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**Beyond New Public Management – city leadership,  
democratic renewal and the politics of place**

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**Abstract**

During the last decade or so there has been a significant shift in the way public services are organized and run. Modern public services, and the associated profession of public administration, have their origins in the expansion of state-run services in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Core values in the public service ethos, built up over more than a century, include a concern for sound procedures, proper accountability of public servants to elected politicians, consistency of treatment and fairness, and a caring concern for the clients of services. Many of these tenets have been challenged by advocates of the 'New Public Management'. The new rhetoric, relying heavily on practice in the private sector, emphasises the importance of introducing competition into public services, and 'new public management' practice often seeks to redefine citizens as consumers of products or customers of public service providers.

This paper, by drawing on local government experience in Europe, Australia and North America, will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the 'New Public Management', when viewed from the perspective of those charged with leading and managing cities. It will be suggested that, while the movement has led to improvements in some urban services, the 'New Public Management' approach has serious limitations. A conceptual framework distinguishing three main routes to public service reform is presented. This suggests that 'New Public Management' reforms often fail to connect to a key driver of public service improvement – the energy and enthusiasm of citizens and communities. Public service improvements generated by 'New Public Management' approaches tend to rely on competition and self-improvement. These are important drivers of change but history suggests that substantial improvements in public services stem from broader forces in society – from political movements and community action.

It follows that city leaders and urban managers have a key role to play in reshaping the agenda for public service improvement as a whole. The paper adopts a 'futures' orientation and maps out the three key challenges now facing those concerned to improve the quality of urban governance: 1) rethinking the roles of politicians, officials and citizens and their triangular relationships, 2) developing the 'public innovation ethos' alongside the 'public service ethos' and 3) revitalizing the local political process to draw excluded and unheard voices into the decision making process. This broad approach, which I have named the 'New City Management,' seeks to combine managerial change with revitalization of the politics of place.

## **Beyond New Public Management – city leadership, democratic renewal and the politics of place**

**Robin Hambleton**

## Introduction

The ‘New Public Management’, in academic circles at least, has received considerable attention from those concerned with public administration for more than a decade (Hood 1991; Pollitt 1990). Despite early efforts to locate the debates about the shift to New Public Management within broader processes of economic and political restructuring – processes that suggest that various trajectories are possible (Hoggett 1991) – much of the literature has tended to assume that the shift is inevitable. The characteristics of New Public Management are contested and there is, in fact, considerable confusion over what New Public Management actually is (Kettl 1995; Ferlie et al 1996; Stark 2002). Shortly we will attempt to penetrate this confusion by examining the change drivers spurring public service reform efforts. At the outset, however, we can say that New Public Management ‘refers to a cluster of contemporary ideas and practices that seek, at their core, to use private sector and business approaches in the public sector’ (Denhardt and Denhardt 2003, p12).

In this paper it will be suggested that New Public Management ideas have had a beneficial impact on the management and delivery of some public services. But the main thrust of my paper is to suggest that many of the ideas associated with New Public Management are not that helpful to city leaders and managers charged with the leadership and management of complex urban areas. The paper argues that it is essential to move **beyond** New Public Management and articulate an agenda for public service reform that pays far more attention to the motivation of public servants and the importance of refreshing citizen involvement. This approach, which also pays careful attention to the politics of place, I have named New City Management (Hambleton 2002).

The New City Management is about much **more** than the development of an array of managerial tools for ‘good’ governance – such as customer driven decision-making, performance measurement systems and the contracting out of public services to private companies. It suggests that we need to examine the changing roles of politicians, managers and citizens in the governance of localities. The New City Management promotes innovation in the politics of place as well as innovation in public service management.

The paper adopts an international perspective and is structured as follows. First, I introduce the two currents of change that are spurring the development of the New City Management. Second, I outline the shift from local government to local governance that is recognisable in most OECD countries. Third, I examine the move from public administration to New Public Management. Fourth, I look afresh at the triangular relationships between politicians, officials and citizens. Taken together these sections map the contours of the New City Management. A final section outlines some reflections on the challenges now confronting leaders, policy makers and urban managers as they strive to improve public service performance in an era when resources are heavily constrained.

## The currents of change

Two currents of change underpin the development of the New City Management. First, the **forces of globalisation** are putting new pressures on all local authorities to be more efficient and effective – to do more for less. These global forces are in tension with local efforts to enhance democracy. Indeed, recent contributions to the literature reveal growing friction in all continents between global pressures for competitiveness and the needs of communities in particular localities (Hambleton, Savitch and Stewart 2002; Ranney 2003; McCarney and Stren 2003). These global pressures do not necessarily mean reducing public expenditure – as some have assumed. Certainly the economic integration of the world economies has introduced new competitive pressures into all public as well as private organisations (Hutton and Giddens 2000). Clearly this means looking in an even more aggressive way for ‘efficiency savings’. But the renewed interest in the effectiveness of public services also reflects changing views about the appropriate role for government, including local government, in modern society. Reformers – and a particularly good example is provided by the ‘reinventing government’ (or REGO) movement in the USA - argue that government should be able to achieve more by working in a different way (Osborne and Gaebler 1993). That is, it may be that government can be more successful in achieving its aims by working with other actors to achieve social outcomes rather than by trying to do everything itself (Rhodes 1997). As an aside, it should be noted that the forces of globalisation are political as well as economic, and that new political movements pointing out the weaknesses of global capitalism are on the rise. For the moment, however, let’s take ‘globalisation’ as a force pushing for more ‘efficiency’.

The second change driver spurring the movement towards the New City Management is **public opinion** that, in turn, reflects wider changes in society. A more confident and well informed citizenry is putting new demands on local government, as well as other public agencies, to be more open, more responsive, and more accountable (Goss 1999; Haus et al 2004). The old ‘leave it to us, we know best’ approach adopted by some local politicians and public service managers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is now simply unacceptable to local citizens and communities. Demands on governments to become more customer-oriented and citizen-centred can be expected to grow. Certainly, citizens now expect their local authority to deal effectively with a growing number of ‘quality of life’ issues that cut across departmental boundaries and perspectives. For example, citizens have concerns about: the perceived deterioration in public safety; the need for more sustainable forms of living and urban development; the social exclusion of disadvantaged groups; and the importance of providing job opportunities for all. None of these concerns – concerns that have been described by Californian researchers as ‘wicked issues’ because they are difficult to resolve (Rittel and Webber 1973) – can be adequately addressed by the traditional approach of separate service departments and agencies working in relative isolation. They need – to use a phrase that has become commonplace in UK debates - ‘joined up’ thinking and ‘joined up’ action (Stewart et al 1999).

It would be wrong to characterize these two sets of change drivers as ‘economic’ and ‘political’ or as, somehow, disconnected. Indeed, some of the new political

movements of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – aided by the internet and other changes in communications technology – explicitly connect campaigns to strengthen the power of local democracy with efforts to restrain the anti-democratic actions of multi-national companies (Ranney 2003; Wainwright 2003). Notwithstanding these shifts in local politics it can be argued that it is helpful to isolate the two currents of change for purposes of analysis.

Thus, some reformers are seeking improvements in efficiency and effectiveness while others are pressing for improvements in responsiveness and accountability. This distinction is not particularly new. Over the years local government reformers have commonly attempted to reconcile managerial and democratic objectives (Keating 1991). Thus, there has been pressure in different countries over several decades to improve professional public service management and delivery in order to enhance government efficiency and effectiveness (Pollitt 1990; Lynn 1996; Osborne and Plastrik 1997). And, indeed, most of the New Public Management ideas can be located within this strand of reform. At the same time the banner of democratic renewal has also been waved at the head of many local government reorganisation campaigns. Reformers have often advocated changes in the belief that they would make city hall bureaucracies less paternalistic, ensure elected representatives became more accountable to local citizens and generally enhance civic traditions (Putnam 1993; Ranson and Stewart 1994; Phillips 1994; Tam 1998).

My suggestion is that these currents of change – the global pressures for improvements in efficiency and effectiveness and the local pressures for improvements in accountability – are here to stay. And, indeed, that they lie at the heart of debates about urban governance and local democracy in all countries.

### **From local government to local governance**

The term ‘governance’ is used in a variety of ways (Rhodes 1997; Andrew and Goldsmith 1998; Pierre and Peters 2000; Denters et al 2003). For the purpose of this discussion it is sufficient to use these words in the way they are commonly used in practitioner as well as academic debates. *Government* refers to the formal institutions of the state. Government makes decisions within specific administrative and legal frameworks and uses public resources in a financially accountable way. Most important, government decisions are backed up by the legitimate hierarchical power of the state. *Governance*, on the other hand, involves government *plus* the looser processes of influencing and negotiating with a range of public and private sector agencies to achieve desired outcomes. A governance perspective encourages collaboration between the public, private and non-profit sectors to achieve mutual goals. Whilst the hierarchical power of the state does not vanish, the emphasis in governance is on steering, influencing and co-ordinating the actions of others. There is recognition here that government can’t go it alone. In governance relationships no one organisation can exercise hierarchical power over the others. The process is interactive because no single agency, public or private, has the knowledge and resource capacity to tackle the key problems unilaterally (Kooiman 1993).

Moving to the local level *local government* refers to democratically elected councils. *Local governance* is broader – it refers to the processes and structures of a variety of public, private and voluntary sector bodies at the local level. It acknowledges the diffusion of responsibility for collective provision and recognises the contribution of different levels and sectors (Andrew and Goldsmith 1998; Wilson 1998). In most situations the elected local council is the only directly elected body in the local governance system and this is of critical importance. The rhetoric about governance can be viewed as a way of shifting responsibility from the state onto the private and voluntary sectors and civil society in general. This displacement of responsibility can also obscure lines of accountability to the citizen and the shift to governance certainly poses a major challenge to local democracy (Kearns and Paddison 2000). The movement to local governance can, however, be welcomed as an overdue shift from a perspective which sees local government simply as a vehicle for providing a range of important public services to a new emphasis on community leadership. This interpretation envisages the role of the local authority being extended beyond the tasks of service provision to embrace a concern for the overall well being of an area (Clarke and Stewart 1998). This shift from government to governance is striking in the UK but it is also visible in other countries, for example Germany (Banner 1999) and in the developing world (McCarney and Stren 2003).

In terms of the government/governance dimension the New City Management is at the governance end of the spectrum. It requires leading politicians and senior managers to adopt an outward looking approach and, crucially, to engage with the economic and other interests which influence the current and future well being of the locality. Clarence Stone, a leading American urban political scientist, argued in 1980 that local politicians operate ‘under *dual pressures* – one set based in electoral accountability and the other based in the hierarchical distribution of economic, organisational and cultural resources’ (Stone 1980, p984, emphasis in original). Stephen Elkin refined this approach arguing that the division of roles between the state and the economy means that government must continually deal with the mandates of popular control and economic well-being. The way the division of roles develops and is handled gives rise to specific ‘regimes’ (Elkin 1987). These depend, basically, on the strength of political elites relative to economic elites. The New City Management acknowledges the reality of these local power structures but is not cowed by them. It uses the unique positional power of local government to intervene in these processes.

The academic study of urban politics and local power structures has benefited in recent years from valuable research on ‘urban regimes’ carried out, initially, by scholars in the USA (Stone 1989; Lauria 1997). The regime approach, and Stone’s work in particular, suggests that the power to command or dominate over others under modern conditions of social complexity in cities and communities is illusive: ‘The power struggle concerns, not control and resistance, but gaining and fusing a capacity to act – *power to*, not *power over*’ (Stone 1989, p229; emphasis in original). In other words, power is structured and exercised in an effort to obtain results through cooperation, not to gain control over other

agencies. There is an ongoing and lively debate in urban studies about the merits of regime theory and its applicability in different countries (Stone 2004; Imbroscio 2004; Davies 2004). This debate will be of interest to all those with an interest in trying to understand how power is being restructured in different localities.

In any event, there are clearly problems with the shift towards a governance approach. How open to public scrutiny are these new governance arrangements? (Burns 2000) How can the people operating in these increasingly important multi-agency partnerships be held to account? Does governance inevitably widen the gap between power holders and citizens? In a separate paper to the conference Judd argues that – in the US context at least – special authorities have increased dramatically and that the major urban development decisions in many cities have now been removed from the arena of municipal politics (Judd 2004). A major challenge for those involved with the development of the New City Management is to ensure that the new collaborative models of governance now being developed do not build up a dangerous democratic deficit in the eyes of the public.

### **From public administration to New Public Management**

In parallel, and overlapping with, the movement from government to governance there has been a significant shift in the way public services are organised and run. In the UK context it is possible to discern two overlapping phases of change in local government: from public administration to corporate management; and from corporate management to New Public Management. There is a good deal of rhetoric about these changes. Bold claims have been made about the virtues of private management practice and about the desirability of developing a more businesslike approach to the running of public services. But, as mentioned in the introduction, there is considerable confusion in the debate. In particular, the phrase New Public Management has several meanings and there is a risk that management-led reforms may come to lose sight of the underlying social purpose of public services.

In order to make sense of current developments it is helpful to step back and examine the evolution of public service management thinking over time. Modern public services, and the associated profession of public administration, have their origins in the expansion of state-run services in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Pollitt (1990), in his useful analysis of managerialism in public services in the USA and the UK, tracks the way different management ideas and concepts have filtered into public administration for over a century. A particularly significant wave of management thinking hit local government in the 1960s and 1970s. Corporate management involved taking an overall view of a local authority's activities and the way they relate to the changing needs and problems of its area. More specifically it involves the authority developing management *and* political processes and structures that will enable it to plan, control and review its activities as a whole.

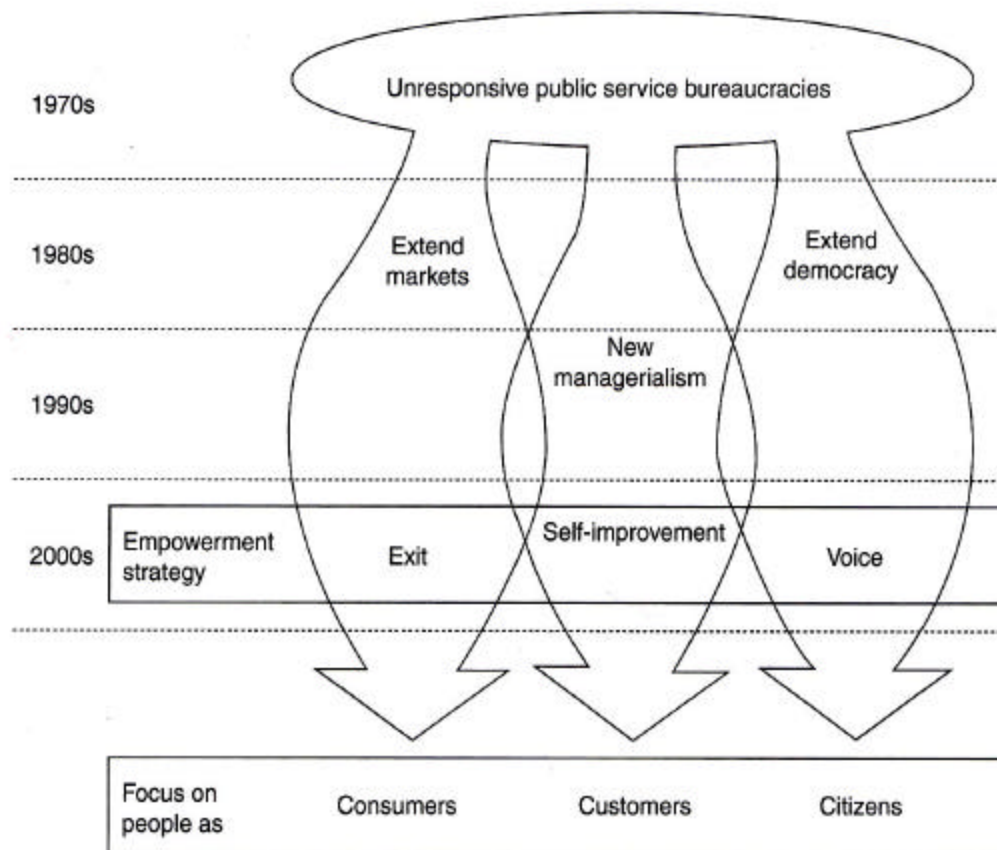
Two well-established traditions of public administration were challenged by corporate management. First, the view that the local authority is the passive

administrative agent of central government – an agent incapable of mapping out its own future – was called into question. Second, the view that the local authority was a vehicle for delivering separate services directed at essentially separate problems was also confronted (Stewart 1971). In the UK the movement led to lasting organisational changes. Out went the old town clerk who ‘administered’ local services and in came the new chief executive who was appointed to ‘manage’ the local authority on behalf of the elected members. Local authorities created policy committees and councillors developed distinctive policies suited to local circumstances. Fresh management practices were imported from the private sector – for example, Management by Objectives (MBO) and Planning Programming Budgeting Systems (PPBS) – and policy analysis and performance review work expanded.

It can be argued that the shift from public administration to corporate management was a significant breakthrough. Certainly local authorities started to address the cross cutting or ‘wicked issues’ referred to earlier (Rittel and Webber 1973). Critics, however, argued that the corporate management changes of the 1970s led to a centralisation of power. In many local authorities a joint elite of senior councillors – usually those on the central policy committee – and senior officers were seen as running the place (Cockburn 1977). Certainly, in the UK context at least, the management changes of the 1970s were not sufficiently far reaching. By 1979, the year Mrs. Thatcher led the Conservative Party into government, councils were widely seen to be in charge of large, unresponsive public service bureaucracies. More radical change was bound to come.

*Figure 1* shows the three currents of change which have characterised public service reform strategies in the last twenty years or so (1). The first broad alternative, associated in the 1980s with the radical right, seeks to challenge the very notion of collective and non-market provision for public need (Walsh 1995). Centring on the notion of privatisation it seeks to replace public provision with private. The second alternative, shown on the right of *Figure 1*, aims to preserve the notion of public provision, but seeks a radical reform of the manner in which this provision is undertaken. Thus, it seeks to replace the old, bureaucratic paternalistic model with a much more democratic model, often involving radical decentralisation to the neighbourhood level (Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett 1994).

**Figure 1. Public service reform strategies**



In Hirschman's terms the right sought to give individuals the power of *exit* and the left sought to give citizens the power of *voice* (Hirschman 1970). In the market model the consumer, dissatisfied with the product of one supplier of a service, can shift to another. The democratic model recognises that many public services cannot be individualised – they relate to groups of service users or citizens at large. Such collective interests can only be protected through enhanced participation and strengthened political accountability (Barber 1984). Hirschman is at pains to point out that, while exit and voice may be strongly contrasting empowerment mechanisms, they are not mutually exclusive.

The third broad strategy for public service reform shown in *Figure 1* attempts to distinguish a managerial as opposed to political response to the problems confronting public service bureaucracies. This response borrows from the competing political models in a way which simulates radical methods but in a form which preserves existing power relations between the producers and users of services. In place of the sometimes violent and unpredictable signals of exit and voice a panoply of techniques (market research, user satisfaction surveys, complaints procedures, customer care programmes, focus groups, call centres, interactive websites etc.) are introduced to provide more gentle and manageable 'feedback'.

On this analysis the New Public Management can be seen to be associated with two of the strands in *Figure 1* – the market and managerialist reform strategies. This interpretation is consistent with the analysis put forward by Hood (1991) who suggests that New Public Management involves a marriage of two streams of ideas: the new institutional economics and business-type managerialism. New Public Management also implies giving much more attention to shaping the culture of the organisation – for example, strengthening support to front-line workers, encouraging risk taking and emphasising the commitment to quality (Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett 1994, pp104-107).

In the US context the Clinton/Gore approach to reform is particularly significant (Gore 1993). In calling for less government and less government spending the policy embraced a traditionally Republican position and was designed to bring the Clinton administration political gains (Rockman 2001). The centrepiece of the program, entrusted to Vice President Al Gore, was the National Performance Review (NPR). Conceptually the NPR aimed at turning the agencies of the federal government into performance-based organisations. Congress ratified elements of the NPR in the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. This requires executive agencies to periodically report on their achievements with regard to their agency and programmatic goals. It is important to note, however, that change has not just been at the federal level - a great deal of innovation has been taking place at state and local levels (Poister and Streib 1999). Almost all the states developed a performance-oriented approach in the mid 1990s (Melkers and Willoughby 1998; Brudney et al 1999). Some researchers argue that state and local government can be seen as leaders of the movement to reinvent government in the US (Christensen and Laegreid 2001).

The New Public Management ideas have been taken up with considerable enthusiasm by local authorities around the world. Many US city mayors claim to have moved in this direction – for example, the mayors of New York City (Weikart 1998), Milwaukee (Norquist 1998) and Indianapolis (Goldsmith 1997). More broadly the Bertelsmann Foundation, based in Germany, has documented examples of local authority innovation with New Public Management in a dozen or so countries (Prohl 1997). However, John (2001) notes that, because local government traditions vary, there has been variation in the take up of New Public Management ideas in Europe. At this stage, he argues, it is more a feature of northern local government systems than those in southern Europe.

As mentioned in the introduction the New City Management involves **more** than the application of new public management approaches to local governance. It is concerned with democratic renewal as well as with public service effectiveness and, as such, it is concerned with all of the three change strategies outlined in *Figure 1*. There are strong links here to the efforts being made in some countries to deepen and widen democracy. For example, Giddens (1998), in his discussion of the third way, suggests that the crisis of democracy comes from its not being democratic enough. He notes that:

‘Reinventing government certainly sometimes means adopting market-based solutions. But it should also mean reasserting the

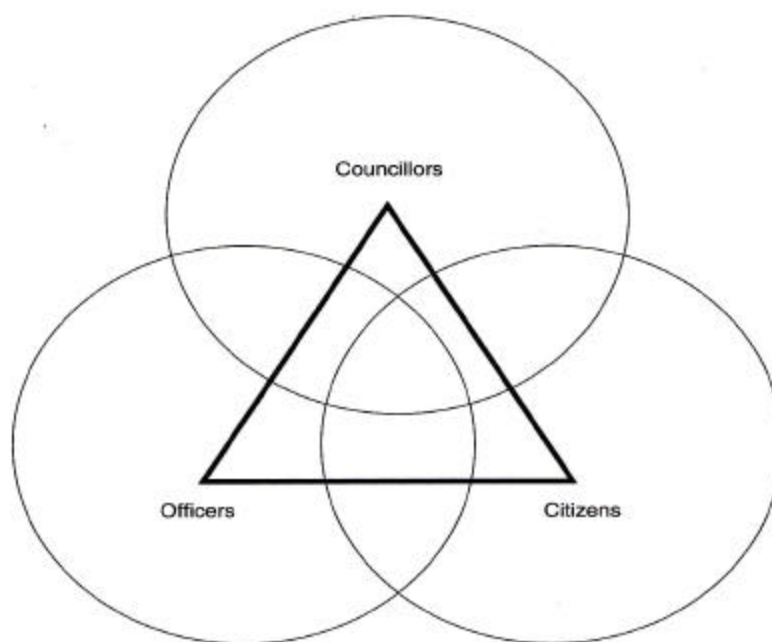
effectiveness of government in the face of markets' (Giddens 1998, p75)

This is an important development in the debate for, as various critics have argued, the New Public Management can result in changes that weaken rather than strengthen local democracy and local accountability (Hoggett 1991; Greer and Hoggett 1999). Giddens argues that government can re-establish more direct contact with citizens, and citizens with government, through experiments with democracy – local direct democracy, electronic referenda, citizens' juries and the like. Again, considerable innovation in local democratic practice is now taking place in various countries and we now turn to consider these developments in more detail.

### **The changing relationships between politicians, officers and citizens**

Earlier, in the discussion of governance, reference was made to the need for local authorities to shape the behaviour of economic actors impacting on their locality. We now focus on the democracy agenda and consider the three main groups of actors in local governance – politicians, officers and citizens. *Figure 2* suggests that there is a triangular relationship between these three interest groups. Each corner of the triangle can generate important contributions to the local policy making process, although the relative influence of the three groups can vary enormously. The New City Management sees interaction on all three sides of the triangle as offering major learning opportunities not just for policy and practice but also for organisational development. However, before we consider each of the groups it is important to draw a distinction between local authority wide deliberative and decision making arenas and local settings relating to parts of the city. The substantial body of literature on area management and neighbourhood decentralisation suggests not only that devolved management can enhance service responsiveness to localities within a city, but also that new settings for enhancing citizen participation – neighbourhood committees, community forums and the like - can strengthen

**Figure 2. The relationship between councillors, officers and citizens**



local democratic accountability (Yates 1973; Hambleton 1978; Hoggett and Hambleton 1987; Pollitt, Birchall and Putman 1998). It is certainly the case that many citizens feel more attached to their immediate 'home area' than, say, the city as a whole and are more attracted to participating in decision making about issues which have an impact on the area where they live. Local authorities in various countries have responded to these preferences by introducing various forms of area-based decision making. There are interesting examples in several Scandinavian cities (Back, Johannson and Larsen 2000), in the UK (Taylor 2000) and in New Zealand (Forgie, Cheyne and McDermott 1999). In the USA there is a long and well-researched history of neighbourhood-based community action that is also relevant to current European concerns relating to urban deprivation and social exclusion (Keating and Krumholz 1999). There is great potential for area-based working to improve both service quality and democratic accountability.

#### *The changing roles of politicians*

Citizens elect councillors to serve as their representatives and it is accountability at the ballot box that distinguishes local government from local administration. Councillors are usually elected on a ward (or district) basis and, to varying degrees, have strong links to the area-based communities that elected them. The following roles for councillors have been well established in UK local government for many years:

- Policy making for the local authority as a whole
- Policy making for particular services
- Voicing concerns about the effective operation of local authority services
- Voicing concerns about the performance of services
- Responding to the grievances of constituents

- Voicing concerns about the needs of the area they represent

It is a simplification but it can be suggested that the traditional role of the councillor focused on *representing* the interests of citizens - speaking out on their behalf and trying to ensure the local authority and other agencies were responsive to their needs. Where party politics is significant the representative role also involves attempting to implement a party programme that has been put to the electorate as a whole. Studies of the way councillors use their time have suggested that local politicians take their responsibilities seriously, put in long hours and are expected to manage many competing pressures (Barron, Crawley and Wood, 1991). Reviews of the role of the councillor carried out in the 1990s in the UK suggested, however, that the representative role had become weakened over the years. This is partly because councillors, mainly through their service on numerous committees of the council, were spending an increasing amount of their time on the internal management of the local authority (Audit Commission 1990, 1997; Young and Rao 1994). Councillors found themselves servicing the decision making system rather than giving a political lead and many expressed concerns that their time was not always well spent in committees. There is also evidence from US research suggesting that aldermen are not always as effective as they might want to be (Simpson 2001).

Updating and modernising local political management to meet new challenges necessarily involves councillors in a rethink of their roles. In 1995 UK national guidance on local authority management suggested that councillors were wanting to give more attention to four emerging roles (Hambleton and Holder 1995):

- Strengthening the approach to civic leadership – involving promoting the image of the area to outsiders as well as developing a more proactive approach to local leadership
- Developing the ward councillor role – involving decentralisation of power and innovations in neighbourhood-based decision making
- Introducing a scrutiny role – with some councils setting up scrutiny committees to examine the performance of other agencies in their area
- Enhancing joint working – involving the creation of a variety of new forms of partnership arrangement

These four roles have received increased attention in recent years and have been given a significant boost in the UK context by the Local Government Act 2000. The new political management arrangements now being introduced in England and Wales are intended to help councillors develop a more outgoing and inclusive style of operation as well as underpin a more effective approach to community leadership. Interestingly, the new UK models – and particularly the directly elected mayor leadership model – draw directly on US experience (Hambleton and Sweeting 2004).

The New City Management is concerned to support the development of a *range* of councillor roles. It recognises that councillors, from the most experienced to the brand new, need help and support in developing new skills to take on new challenges. Managers, too, need to develop their political awareness, to recognise the diversity of councillor roles and to develop creative ways of enhancing the skills of both members and managers. The new era requires good understanding and close working not just between the top officers and the political leaders, but also between ward councillors, the local managers and front line staff working in the neighbourhoods.

### *The changing roles of officers*

The shifts from government to governance and from public administration to new public management outlined earlier set down important challenges for local government officers. Local government is well served by hard working and committed officers at all levels – from those interacting directly with the public in day-to-day service delivery through those in middle management to chief officers and chief executives. Moreover, local government officers have a good record as effective managers and a well-deserved reputation for maintaining political neutrality. A public service ethos underpins the way most of them go about their work. This remains a fairly intangible concept but some of the key values of this ethos are:

- A respect for the democratic political process.
- A commitment to fair, defensible procedures in public decision making.
- A belief in high standards of staff conduct with an emphasis on honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity.
- A respect for the rights of the individual citizen regardless of that person's purchasing power.
- A belief that public servants hold the wider concerns of the public at heart.
- A motivation amongst the workforce which is not driven by the pursuit of profit.

These are fine beliefs but a New City Management perspective suggests that the way they are operationalised needs updating. A study of local government management in the UK carried out in the mid 1990s proposed that the 'public service ethos' should be complemented by the development of a 'public innovation ethos' (Hambleton, Hoggett and Razzaque 1996). *Figure 3* suggests that the five pillars of the public service ethos in local government have been a concern for: sound procedures; good control mechanisms; conforming behaviour; consistency of treatment; and service for the public. These are values that remain important for local government today. They are, however, in tension with the public innovation ethos which gives weight to: getting results; steering; enhancing the performance of people and systems; responding to diverse needs in a flexible way; and working with local communities.

**Figure 3. Public service and public innovation in local government management**

The public service ethos	The public innovation ethos
1) Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fairness</li> <li>- propriety</li> <li>- accountability</li> </ul>	1) Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- quality of service</li> <li>- efficiency and impact</li> </ul>
2) Controlling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- centralised accountability</li> <li>- seeks to avoid mistakes</li> </ul>	2) Steering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clear guidance</li> <li>- local autonomy</li> <li>- valuing staff</li> </ul>
3) Conformance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- obedience</li> <li>- reliability</li> </ul>	3) Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creativity and inventiveness</li> <li>- risk taking</li> </ul>
4) Consistency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- uniformity</li> <li>- equity</li> </ul>	4) Diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- responsive to differences</li> <li>- customised</li> <li>- flexible</li> </ul>
5) Working for the public <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- caring</li> <li>- professional</li> </ul>	5) Working with the public <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- listening</li> <li>- supportive</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Hambleton, Hoggett and Razzaque 1996

There is no suggestion here that public service managers should switch allegiance from the values on the left to those on the right of *Figure 3*. There are great strengths on both sides of this table. It may be helpful, however, for individual local authorities to consider, in relation to particular issues and services as well as strategic management as a whole, whether it currently has the right balance between the ‘service’ and the ‘innovation’ ethos. These ideas are consistent with the idea of a ‘New Public Service’ advocated by Denhardt and Denhardt (2003) and resonate with the findings of the UK Egan Review studying how to create ‘sustainable communities’ (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2004).

What about the role of the top officer – the chief executive? A study of managerial leadership for the UK Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) suggested that chief executives have a key role in leading change and developing the organisation of the authority (Hambleton 1999). Four leadership roles were identified: providing strategic advice to councillors; managing processes relating to decisions; taking decisions on behalf of the council; and

influencing other agencies. Chief executives interviewed for the research suggested that the fourth role was expanding quite quickly and this chimes with the shift from government to governance discussed earlier (Travers, Jones and Burnham 1997).

Cross-national comparative research on the roles and functions of chief executive officers has uncovered useful insights on alternative approaches to managerial leadership (Klausen and Magnier 1998). The researchers drew a distinction between two kinds of chief executive – the classical bureaucrat, whose approach aligns closely with the public service ethos outlined above, and the political bureaucrat, who is more committed to learning from the public and whose stance is more in line with the public innovation ethos. Again it would be unwise to suggest that features of the classical bureaucrat are now old hat and can be discarded in favour of the more political approach. But the new city management certainly envisages the chief executive (or city manager) as a dynamic executive leader who is capable of working closely with elected members and brokering community interests.

#### *Changing approaches to citizen involvement*

Earlier I suggested that one of the driving forces underpinning the development of the New City Management is an increasingly well-informed citizenry putting new demands on all public agencies. In a series of cross-national studies Terry Clark and his colleagues have suggested that a 'New Political Culture' is developing which contrasts with the class politics that have dominated local politics in many countries for more than a century (Clark 1994; Clark and Rempel 1997; Clark and Hoffman-Martinot 1998). This body of work points to the rise of 'single-issue' politics and the growth of new social movements (e.g. concerning civil rights, environmentalism, or feminism). Certainly, in the period since the 1960s and 1970s there has been growing public pressure for participation and new forms of democracy and citizen activism have emerged (Held and Pollitt 1986).

*Figure 1* referred to the growth of voice as an empowerment mechanism and, in practice, local governments have developed a wide array of approaches designed to enhance representative democracy and/or encourage participatory democracy (Lowndes et al 1997). *Figure 4* refers to four broad strategies councils have developed for strengthening the voice of the service user or citizen in local decision-making. This is not a comprehensive listing of the options. Rather it gives an impression of the sorts of innovations that are taking place.

**Figure 4. Ways of strengthening voice in local governance**

1) Improving representative democracy

e.g. voter registration drives, experimenting with voting methods, open government rules, citizens' rights at meetings, better support to local councillors, council debates on the internet, electronic polling, interactive websites

2) Extending representative democracy

e.g. area committees of councillors based on wards or groups of wards, strengthening parish councils, community boards, neighbourhood forums, user panels

3) Infusing representative with participatory democracy

e.g. community visioning projects, citizens' juries, deliberative opinion polls, community representation on committees and partnership boards, consensus conferences

4) Extending participatory democracy

e.g. funding of non-statutory groups, community development, delegation to neighbourhood and/or community groups, referendums, citizen ballots

There is a risk, however, that some of those involved in the modernisation of public service management lack sophistication when they discuss community involvement. Certainly, as in the 1970s, too many governments seem to use the word 'community' as if it were an aerosol can, to be sprayed onto any policy or service in the hope of giving it a more progressive and sympathetic cachet (Cochrane 1986). In practice, as Hoggett (1997) demonstrates, 'community' can provide a vehicle for dominance by powerful groups as well as a platform for emancipatory politics. Social exclusion has grown in western democracies in recent times and a new enthusiasm for a community based approach to public policy making, which is more inclusive and community based, has gained momentum (Etzioni 1994; Giddens 1998; Tam 1998). This is to be welcomed and the New City Management recognises the importance of working closely with communities. But it also understands that modern communities are fragmented and fraught with conflict.

## Reflections

It is worth issuing a word of caution about cross-national comparisons. We ignore the differences between countries at our peril. There are, in particular, significant differences between Europe and the USA reflecting different traditions. These differences are captured in this vivid quote from Dwight Waldo: ‘We did not *want* a European-style state, we did not *need* a European-style state, and we did not *develop* a European-style state’ (quoted in Stillman 1998, p172). It follows that transatlantic conclusions need to be advanced with care.

Having said that this discussion of the New City Management suggests that, if they are to cope with the new challenges that now confront them, local authorities in all countries need to consider whether they should develop a much stronger approach to community leadership as well as more effective approaches to citizen involvement. The importance of strengthening city leadership is increasingly being recognised (Judd 2000). This is partly because leadership is vital to attract investment and compete for growth and, more important, because strong local leadership is essential to deal with the social and environmental dilemmas that now confront people wherever they live. Outgoing leadership by elected politicians and their senior managers is now needed to orchestrate the actions of a wide range of public and private actors to achieve desired outcomes. Useful research on urban leadership and alternative styles of political leadership can help here (Svara 1990, 1994; Leach and Wilson 2000; Haus et al 2004). Examples of bold approaches to leadership in difficult settings can also inspire, for example, the imaginative leadership of Philadelphia by Mayor Ed Rendell (Bissinger 1997).

In the UK the Labour Government, elected in 1997, has given considerable attention to the development of new institutional forms which can provide not only a platform for more visible and outgoing approaches to local political leadership, but also a basis for more accountable decision making. The Local Government Act 2000 requires all local authorities in England and Wales to modify their constitutions and three main options for the future have been provided for in the legislation: a directly elected executive mayor with a cabinet; a directly elected mayor with a council manager; and a council leader, elected by the full council, who heads a cabinet. All these models provide for a separation of powers between an executive, charged with taking responsibility for exercising leadership, and an assembly, which focuses on policy development, representation and scrutiny roles (Hambleton 2000). These proposals, as with the legislation creating the directly elected mayor for London and the Greater London Authority, have stirred up wide ranging debate about the future of local democracy in the UK. It is early days but the signs are that the legislation will help to spur a significant wave of innovations with New City Management ideas in the coming years.

Does the New City Management differ that much from previous reform efforts? The short answer is ‘yes’ – for three reasons. First, the pace of change, spurred by advances in new information technology, is surely more rapid than before. For example, the take up of the internet is faster than for previous technological

advances, such as the telephone and television. The implications for the way the local authority interacts with the public are only starting to be grasped. But it is not just the breakthroughs in technology that are speeding up change – the key driver is public demand for enhanced responsiveness. Citizens used to obtaining instant money from bank cash machines on a 24 hour basis and to paying their bills via the internet at the press of a button will become impatient with public service providers who fail to operate at similar levels of speed. Public services are responding. For example, the UK Improvement and Development Agency has, via a new National Land Information System, cut the length of time taken to conduct a legal search on a property from six weeks to six hours and is aiming for six minutes (Larner 2000). Another example of imaginative use of new technology is provided by the City of Chicago that provides a superb 24 hour customer service response service accessed by dialling 311 (Hambleton 2004). Innovations in local government use of the internet are now gathering pace, particularly in Europe (Baldersheim 2004) and North America (Barrett and Greene 2001).

Second, the changes I have outlined imply a radical rethink in the role and purpose of the local authority. If the global economic forces and new social challenges are to be met head on, bold new approaches to leadership and management are needed. Take young people – many of them are choosing not to vote in local elections because they can't see the point. The imaginative local authority does not recoil in horror, rather it takes steps to reach out and engage with young people in new and inventive ways – it takes risks, it listens, it tries out new approaches. In the language used earlier it emphasises the importance of developing the public *innovation* ethos alongside the well-established public *service* ethos. Many in local government welcome the opportunity to break new ground and lead the way on the issues concerning local people but they have been held back. The New City Management, by bringing about a major change in the culture of the organisation, can free these energies. The New City Management puts concern for the quality of democracy center stage and requires managers to deliver on democratic values as well as service quality. This is a stance that is consistent with those who have criticised New Public Management ideas because they neglect substantive democracy (Box et al 2001).

Third, there is an opportunity to move beyond the old and sterile local government debate that has pitched political leadership against managerial leadership, members against officers. The new triangular relationships between members, officers and citizens discussed earlier provide real opportunities for disaggregating decision making and empowering all parties. Well-supported politicians able to pursue their various political roles will value managers who work closely with them and deliver results on the ground. The reputation of both politicians and officers is well placed to go up if new policies and new approaches lead to improvements in the local quality of life, more so if local people have a real say in the decisions that matter most to them.

The analysis of trends in public service management set out in *Figure 1* suggests that three empowerment strategies will continue to be important in political and managerial practice in the future: the power of exit, the power of voice and the

power of self improvement. Those involved in the new systems of local governance need to consider what mix of all three can best meet the needs of their communities. Be sure there already is a mix in every locality. But have leaders and managers examined this mix and developed approaches that make the best use of these empowerment mechanisms? A central policy lesson from this analysis is that alternative empowerment mechanisms exist and that leaders and managers should give far more attention to introducing innovations that strengthen the democratic process.

In conclusion, there is no suggestion here that the movement to New City Management represents a well defined shift in local government in all western democracies, still less an international paradigm shift in the nature of local governance and/or public service management. Rather, by outlining the main contours of the New City Management, I have attempted to show how New Public Management offers an inadequate response to the challenges now facing city and regional governments across the world. It offers a peculiarly narrow view of public service, one that seriously neglects the democratic vitality of the polity. If we can move **beyond** managerial 'solutions' and blend managerial innovation with political innovation designed to enhance democratic values, communities as well as the institutions of local democracy will benefit.

#### Notes

1) I would like to acknowledge the contributions of Danny Burns and Paul Hoggett in developing this framework in the early 1990s (Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett 1994, p22).

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