

ABSTRACTS

Comparative Studies of Public Administration:
The Role of Residents,
Non-Governmental Organizations and Quasi-Public
Agencies in Local Government

1. AUSTRALIA

This paper examines the role of residents, non-government organizations and quasi-public agencies in local government for Australia and New Zealand. The basic frame of reference for this study is taken from Charles H. Levine's "Citizenship and Service Delivery". American local authorities have faced severe fiscal stress in the past decade so their research is the most useful to use as a point of reference for this current analysis.

Australia has only recently begun to examine the issue of fiscal stress in local government. Australian local authorities collect only about three and a half percent of all taxation and this minor tax level means that there has been no locally-based tax revolt. Most local authorities increase their property taxes in line with the increase in consumer prices, so there has not been the fiscal crisis that has caused local units in other countries to examine revenues and expenditures. The intergovernmental grants system in Australia has also been relatively stable and this has also limited the financial crisis on local authorities.

Australian local authorities are increasingly co-operating with the private sector in monitoring and altering the economic structure of their regions. This is more common now that the Australian economy is experiencing more structural change than has been the case in the past.

Also the trends towards privatization, self-help, and the use of volunteers are having only minimal effect on local government in Australia. As much as in other Commonwealth nations, New Zealand has undertaken series of local government reforms.

New Zealand established thirteen new Regional Councils as part of its radical 1989 reforms to the local government system. Although these councils have been given a wide range of functions, they have been engulfed with a score of serious urban administrative problems and need of helps from non-public sectors.

2. CHINA

In China, aside from the formal national government organizations, there are a large number of self-governing organizations, non-governmental organizations and various other mass associations,

all of which, as often as not, play a critical role in the administration of voluminous public policies. Among many networks, mass self-governing bodies such as neighborhood committees and villagers' committees are of significance. Being comprised of chairman, vice-chairman and several committee members, these units function as a transmitting belt between the public sector and the citizens, and carry out administrative tasks relevant to the needs and demands of the residents of their respective jurisdictions. In particular, these organizations are critical in the areas of local economic development and welfare services. The past record indicates that these non-public organizations will increase their importance as a large number of social and political problems and issues tend to proliferate in China.

There are several other important associations. Mass-organizations engage in social activities of masses, such as trade-unions, Communist Youth League, farmers' associations, women's federation, association of industry and commerce, federation of democratic youth, students' federation, etc., while public welfare organizations are working for the public welfare, such as China Welfare Institute and the Red Cross Society of China. In addition, there are a number of academic organizations such as societies of social sciences, research associations, etc. Social economic organizations also increase their functions. They include various trade associations, professional associations, consumers' associations and others involved in economic and technical consultancy and information services.

3. GHANA

Ghana has a population of 12 million, 69% of which is rural. Like any developing country of the Third World, she faces a major as well as a complex and challenging task of under development: Reducing poverty, inequality; eradicating diseases and malnutrition, illiteracy and ignorance; reducing unemployment and under-employment, promoting balanced spatial and sectoral development; reaching the milliard of people in the rural areas with amenities of contemporary living, and generating sufficient revenue to finance and sustain development programmes.

Ghana had through its pre- and post-independence approach to development pursued the traditional top-down and sectoral in nature national planning. The result has been that the benefits of development could not trickle down as envisaged and thus development remains a mirage to a great number of people.

Development, however, must have meaning, purpose and carry the commitment of all, and must be founded on genuine popular participation. The development process is a shared responsibility between the people, government, non-governmental organisations and parastatals. Ghana has embarked upon administrative reform via the District Assemblies to tap the potentials of other "partners" in development.

The measures being taken to promote the participation of quasi-public agencies, non-governmental organisations and residents are varied: Non-governmental organisations are being registered. They are to co-operate with District Assemblies in planning of projects and co-ordination of their activities with the Assemblies. They are also being persuaded to work in close harmony with the District Assemblies through administrative guidance. The quasi-public agencies are being allocated greater resources to create the necessary infrastructure necessary for administration and the residents, through village level organisation - Unit Committees.

4. INDIA

Since the very beginning of independence, attempt have been made by local governments to secure citizen involvement and peoples' participation in social welfare and community developmental activities through creating certain institutional devices and also through voluntary action. At the urban local governments, such devices have taken the form of urban community development programs, voluntary associations and citizen groups, cooperative bodies and direct sharing of certain administrative responsibilities, in rural areas such steps have resulted in the initiation of community development programs, Panchayati Raj institutions, cooperatives and various types of voluntary organisations.

The paper reviews the progress of the above devices and institutions for enlisting peoples' participation in welfare and developmental activities and makes a strong plea that the various ongoing and many new responsibilities, like the conservation of energy, regulation of traffic and transport, housing problem, slum removal, control over environmental pollution and uplifting of the village poor are the kind of activities which can be adequately discharged only with the active and spontaneous support of peoples' voluntary organisations, the so-called NGO's. It is high time that such NGO's get the sort of recognition they deserve and that the local government evolve some

guidelines, procedures and incentives for making their role more effective and persuasive.

5. INDONESIA

Local governments in Indonesia are regulated by Public Law No.5-1974, whose principal features are derived from the basic idea in the Constitution of 1945. Indonesia has a long history of residents always participating in decision-making process of their immediate concerns and problems. This tradition is reflected in rembug desa(village deliberation), gotong royong(mutual help), etc. The resident participation in Indonesia takes places through well-structured channels such as Village Resilience Organization(LKMD) and Family Welfare Movement(PKK). LKMD plays an active role as a resource mobilizer, while PKK functions as a supportive of local government development. The needs of the local residents in Indonesia are processed through both bottom-up and top-down mechanisms. However, the upward articulation of people's needs and aspirations is less effective in influencing policy-making process.

This study aims at depicting the actualization of a number of principles of participation in the context of Indonesian local government. Specifically it will address to such questions as what kinds of local government activity are carried out through cooperative participation of the people; what kinds of roles are played by residents, non-government organizations and quasi-public agencies; what techniques and methods are used by local government to encourage people's participation in the process of carrying out its development activities; what are the constraints and potentialities of people's participation, etc.

6. JAPAN

One of the conspicuous features of Japanese local government lies in the comprehensiveness of its functions. Although some associations and public corporations provide regional public services not covered by prefectural or municipal authorities, a large number of services are primarily offered through prefectural and municipal entities. Such a comprehensiveness of the functions indicates that Japanese local governments are concerned with a great many aspects of residents' life.

Many of local government services in Japan are given directly or indirectly to residents. In the case of direct governmental activities, local governments themselves are involved in offering services and, concomitantly, write out regulations and guidances. An additional method is to accomplish public works through the activities of non-governmental organizations. And the third method is the mixture of the two.

Because of the growing realization in Japan that the central government has limited financial and other resources, further hopes are being laid on the role of the local authorities. However, the burden seems too heavy on the part of the local governments; especially, the administrative demands are too large to be met completely by the direct services of local public entities. There is thus no way but to rely on non-governmental public and private sectors. In the Japanese context, much importance is attached to the roles of private sector not only because of the limited ability of local governments, but also because of suitabilities. In some areas, private sectors are more suited as a service provider.

The paper reviews the roles which residents, private organizations, have played in local administration in Japan. It discusses which administrative fields require cooperation between local administration and residents/private organizations and how it should be done.

7. KOREA

Many countries are wrestling with the problem of how to change their governmental systems to enhance development and modernization. Common to every political system is a bureaucracy and a system of local government, and these are the institutions that are most involved in both development and modernization of the countries in contemporary scene.

This view is frequently advocated in the discussions of development strategies for Korea and is used to justify structural change. There have been a number of experiments, as well, in western industrial nations to create greater decentralization in local governments. Korea is a prime example of a country that has experienced remarkable economic growth without widespread sharing of its benefits among the rural populace and without decentralization of power to local governments. Indeed, as national development accelerated, inequalities worsened, political and human rights were suppressed, and power within the public

bureaucracy and in the center-periphery relations was strongly centralized. The result is that, by any measure, few countries are as centralized as Korea.

Against these backgrounds, the paper examines the adequate fields in which privatization can be applied in Korea as a means to cope with critical urban finances. This study suggests various methods of supplying services and plans of privatization. It notes that we must find out whether public in a proper manner. The current analysis also indicates that we must study whether the involvement of private sector raised by revitalization of local economy and expansion of autonomy will cut down urban administrations, expenses and bring functional reduction of government bodies.

8. MALAYSIA

Local governments in Malaysia are the lowest level of the governing body and have direct bearings on the lives of at least 50% of populations are expected to fulfill the obligatory tasks and discretionary functions, most of them ought to face difficulties in fulfilling even their basic obligatory functions.

Since the local governments function and task emphasized mainly in routine and maintenance activities, individual residents and business establishments were passive participants. Their participation and cooperation frequently initiated by the local government concerned. Sometimes their participation might be due to coercion or threat of sanction for non-compliance or due to the expectation of gain or reward at the end. Normally participation by residents, NGOs, professional and business associates is encouraged through consultation methods such as meetings, forums and dialogues where the comments from individuals and interest groups may be taken into consideration before the planning policies are finalized. Individual residents and voluntary organizations tend to participate more in social service, while the quasi-public agencies and the business establishment are involved in economic activities.

In general, the role of residents, NGOs, QPAs in local government affairs have not been successful due to several problems. Besides limitation of the availability of personnel and financial resources, other problems such as negative public attitude towards local government functions and services, negative attitude of some local officials towards

the public and politicians interference need to be solve. Other areas for improvement like improving information and reduce red tape for clients, create and given more opportunities for socio-economic organizations, voluntary organizations and private sector companies to articulate their opinions without political intrerference could reduce the politicization of public interest issues and allow true participation of the public in local government activities.

9.NEPAL

Nepal is a developing country. Recently we have restored the multiparty-based parliamentary democracy abolishing the so-called partyless panchayat dictatorship as a result of historical movement of the people. The new democratic constitution has been promulgated in Nov. 1990 and the general election for central parliament is due in April 1991.

The interim democratic government has promulgated statutes for local governments for the interim period. Accordingly, we have constituted two tiers of local governments in Nepal (a) at the village and city levels, we have four thousand fifteen village development committees and thirty three municipalities. (b) and at the district level we have seventy five district development committees. They are collectively known as local governments. The local units are mostly dependent on central grants for their financial arrangements in functioning. Some municipalities are currently getting 'octroi' covering almost 80 percent of their expenses. However it is going to be abolished very soon. Therefore, some other financial measures are suggested.

The new local bodies are still equipped with the personnel appointed in the panchayat period. Therefore, a plan for personnel is also suggested. The present local government units have inherited problems from the panchayat period. So some sort of reorganization is needed in order to make them responsive to the peoples' need.

Regarding the role of citizens, currently it is very limited. Most of the municipal services are carried out by public enterprises under the supervision and guidance of central government. Regarding the role of NGOs (Internal and external), they are providing financial, technical and managerial co-operation to the local bodies in co-operation with the central authorities.

10. PHILIPPINES

In the Philippines, participation in local government affairs by residents, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), quasi-public agencies (QPAs) has taken place since 1950s through a nationwide community development program introduced by President Ramon Magsaysay. This was followed by the Marcos government through participatory strategies, even though participatory approaches were used for political consolidation. Participatory efforts were taken seriously by Aquino government than its predecessor. This emphasis could be seen in the Art. II, sec.23 and Art. XIII, sec.15 and 16 of the 1987 Constitution.

Residents are involved in various types of approaches such as the council type, the Integrated Area Development and non-judicial form of disputes settlement which are the popular way of encouraging the participation of residents. Between 1980-1987, about 716,262 disputes were settled. Those settlements should have cost the government for about Peso 2,077,448, if they had been settled in the actual court. The NGOs, on the other hand, are involved in a wide range of development activities including socio-economic programs such as nutrition program, upland development and agrarian reform program. Together with local government unit, they promote various strategies such as creating consultative mechanism, assigning in-house liaison bureaus, design special community assigning in-house liaison bureaus, design special community assistance programs for NGOs and residents participation and packaging financial assistance programs Quasi-public agencies, too, are successful in contributing to the delivery of local services, but its role is limited to public utilities and localities such as water supply and power supply distribution. Residents, NGOs and QPAs should work collectively and, at the same time, local governments also should provide the necessary atmosphere for collaborative development. Hence those effort could support the local development programs.

11. THAILAND

In maximizing the Gross National Product (GNP), especially in the early 1960s, most of the development activities are controlled by national government ministries and agencies. Thus, centralization has been a blockage for community participation in local government programs. Later, the need for community participations become important due to

several factors. With limited sources of revenue and insufficient local officials to handle the problems such as housing, slums and squatters, poverty, drug abuses and crimes and environmental deterioration, the involvement of the community could not be avoided.

Under the 6th.National Social and Economic Development Plan and the Interior Ministry Master Plan, the direct participation of community has been emphasized. Community organizations then were set up under the guidance of Ministry of Interior such as Public Health Volunteer and Health Communicator and Civil Defense Volunteer. NGOs including private associations, private foundations and private companies are involved through financial and material support, technical assistance, knowledge and skill improvement and public services operation. For example, UNICEF primarily to help improve the quality of life; professional associations such as the Civil Laws Association (non-profit agency) is to improve the efficiency of the municipal officials by conducting the technical seminar in the field of engineering, public works, public health and water supply. Quasi-public agencies which are the state enterprises such as Provincial Water Work Authority, Provincial Electricity Authority and National Housing Authority are concentrated more on public service utilities.

Community involvement in local government activities and programs largely depend on their own interest. If they do not receive what they want, their willingness to participate tend to be low. In addition, other problems like bureaucracy and red tape when dealing with local bureaucrats, incompetence of local officials to handle communities problems and the political interference have been complicating the participatory efforts done by the government.

12.UNITED KINGDOM

There are considerable difficulties in providing an authoritative statement on the role of residents, non-government organisations (NGOs) and quasi-public agencies (QPAs) in local government in the United Kingdom as a result of the logistical obstacles to making sense of the numerous forces for change in the last decade or so. This paper confronts these difficulties via a summary of the existing literature, which offers varying means of interpreting change in the framework of local politics, and thus of the roles of various local agencies and actors in local government.

The paper proceeds by means of five principal sections. After an introduction, section two establishes definitions of United Kingdom local government, residents, NGOs and QPAs, the importance of local government responsibilities and conventional means of conceptualising local politics in the United Kingdom. Section three then summarises the main findings of studies of local politics conducted prior to the 1980s. These orthodox models provide a basis against which various forces for change can be compared.

Section four explores these forces for change: in local government; in civil society; and in central government legislation affecting local government. The paper's penultimate section, then, considers whether these and other changes are sufficient to not only revise empirical findings on the framework for local politics but also to re-conceptualise local politics as no longer local government-centred. The concluding section makes a case for continuity in the framework of local politics from orthodox models. This is a caution against much of the current literature of change in local politics, which like most United Kingdom political science of the last ten years is conditioned by the unfortunate assumption from a variety of perspectives of the years of Mrs Thatcher's Governments (1979-1990) being an era of significant political transformation.