public decision making, and more experience with participatory efforts. All these skills may make these participants more effective in participating, solving problems, and getting decisions implemented (p. 47).

Because participants in less intensive mechanisms have a "lesser degree of capacity," less intensive mechanisms might be shown to be of greater benefit when a facilitator is present. That is, less intensive mechanisms might tend to show a greater change in success than more intensive mechanisms when comparing each with and without a facilitator.

Because the literature indicated that facilitators have particular influence on the "quality" of public participation and "trust" in the agency sponsoring the participation effort, additional analysis of the data was designed to determine, specifically, the impact

of facilitators on two of Beierle's and Cayford's five social goals, namely "improving the substantive quality of decisions" and "building trust in institutions." This design led to four additional sub-questions to be answered in order to derive the final answer to the major research question of the study.

Sub-question 4: Evaluate if those cases which included a facilitator had higher scores on improving the substantive quality of decisions than those that did not.

Sub-question 5: For those cases that did use facilitators, evaluate if there were higher scores on improving the substantive quality of decisions when the facilitator is a third-party intermediary versus a member of the lead agency's staff.

Sub-question 6: Evaluate if those cases which included a facilitator had higher scores on building trust in institutions than those that did not.

Sub-question 7: For those cases that did use facilitators, evaluate if there were higher scores on building trust in institutions when the facilitator is a third-party intermediary versus a member of the lead agency's staff.

As previously stated, 166 of the original 239 cases received an aggregate measure of success score which could be evaluated for the Facilitator variable (p. 94). Considering cases which Beierle and Cayford codified as definitively (a) having and (b) not having a facilitator, the data set for answering research sub-questions 1 through 3

consisted of a total of 88 cases—67 with a facilitator present and 21 with no facilitator present.

Using Beierle's and Cayford's full data set contained in the spreadsheets, the 88 cases for answering sub-questions 1 through 3 were identified using the following steps:

Step 1: Sort by type of public participation activity (i.e., public meetings, advisory committees not seeking consensus, advisory committees seeking consensus, and negotiations and mediations);

Step 2: Sort by presence of a facilitator (i.e., yes, no, maybe, no evidence);

Step 3: Sort by the type of facilitator (i.e., internal or external); and

Step 4: Sort by the aggregate measure of success (low, medium, high).

To answer research sub-questions 4 and 5, the low, medium and high measure of success was utilized. The measure was not an aggregate measure but, rather, a measure of success for the two social goals. For "improving the substantive quality of decisions," a case coded as "low" means that "quality decreased" as a result of public participation whereas one coded as "medium" means that the "quality did not change" and a case coded as "high" means that "quality increased" (see Table 3-1).

To create the subset of data to answer sub-questions 4 and 5, it was necessary to follow these analytic steps:

Step 1: Sort the full data set for cases coded for the "improving the substantive quality of decisions" social goal. This yielded a total of 172 cases;

Step 2: Sort the 172 cases by presence of a facilitator (i.e., yes, no, maybe, no evidence);

Step 3: Sort by the type of facilitator (i.e., internal, external); and

Step 4: Sort by the "improving the substantive quality of decisions" measure of success (low, medium, high).

The final number of cases available for answering research sub-questions 4 and 5 totaled 89, including 70 with a facilitator present, and 19 with no facilitator present.

For "building trust in institutions," a case coded as "low" meant that "trust decreased, or a state of low trust was not improved" as a result of public participation. A case coded as "medium" meant that the "trust was improved only moderately or only among some participants." Finally, a case coded as "high" meant that "trust was built by the process, or a state of high trust was maintained" (see Table 3-1). To create the subset of data to answer sub-questions 6 and 7, the following manipulation of the data set was required:

Step 1: Sort the full data set for cases coded for the "building trust in institutions" social goal. This yielded a total of 86 cases;

Step 2: Sort the 86 cases by presence of a facilitator (i.e., yes, no, maybe, no evidence);

Step 3: Sort by the type of facilitator (i.e., internal, external); and

Step 4: Sort by the "building trust in institutions" measure of success (low, medium, high).

The final number of cases available for answering research sub-questions 6 and 7 was 35; 24 with a facilitator present, and 12 with no facilitator present.

Limitations of Methodology

It is truly fortunate that such a large set of data was made available by Beierle and Cayford for further analysis in this dissertation. With the use of those data came the same limitations already identified by Beierle and Cayford (2002). To begin, they stated that the case survey methodology was, and perhaps still is, a relatively new research method with primary application in the policy analysis and business literature (p. 19). Additionally, as with any research method relying on secondary data, the authors noted that the data were only as good as the 239 case studies forming the basis of their analysis. Likewise, the results of the research for this dissertation are only as valid as the same 239 case studies and original coding techniques used and transferred, intact, to this study.

Confidence in the Beierle and Cayford data set was derived from the care taken in their research approach to control for the opinions, versus factual reporting, by the authors of the 239 case studies. Additionally, the authors were careful to evaluate and consider the impact of bias towards "success" in the case studies to ensure bias was minimized (p. 19, see also Appendix D). For the issue of opinion versus fact, the authors noted that for each attribute evaluated, a large number of cases (100-200) was utilized for analysis and, for each analysis, the cases used were different, thus diluting any bias that any one case, or even a group of cases, would exert on the final results.

An additional limitation of this methodology is the relatively small number of cases remaining after completing the additional sorting to derive the facilitator data, particularly the internal versus external facilitator comparison data. This protocol left a limited data set from which to draw conclusions and upon which to conduct statistical

analysis. This limitation will become clear in the data analysis discussion in Chapter 4. Even so, when considering that many social science case study research designs include relatively low numbers of cases, even the smaller sample set of 35 cases for evaluating the "building trust in institutions" variable would be considered reasonable when considering current literature standards for drawing descriptive conclusions, if not statistical conclusions.

Finally, when coding data to determine whether or not the facilitator for each case was from within the sponsoring agency or a true third-party, insufficient data in many reports made it impossible to be absolutely certain in which category several of the cases belonged. In these instances, the best determination was made using the coded information available in the original Access database file. Out of the 75 cases clearly using a facilitator and analyzed for this dissertation, a total of 12 fell into this category.

Summary of Methodology

Using the original Beierle and Cayford data set, several sorting protocols were implemented to narrow analysis efforts to the specific sub-questions of the study. Analyses were designed to address each of the sub-questions in order to lead the analysis to a conclusion regarding the major research question of the study. Sorting categories included measured degrees of success reported and the use of internal or external facilitators as well as improving the substantive quality of decisions and building trust through the facilitated process. Implementing the analysis protocols following the complex sorting processes was determined to be the best approach to illuminating research question answers.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Table 4-1 summarizes facilitator data from the Beierle and Cayford (2002) data set, including a separate table representing data for "All Cases" as well as for each of the four meeting types into which Beierle and Cayford segregated their data to create Figure 5-1 in their book (p. 47) which is represented by Figure 3-4 in this dissertation. Table 4-2 summarizes data relevant for the two social goals, "improving the substantive quality of decisions" and "building trust in institutions."

The sub-tables shown as Tables 4-1 and 4-2 display the frequency of cases by reported value (i.e. the number of cases that meet each criterion) and by percentage. For a descriptive analysis of the data, both reported values and percentages, collectively, were considered because some percentages appearing to be quite high could be construed as important or significant, but may represent a very small number of cases within a very small subset of cases. For example, in Table 4-1D, 50% of the advisory committees seeking consensus had an internal facilitator, resulting in a high aggregate measure of success score. This percentage was derived from a total of two cases out of a total of four which had an internal facilitator and, therefore, presents a misleading result.

In an effort to make statistically driven determinations about the probability of the facilitator variable exerting significant impact on the successful outcome of the public participation cases studied in the data set, a chi-square probability analysis was conducted on the data in each of the sub-tables using an on-line chi-square calculator by

Table 4-1

Aggregate Measure of Success Data, Evaluation of Facilitator Variable by Meeting Type

4-1A Aggregate Measure of Success - All Cases

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Total	TOTAL
No Facilitator Present	19% (4)	38% (8)	43% (9)	24% (21)	100% (88)
Facilitator Present	1% (1)	28% (19)	70% (47)	76% (67)	
Internal Facilitator	0% (0)	45% (5)	55% (6)	16% (11)	100% (67)
External Facilitator	2% (1)	25% (14)	73% (41)	84% (56)	
For "No Facilitator Present" versus "Facilitator Present" data only, $p < 0.05 = 0.004$					

4-1B Aggregate Measure of Success - Public meetings and hearings

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Total	TOTAL
No Facilitator Present	40% (2)	40% (2)	20% (1)	50% (5)	100% (10)
Facilitator Present	0% (0)	80% (4)	20% (1)	50% (5)	
Internal Facilitator	0% (0)	100% (3)	0% (0)	60% (3)	100% (5)
External Facilitator	0% (0)	50% (1)	50% (1)	40% (2)	

4-1C Aggregate Measure of Success - Advisory committees not seeking consensus

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Total	TOTAL
No Facilitator Present	10% (1)	30% (3)	60% (6)	63% (10)	100% (16)
Facilitator Present	0% (0)	67% (4)	33% (2)	38% (6)	
Internal Facilitator	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (1)	17% (1)	100% (6)
External Facilitator	0% (0)	80% (4)	20% (1)	83% (5)	

4-1D Aggregate Measure of Success - Advisory committees seeking consensus

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Total	TOTAL
No Facilitator Present	20% (1)	60% (3)	20% (1)	21% (5)	100% (24)
Facilitator Present	5% (1)	37% (7)	58% (11)	79% (19)	
Internal Facilitator	0% (0)	50% (2)	50% (2)	21% (4)	100% (19)
External Facilitator	7% (1)	33% (5)	60% (9)	79% (15)	

4-1E Aggregate Measure of Success - Negotiations and mediations

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Total	TOTAL
No Facilitator Present	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (1)	3% (1)	100% (38)
Facilitator Present	0% (0)	11% (4)	89% (33)	97% (37)	
Internal Facilitator	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (3)	8% (3)	100% (37)
External Facilitator	0% (0)	12% (4)	88% (30)	92% (34)	

Table 4-2

Evaluation of Facilitator Variable on Measure of Success for "Improving the Substantive Quality of Decisions" and "Building Trust in Institutions" Social Goal Variables.

4-2A Measure of Success - Improving the substantive quality of decisions

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Total	TOTAL
No Facilitator Present	21% (4)	32% (6)	47% (9)	21% (19)	100% (89)
Facilitator Present	13% (9)	14% (10)	73% (51)	79% (70)	
Internal Facilitator	10% (1)	10% (1)	80% (8)	80% (10)	100% (70)
External Facilitator	13% (8)	15% (9)	72% (43)	86% (60)	

Fore "No Facilitator Present" versus "Facilitator Present" data only, $p < 0.10 = 0.0996$

Low = Quality decreased; Medium = Quality did not change; High = Quality increased

4-2B Measure of Success - Building trust in institutions

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Total	TOTAL
No Facilitator Present	75% (9)	0% (0)	25% (3)	33% (12)	100% (35)
Facilitator Present	25% (6)	13% (3)	63% (15)	67% (24)	
Internal Facilitator	25% (1)	0% (0)	75% (3)	17% (4)	100% (24)
External Facilitator	25% (5)	15% (3)	60% (12)	83% (20)	

Fore "No Facilitator Present" versus "Facilitator Present" data only, $p < 0.05 = 0.014$

Low = Trust decreased, or a state of low trust was not improved

Medium = Trust was improved only moderately or only among some participants

High = Trust was built by the process, or a state of high trust was maintained

Preacher (2010). This protocol was followed first for the "no facilitator present" and "facilitator present" data, then for the "internal facilitator" and "external facilitator" data. The results of these analyses are shown in Appendices A, B and C.

As exhibited in Appendices A, B and C, and also highlighted in Tables 4-1 and 4-2, the only data yielding a probability at the $p < 0.05$ significance level were those data related to the aggregate measure of success for "all cases" (Table 4-1A) and "building trust in institutions" (Table 4-2B). Analysis of data for "improving the substantive quality of decisions" (Table 4-2A) proved significant, but at the lower significance level

of $p < 0.10$. Data for facilitator present for each participation type (Appendix B) yielded a probability with the greatest significance at the $p < 0.01$ level.

According to Preacher (2010), "use of the chi-square test is inappropriate if any expected frequency is below 1, or if the expected frequency is less than 5 in more than 20% of the data cells" (para. 9). Four of the fifteen data tables in Appendices A, B and C met the first criterion of having all expected frequencies greater than 0. However, all but 1 of the 15 tables failed to have 20% or more of the expected frequencies with 5 or more cases. To correct for this, Preacher included a Yates' chi-square correction calculation in his on-line calculator. According to Preacher, "This correction is often employed to improve the accuracy of the null-condition sampling distribution of chi-square" (para. 8). He further qualified his response, however, that the Yate's correction for continuity "probably should be used only for 1-df tests (i.e., goodness of fit tests or tests of independence with 2x2 contingency tables), so use at your own risk for tests with $df > 1$." While analysis results from the chi-square calculator indicated that a few of the data tables in Appendix A have 1 degree of freedom (because one of the columns of data had zero in both rows), all of the data tables were effectively 3x2 with 2 degrees of freedom or, for Appendix B, a 3x4 table with 6 degrees of freedom. Thus, while the Yates' chi-square correction calculation was conducted and displayed for each table, those data were not of use in the final data analysis.

Analysis of Research Sub-Questions

Implementing multiple analysis protocols to determine the answers for sub-questions of the study represented a pathway to reach the answer to the major research

question. The response to each of the sub-questions required a different approach in which, while some steps appear duplicative, in fact, each considers a different subset of the data set and must be considered separately in order to reach an answer. In each instance, the data analysis protocol resulted in an answer to the sub-question, although in some instances, the results were surprising.

Sub-question 1 – Evaluate if the public meetings, advisory committees not seeking consensus, advisory committees seeking consensus, and negotiations and mediations that use facilitators are more successful than those that do not.

Data shown in Table 4-1A for "All Cases" indicate a positive relationship between the presence of a facilitator and success of a participation effort based on the aggregate measure of success criteria established by Beierle and Cayford. Whereas a more or less equal number of cases are found in the "medium" and "high" success category for "no facilitator present", 8 and 9 or 38% and 43% (with 4 or 19% in the "low" category), for cases with a facilitator, the greatest number of cases are clearly found in the "high" success category (47 or 70%) with a moderate number in the "medium" success category (19 or 28%) and only one (1) case in the "low" category. As indicated above, this positive relationship between the presence of a facilitator and success is supported by the chi-square statistical analysis of the data, showing a significant positive relationship at the $p < 0.05$ level.

For the various meeting types, the impact on success of the participation effort attributable to the presence of a facilitator is inconclusive for the less intensive mechanisms (i.e., public meetings and advisory committees not seeking consensus) but

much more clear for the more intensive mechanisms(i.e., advisory committees seeking consensus as well as negotiations and mediations).

The data shown in Table 4-1B regarding public meetings shows more cases aggregated in the low-medium category, 2 and 2 or 80%, for "no facilitator present" while 100% of the cases with a facilitator are in the medium-high category. However, with 80% of the facilitated cases (4) in the medium category, it is less obvious that the tendency is towards higher success. Table 4-1C for advisory committees not seeking consensus shows a grouping of cases without a facilitator more towards the medium and high category, with 60% of the cases (6) in the high category. The cases with a facilitator are distributed similarly to those in Table 4-1B, with a majority (67%) categorized as achieving a medium level of success.

The data displayed in Table 4-1D for advisory committees seeking consensus show a more clear relationship between the presence of a facilitator and success, with a strong majority of cases with a facilitator tending to be more successful (37% with medium success and 58% with high success). Analyses for cases without a facilitator did not indicate a relationship either way with 20% low, 60% medium and 20% high success.

Beierle and Cayford offered the following commentary regarding the non-consensus/consensus distinction between advisory committees, a position directly relevant to the facilitator variable.

> Whether advisory committees seek consensus is an important distinction. In contrast to public meetings, a large part of the work of advisory committees involves managing interactions among participants (who frequently bring very different views to the table) as well as providing input to a lead agency. The procedures that guide that interaction are therefore important. Consensus requires opposing interests to work together to come to a common and acceptable solution

> in ways that voting and other approaches to decision making do not. Consensus-based decision making takes on aspects of internal negotiations among participants, and these kinds of cases commonly are facilitated by a third party (p. 46).

As anticipated from the literature, it is no surprise that 38% of the non-consensus meetings (6) were facilitated whereas 79% of consensus meetings (19) were not because Beierle and Cayford clarified that advisory meetings seeking consensus were more-intensive than those not seeking consensus, meaning "greater funding and staff support" that provides resources for hiring facilitators (p. 47).

For the most intensive participation mechanisms (i.e. negotiations and mediations) the impact on success of the participation effort attributable to the presence of a facilitator emerges as the strongest and clearest of any of the mechanisms. Data in Table 4-1E show that 37 of the 38 negotiations and mediations (97%) included a facilitator while only one case did not. Of the 37 cases with a facilitator, 33 showed a high level of success (89%). In this case, the fact that participants in high intensity public participation have what Beierle and Cayford call greater "capacity" for participation, as discussed previously, would help to explain this result (p. 46).

Answer to research sub-question 1: Analyses determined that public participation efforts using a facilitator were more successful than those that did not.

> *Sub-question 2 – For those cases that did use facilitators, evaluate if success is greater in the less intensive mechanisms when a facilitator is present than for the more intensive mechanisms.*

Data analysis did not indicate a greater level of success for the less intensive mechanisms that included a facilitator. In fact, the chi-square analysis (see Appendix B) indicated the opposite, showing that the more intense public participation mechanisms including a facilitator were more significantly correlated with level of success than the less intense mechanisms (at the $p < 0.01$ level).

Answer to research sub-question 2: Analyses indicated that success was greater in the more intensive mechanisms when a facilitator was present than for the less intensive mechanisms.

Sub-question 3 – For those cases that did use facilitators, evaluate if success is greater when the facilitator is a third-party intermediary (external) versus a member of the lead agency's staff (internal).

None of the analysis outcomes for the cases with internal and external facilitators were found to be statistically significant. However, data shown in Table 4-1A for "All Cases" indicated a more positive relationship between the use of an external facilitator and success of a participation effort than for internal facilitators. For the internal facilitator data, all cases were either of "medium" success (45%) or "high" success (55%), but the difference between "medium" and "high"" was not significant, especially with only 11 cases (5-medium; 6-high) between the two categories. For the external facilitator data, the overwhelming number of cases were in the "high" success category (73%) with 41 of 56 cases represented. For these analyses, there was a sharp drop-off in the number of externally facilitated cases with "medium" success at only fourteen (25%) and only one case in the "low" success category.

For the various meeting types, the impact on success of the participation effort attributable to internal versus external facilitators was very difficult to determine for public meetings and advisory committees not seeking consensus because there were too few cases (5 and 6 total respectively) and many of the categories contained no data (see Tables 4-1B and 4-1C). For advisory committees seeking consensus, Table 4-1D shows more data (19 cases total), however the difference between data for internal and external facilitator also was inconclusive. All of the cases for internal facilitator were equally distributed between the "medium" and "high" success category (2 and 2 respectively). Data for external facilitator tended to reflect the "high" success category, with 9 of the 15 cases (60%), and 5 of 9 cases (33%) in the "medium" success category with only 1 case in the "low" category. However, these findings were insufficient to say that the impact on success of an external facilitator measures significantly different than does the impact of an internal facilitator.

Data displayed in Table 4-1E regarding negotiations and mediations showed 100% of the cases for internal facilitator in the "high" success category. However, while this relationship was definitive, the total number of cases numbered only three (3). Thus, evidence remains unclear as to whether or not this level of success could be maintained with more cases utilizing an internal facilitator. For negotiations and mediations using an external facilitator, the data were overwhelmingly positive with 30 of the 34 cases (88%) in the "high" success category.

Answer to research sub-question 3: Analyses involving all cases indicated that public participation efforts using facilitators were more successful when the facilitator

was a third-party intermediary (external) versus a member of the lead agency's staff (i.e., internal). Analyses also indicated that negotiations and mediations using a third-party facilitator were more successful than those in which the facilitator was a member of the lead agency's staff.

Data exhibited in Table 4-2 represent measures of success based upon two of Beierle's and Cayford's social goals, "improves the substantive quality of decisions" and "building trust in institutions." To be clear, whereas low, medium and high levels shown in Table 4-1 represent an aggregate measure of "success", data in Table 4-2A represent a measure of the quality of the decision arrived at by the public participation effort. Low means "quality decreased," medium means "quality did not change," and high means "quality increased." For Table 4-2B, the data represent a measure of how much the public participation effort impacted the participants trust in the sponsoring agency. Low means "trust decreased, or a state of low trust was not improved", medium means "trust was improved only moderately or only among some participants," and high means "trust was built by the process, or a state of high trust was maintained" (Beierle & Cayford, 2002, p. 26).

Sub-question 4 – Evaluate if those cases which included a facilitator had higher scores on improving the substantive quality of decisions than those that did not.

Data displayed in Table 4-2A indicate that the presence of a facilitator increased the substantive quality of decisions in the public participation cases in the Beierle and Cayford study. Data for "no facilitator present" trended to the positive, but was generally distributed evenly between the three low, medium and high categories at 21%,

32% and 47% respectively. For cases using a facilitator, the analysis indicated a strong relationship between an increase in quality and the presence of a facilitator with 51 of 70 cases (73%) in the "high" category. This positive relationship was confirmed by the chi-square analysis showing a correlation between the presence of a facilitator and increased quality at the $p < 0.10$ significance level (see Appendix C). Cases which showed no change in quality (10 cases) or a decrease in quality (9 cases) were more or less equal, but much fewer out of a total of 70 cases.

Answer to research sub-question 4: Data analysis indicated that public participation efforts using a facilitator result in higher scores on improving the substantive quality of decisions than those that did not.

Sub-question 5 – For those cases that did use facilitators, evaluate if there were higher scores on improving the substantive quality of decisions when the facilitator is a third-party intermediary versus a member of the lead agency's staff.

According to the percentage data contained in Table 4-2A, the impact on the substantive quality of decisions for public participation cases with an internal compared to an external facilitator was nearly equal, 72% (external) and 80% (internal). However, there were far more cases with an external facilitator than an internal facilitator, 60 versus 10 respectively. Moreover, a far lower, but more or less equally distributed, percentage of cases represented the no change in quality (medium) or a decrease in quality (low) categories.

Answer to research sub-question 5: Analysis protocols resulted in insufficient evidence to indicate that public participation efforts facilitated by a third-party resulted in higher scores on improving the substantive quality of decisions than were evident when public participation efforts were facilitated by a member of the lead agency's staff.

Sub-question 6 – Evaluate if those cases which included a facilitator had higher scores on building trust in institutions than those that did not.

Data shown in Table 4-2B indicate a substantial relationship between the "building trust in institutions" variable and the presence of a facilitator. For those cases which did not include a facilitator, a majority (9 of 12) of cases (75%) indicated that trust had decreased, "or a state of low trust was not improved," compared to none of the cases in the medium category and 3 of 12 cases indicating that trust had been built in the participation process, "or a state of high trust was maintained." At the other end of the spectrum, 15 of 24 cases (63%) which included a facilitator showed that trust had been built in the participation process, "or a state of high trust was maintained." This positive relationship between the presence of a facilitator and building trust in institutions was shown to have a strong correlation, at the $p < 0.05$ significance level, as demonstrated by the chi-square analysis (see Appendix C). Only three cases (13%) including a facilitator were reported indicating "trust was improved only moderately or only among some participants", and 6 cases with a facilitator indicating trust had decreased, "or a state of low trust was not improved", was slightly higher at 25%.

Answer to research sub-question 6: Data indicated that public participation efforts that included a facilitator resulted in higher scores on building trust in institutions then those that did not.

Sub-question 7 – For those cases that did use facilitators, evaluate if there were higher scores on building trust in institutions when the facilitator is a third-party intermediary versus a member of the lead agency's staff.

Cases with an internal facilitator and cases with an external facilitator both scored high on the "building trust in institutions" social goal (i.e. "trust was built by the process, or a state of high trust was maintained") with no significant difference between the two types of cases. Table 4-2B shows 3 out of 4 of the cases (75%) with internal facilitators scored "high" and 12 out of 20 cases (60%) with an external facilitator scored "high." While the cases using an external facilitator indicated a more or less even distribution between "medium" and "low", the only remaining case with an internal facilitator scored "low".

Answer to research sub-question 7: There is insufficient evidence to indicate that public participation efforts facilitated by a third-party resulted in higher scores on building trust in institutions than did public participation efforts facilitated by a member of the lead agency's staff.

Summary of Findings

The research methodology described in Chapter 3 provided sufficient results to complete both descriptive and statistical analysis of the data to answer the primary

research question and each of seven sub-questions. The analysis showed that facilitators have a significant, positive impact on the success of public participation efforts. In particular, the analysis showed that public participation efforts using facilitators are more successful when the facilitator is a third-party intermediary rather than a member of the lead agency's staff. The analysis did not indicate a greater level of success for the less intensive mechanisms that included a facilitator but, instead, indicated that a facilitator had greater impact on more intensive mechanisms. Finally, the analysis showed that the presence of a facilitator had a significant, positive impact on improving the substantive quality of decisions and building trust in institutions.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary purpose of this dissertation was to draw a connection between the success of a public participation effort and the presence of a designated individual performing the role of facilitator. More specifically, the aim was to determine if the presence of a third-party, neutral facilitator from outside a sponsoring agency has a more significant impact on the success of public participation efforts than if the facilitator is a member of the sponsor's staff. Research cited included fields of public participation, small group communication, and group facilitation along with the variables that are shared among the fields and proven important to successful public participation. A description was provided of the role that professional facilitators can play to ensure that the important variables are not only *present* in public participation group exercises, but also *maximized*, thus increasing the opportunity for public participation to be successful.

Additional literature from the field of public participation evaluation research was reviewed to determine the state-of-the-art for evaluation of public participation and to pick an evaluation methodology for this dissertation that included the key, important analysis features that would be necessary for this study to be of high quality. The evaluation framework selected, from Thomas Beierle and Jerry Cayford, not only met this requirement, but also included a data set that the authors were willing to share so that further analysis for this dissertation, and an answer to the research question, could be realized.

The findings from this study show that public participation efforts which engage a facilitator result in more successful processes and outcomes than those efforts that do not use a formal facilitator to reach the goals established by the group. Additionally, the presence of a facilitator results in a positive impact on the substantive quality of decisions arrived at by public participation efforts and on participants' level of trust in the agency sponsoring the participation.

These results confirm existing literature analyses that a particularly important variable in determining success of a public participation effort is the presence of a facilitator (Anson et al., 1995; Aronoff & Gunter, 1994; Hirokawa & Gouran, 1989; Margerum, 2002; Rosener, 1978, 1981; Rowe et al., 2005; Rowe & Frewer, 2000, 2004; Young, Williams, & Goldberg, 1993). While public participation, in general, improves the quality of public decisions, the literature clarifies (Anson et al., 1995; Hirokawa, 1988; Hirokawa & Pace, 1983), and this study confirms, that facilitators have a direct impact on improving group communication and deliberation between participants as well as assisting participants to overcome a lack of experience with problem solving and/or little or no negotiation skills (Aronoff & Gunter, 1994) leading to an increase in the success of public participation. Finally, these findings regarding an increase in trust in the agency sponsoring the participation confirm what many researchers and public participation evaluation practitioners have discovered: that "trust in government" is an important indicator of success for public participation (Baldwin & Twyford, 2007; Rosener, 1988; Schweitzer, et al., 1999; Yang & Pandey, 2011).

In Chapter 3, it was hypothesized that facilitators may be more important to less intense public participation mechanisms, such as public meetings and advisory committees, than to more intense mechanisms because participants in less intensive mechanisms have a "lesser degree of capacity." It was reasoned that the presence of a facilitator would ameliorate many of the shortcomings of the participants, citing this benefit as particularly important because public meetings and advisory committees are more inclusive of the wider public. However, study findings relevant to this issue proved the opposite. Data analyses showed conclusively that the more intense public participation mechanisms, i.e. negotiations and mediations, benefited more from the presence of a facilitator than did the less intense mechanisms, given the limitations of the sample size.

Although the data did not substantiate the importance of a facilitator to the less intensive public participation mechanisms, the existing literature contains strong evidence showing facilitators may be more important than these data suggested. Appendix B shows how little data were available for public meetings and hearings as well as advisory committees not seeking consensus on which to conduct a comprehensive analysis. This lack of data is no surprise given what the literature explains about the impact of resources on less intense mechanisms, specifically as those resources relate to funding for facilitators. However, additional data may ultimately show a greater impact on success and this as an area recommended for further research.

The answer to the primary research question, "Do third-party, neutral intermediaries (facilitators) have a positive impact on the success of public participation? was determined through the answers to the sub-questions. Findings from this study indicate that public participation efforts using facilitators are more successful when the facilitator is a third-party intermediary (external) versus a member of the lead agency's staff (internal). While this finding was inconclusive for the less intensive public participation mechanisms, it was strongly upheld for the most intensive mechanisms, negotiations and mediations, and also for all 88 cases in the aggregate measure of success data set when considered collectively.

Because an extensive review of the literature identified no studies that looked specifically at the impact of internal versus external facilitators on the quality of public participation, the findings from this study related to internal versus external facilitators are perhaps the most important contribution of this research, specifically, to the fields of group facilitation and public participation. These findings are in line with the issues of neutrality of the facilitator (Griffith et al., 1998) and benefits of "outside perspective" (Aronoff & Gunter, 1994) that were identified in the literature as important to successful group outcomes. Most importantly, these finding have answered the question that has served as the major focus of the past 15 years of personal research efforts, following a first reading of Judy Rosener's 1981 article, "User-oriented Evaluation: A New Way to View Citizen Participation." Rosener postulated that the difference in success between two Army Corps of Engineer's public participation workshops was the presence of a

facilitator in one of the workshops, acting as a "third-party intermediary" (p. 586). This study serves as evidence to support this thesis.

A review of the literature also revealed that another important variable to the success of a public participation effort that includes a facilitator is the quality of the facilitator. Quality was measured using several factors such as a facilitator's skill level, experience, training, and, according to the group communication literature, whether or not the facilitator ensures that the group deliberations include key elements of discussion that are important to success (Hirokawa, 1988). Unfortunately, the data available in Beierle's and Cayford's data set did not provide sufficient detailed information to evaluate if any of the essential items or elements were present. However, such an exploration would be an excellent area of further research, and perhaps even using Beierle's and Cayford's data set, if additional detail could be gleaned from the original case study sources.

A final area of additional study which may be worthwhile for the future would focus on a closer look at the impact of a facilitator on Beierle's and Cayford's other three social goals (i.e. "incorporating public values into decisions," "resolving conflict among competing interests," and "educating and informing the public"). Based on the evidence supporting the position of the positive and significant impact a facilitator can have on "improving the substantive quality of decisions" and "building trust in institutions," it seems reasonable to anticipate that data may show the same positive result for the other three social goals.

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APPENDIX A

Chi-square Data Analysis

Aggregate Measure of Success by Type of Participation

ALL Cases

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)		
No Facilitator Present	4	8	9	Chi-square	11.038
Facilitator Present	1	19	47	Degrees of freedom	2
				Probability	0.00400986
				Yates' chi-square	7.553
				Yates' p-value	0.02290271

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)		
Internal Facilitator	0	5	6	Chi-square	2.01
External Facilitator	1	14	41	Degrees of freedom	2
				Probability	0.36604463
				Yates' chi-square	1.782
				Yates' p-value	0.4102453

Public meetings and hearings

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)		
No Facilitator Present	2	2	1	Chi-square	2.667
Facilitator Present	0	4	1	Degrees of freedom	2
				Probability	0.26355321
				Yates' chi-square	1.167
				Yates' p-value	0.55794215

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)		
Internal Facilitator	0	3	0	Chi-square	0.686
External Facilitator	0	1	1	Degrees of freedom	1
				Probability	0.40752827
				Yates' chi-square	0.076
				Yates' p-value	0.78279311

Advisory committees not seeking consensus

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)		
No Facilitator Present	1	3	6	Chi-square	2.286
Facilitator Present	0	4	2	Degrees of freedom	2
				Probability	0.318861
				Yates' chi-square	0.667
				Yates' p-value	0.7164119

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)		
Internal Facilitator	0	0	1	Chi-square	2.4
External Facilitator	0	4	1	Degrees of freedom	1
				Probability	0.12133525
				Yates' chi-square	0.15
				Yates' p-value	0.69853536

Chi-square calculations run at http://www.quantpsy.org/chisq/chisq.htm (Preacher, 2012)

Chi-square Data Analysis
(continued)

Aggregate Measure of Success by Type of Participation

Advisory committees seeking consensus

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Chi-square	2.678
No Facilitator Present	1	3	1	Degrees of freedom	2
Facilitator Present	1	7	11	Probability	0.26210765
				Yates' chi-square	0.632
				Yates' p-value	0.72905945

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Chi-square	0.559
Internal Facilitator	0	2	2	Degrees of freedom	2
External Facilitator	1	5	9	Probability	0.75616173
				Yates' chi-square	0.523
				Yates' p-value	0.76989588

Negotiations and mediations

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Chi-square	0.121
No Facilitator Present	0	0	1	Degrees of freedom	1
Facilitator Present	0	4	33	Probability	0.72795243
				Yates' chi-square	1.699
				Yates' p-value	0.19241881

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Chi-square	0.396
Internal Facilitator	0	0	3	Degrees of freedom	1
External Facilitator	0	4	30	Probability	0.52916229
				Yates' chi-square	0.116
				Yates' p-value	0.73341397

Chi-square calculations run at http://www.quantpsy.org/chisq/chisq.htm (Preacher, 2012)

APPENDIX B

Chi-square Data Analysis

Aggregate Measure of Success by Presence of Facilitator and Type of Participation

Facilitator Present

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)
Public meetings and hearings	0	4	1
Advisory committees not seeking consensus	0	4	2
Advisory committees seeking consensus	1	7	11
Negotiations and mediations	0	4	33

Chi-square	20.104
Degrees of freedom	6
Probability	0.00265378
Yates' chi-square	16.83
Yates' p-value	0.00992875

Chi-square calculations run at http://www.quantpsy.org/chisq/chisq.htm (Preacher, 2012)

APPENDIX C

Chi-square Data Analysis

Measure of Success by Quality of Decisions & Trust in Institutions

Improving the substantive quality of decisions

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)		
No Facilitator Present	4	6	9	Chi-square	4.613
Facilitator Present	9	10	51	Degrees of freedom	2
				Probability	0.09960927
				Yates' chi-square	2.944
				Yates' p-value	0.22946609

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)		
Internal Facilitator	1	1	8	Chi-square	0.306
External Facilitator	8	9	43	Degrees of freedom	2
				Probability	0.85812972
				Yates' chi-square	0.053
				Yates' p-value	0.97384804

Building trust in institutions

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)		
No Facilitator Present	9	0	3	Chi-square	8.55
Facilitator Present	6	3	15	Degrees of freedom	2
				Probability	0.01391205
				Yates' chi-square	5.613
				Yates' p-value	0.06041608

	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)		
Internal Facilitator	1	0	3	Chi-square	0.72
External Facilitator	5	3	12	Degrees of freedom	2
				Probability	0.69767633
				Yates' chi-square	0.3
				Yates' p-value	0.86070798

Chi-square calculations run at http://www.quantpsy.org/chisq/chisq.htm (Preacher, 2012)

APPENDIX D

Reprint Permission, Thomas Beierle

From: Tom Beierle
Sent: Thursday, March 7, 2013 11:52 PM
To: Daran Wastchak
Subject: RE: Permission to use charts

Hi Daran. You have my permission to reprint any of the graphs from the book. Thanks for checking.

Glad to know things are moving along well!

--Tom

From: Daran Wastchak
Sent: Thursday, March 07, 2013 7:21 PM
To: Tom Beierle
Subject: Permission to use charts

Hello, Tom.

I'm making good progress on my dissertation. Defended my research proposal last month (successfully) and now I'm working on updates to my paper.

According to the APA Manual, it is necessary to get permission from the author of a published work to reprint any of their graphs, tables or figures. I would like to use, among others, the attached Figures that I scanned from your book. You and Jerry Cayford will be cited in the caption, but I will also need to add, "Reprinted with permission." Would that be OK with you?

Look forward to hearing back.

Daran