

**Citizen Involvement Efforts and Bureaucratic Responsiveness:
Participatory Values, Stakeholder Pressures and Administrative Practicality**

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Abstract

This article addresses four issues regarding the efforts of local governments to involve citizens in administrative processes. In particular, we explore: What social/political groups in the community promote citizen involvement? Which groups are likely to succeed? What barriers obstruct citizen involvement efforts? Do administrative attitudes make a difference in undertaking citizen involvement? With survey data, this study tests a framework that assumes the decision to involve citizens in administrative processes reflects administrative responsiveness to salient community stakeholders, normative values associated with citizen involvement, and administrative practicality. The statistical results confirm the bureaucratic responsiveness framework and point to future directions for citizen involvement research and practice.

Introduction

Public administration scholars and practitioners attribute an important role to citizen participation in the decision making process of state and local governments (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Frederickson 1982; King, Feltey, and Susel 1998; Schachter 1995; Thomas 1995). Yet, meaningful, or authentic, participation is rarely found as many public officials are reluctant to include citizens in decision making, or if they do, they typically involve citizens after the issues have been framed and decisions have been made. Citizens are often frustrated by shallow participation efforts which create more anger toward government and distrust in the ability of public officials to do the right thing. Some key questions, therefore, demand attention: Why do some local governments involve citizens more than others? What factors affect government decisions regarding citizen involvement?

In this article, citizen involvement efforts refer to activities initiated by government to encourage citizen participation in administrative decision-making and managerial processes.¹ Although researchers have extensively studied citizen participation in electoral voting (Verba, et al. 1993) and community association (Putnam 2000), fewer studies have explained the level of citizen involvement efforts initiated by government in administrative decision making (Franklin and Ebdon 2005; Koontz 1999).

This article focuses on the community level and seeks to answer the following questions: What social/political groups in the community promote citizen involvement? Which of these groups are likely to succeed? What barriers obstruct citizen involvement efforts? Do administrative attitudes make a difference? We test a framework that assumes the decision to involve citizens in administrative processes reflects administrative responsiveness to salient

community stakeholders, normative values associated with participation, and administrative practicality.

Citizen Involvement Decisions and Bureaucratic Responsiveness

Public administrators bear ultimate responsibility for opening administrative decision making processes to the public, for structuring the participation mechanisms, for determining how collaborative the process will be and in ultimately making decisions that may, or may not, reflect the recommendations of the public. Many of the theorists who advocate for direct citizen participation do so based on the normative value of citizen participation – that it builds trust, strengthens democracy, and increases accountability (Barber, 1983; Box, 1998; Etzioni, 1994; King and Stivers, 1998; Schacter, 1997). Normative values can be vague and conflicting which contributes to the ambiguity and ambivalence that surrounds direct citizen participation. In addition, advocating for administrative reforms based exclusively on normative values fails to recognize the practical aspects of participation and the importance of the public administrator in implementing participation strategies (Moynihan, 2003). It's essential that advocates and reformers understand the critical role that public administrators play and develop a better understanding of the instrumental factors that shape administrative attitudes toward citizen participation. The instrumental perspective suggests that the administrative decision to include or exclude citizens from the deliberative process is based on the costs and benefits associated with opening the process to the public. While normative values may inspire public administrators to be more open and deliberative when making decisions that matter to the public, they will more likely create opportunities for direct citizen participation when they can visualize the practical benefit in doing so.

Public administrators have discretion over decisions regarding when and how citizen involvement is initiated and structured. Public administrators influence the structure and the meaning of the citizen-government interactions by the decisions they make, or fail to make (Feldman and Khademian 2002). To help public managers make involvement decisions, scholars have developed various normative models (King, Feltey, and Susel 1998; Thomas 1995; Walters, Aydelotte, and Miller 2000) and more recently have called for an examination of the instrumental values that shape such decisions (Moynihan 2003). Scholars have also empirically assessed factors that affect involvement decisions at the community (Franklin and Ebdon 2005; Wang 2001), organizational (Koontz 1999) and individual levels (Yang 2005).

Still, few studies have systematically explained citizen involvement efforts based on a thorough conceptual model. Since citizen involvement is a manifestation of bureaucratic responsiveness to citizens (Hoggart and Clark 2000; Saltzstein 1992), we aim to illustrate various drivers, or considerations, of that responsiveness. In general, the traditional literature on bureaucratic behavior has largely assumed that bureaucratic decisions are determined by external political controls (Krause 1999; Meier and O'Toole 2006), reflecting the notion that bureaucrats are value-neutral and bureaucratic responsiveness is responsiveness to external political forces (Rourke 1992). Recent studies have rejected this notion and demonstrated that bureaucratic values are far more important than political factors in explaining bureaucratic decisions, outputs and outcomes (Meier and O'Toole 2006). Such a transition from focusing on political controls to bureaucratic values is relevant in the research on citizen involvement, which provides a good context to test the general argument put forth by Krause (1999) and Meier and O'Toole (2006).

Responsiveness to Participatory Values

Bureaucratic values regarding citizen involvement include both managerial attitudes toward the value of citizen participation and administrative practicality. Recent theories have started to treat community building as an administrative value (Nalbandian 1999) and emphasize the importance of administrative responsiveness to both external stakeholders and internal professional judgments (King and Stivers 1998; Nalbandian 1991; Stivers 1994). Public administrators do not just passively respond to external pressures; they make judgments about what is best for the community and become democratic principals (Selden, Brewer, and Brudney 1999). They are motivated not only by career concerns, but also by the desire to solve community problems and achieve the public interest (DeSantis, Glass, and Newell 1992). The legitimacy of their role depends on anchoring their actions in fundamental values such as efficiency, representation, individual rights, and social equity. Therefore, it stands to reason, that favorable attitudes toward citizen participation may positively affect administrative decisions to include citizens in administrative processes. However, this argument has not been empirically tested.

Responsiveness to Administrative Practicality

Bureaucratic realities require managers to consider the administrative practicality of citizen involvement in terms of resources required, the institutional capacity needed and the potential barriers. Barriers have been attributed to both citizens and administrators. Citizens are often criticized as lacking competence, expertise, skill, interest, and time for meaningful participation. Those who regularly participate often promote their own agenda and therefore are not representative of the entire community. Administrators are often criticized for promoting their own agendas as well as their unwillingness to share power. In addition, administrators may

lack the time and financial resources that are necessary for meaningful citizen involvement to take place.

Responsiveness to External Stakeholders

The traditional literature on citizen involvement (Aleshire 1972; Kweit and Kweit 1981; MacNair, Caldwell, and Pollane 1983) supports our proposition that administrative decisions to involve citizens in the deliberative process are made in response to salient external stakeholders who push for participation. This proposition is rooted in the models that depict bureaucrats as responding to competing demands from external stakeholders such as powerful politicians, knowledgeable citizens, other government agencies, legal entities, and professional organizations (Saltzstein 1992; Rourke 1992). As demonstrated by prior studies (Stone 1989), responsiveness to stakeholders explains a large portion of bureaucratic behavior and decision making in pluralistic democratic societies, where public managers often assume the role of broker or negotiator (Nalbandian 1991; Stillman 1974).

Administrators often feel pressure from stakeholder groups to act and respond in the best interest of the group. There is a constant push and pull. For example, business groups may push to keep taxes stable, while parent groups pull to have school funding increased. For the purpose of this research, we do not look at a single independent variable as a measure of external pressure; rather we look at a series of independent variables that relate to different stakeholders. Stakeholders who most enthusiastically promote citizen involvement may not be the ones who succeed. The act of promoting involvement reflects the needs of the stakeholder, while the success of their action reflects the salience of their position. Stakeholder salience is based on the power and legitimacy of stakeholders. Legitimacy means the extent to which stakeholder claims are appropriate given the constitutional framework and political norms. Illegitimate claims can

be resisted by managers, even when the claims are made by powerful groups. For example, elected officials who attempt to micromanage administrators violate the norm of professional expertise and are often resisted by career managers. Power refers to the extent to which stakeholders “have or can gain access to coercive, utilitarian, or normative means, to impose its will in the relationship” (Mitchell et al 1997, 865).

The stakeholder relationships we explored in this research were between public administrators and elected officials; non-profit organizations; the media; the business community; religious organizations; political parties; and individual citizens.

Method

In order to test the theory of bureaucratic responsiveness and the salience of stakeholder groups in influencing citizen involvement efforts we conducted a national survey of county and city administrators in January 2004.

Sampling

The sampling frame was obtained from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), and included 823 chief administrative officers from counties/municipalities with populations from 25,000 to 49,999, and 110 from counties/municipalities with populations from 250,000 to 499,999. Two sub-sampling frames were used in order to improve data variation on community size, which might affect citizen participation in general (Kelleher and Lowery 2004).

Response

428 valid surveys were returned and the response rate was 46 percent for both sub-samples. Among all respondents, 75% identified themselves as municipal managers (or county managers), 11% identified themselves as business administrators (county administrators), and

1% identified themselves as elected officials. Other respondents included assistants to city/county manager or council/board, as well as public information officers.² Ninety-five percent of the respondents worked in the public sector for at least 5 years. Community characteristics for the overall sample and two sub-samples are summarized in Table 1.

[Table 1 here]

Measurement

The dependent and independent variables are measured by survey items; the control variables were measured by secondary data collected from the 2000 Census. Consistent with the literature (Oliver 2000; Verba, et al. 1993), the following control variables were included: Region (south vs. non-south), metro status, population category, type of government (city vs. county), area, affluence, form of government, education and race. All relevant survey items and secondary data are described in the Appendix.

Dependent Variable. We used Wang's model (2001) to measure citizen involvement efforts along two dimensions: the use of participation mechanisms and the use of citizen input in strategic decision making. The distinction was made because while participation mechanisms (e.g., public hearings and citizen advisory boards) are often widely adopted, the outcomes of such mechanisms are seldom used to improve strategic decision making (King, Feltey and Susel 1998; Walters, Aydelotte and Miller 2000).

Similar to Wang's (2001) survey, our respondents were asked to assess on a 5-point scale (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=frequently, 5=consistently) how frequently they used six participation mechanisms and how frequently they used citizen input in four strategic areas (Appendix). A factor analysis with orthogonal (varimax) rotation was conducted, and the results supported a two factor solution.³ Factor 1, citizen involvement in strategic decisions, included

four items and was internally consistent (standardized Cronbach $\alpha = .84$). Factor 2, use of participation mechanism, included six items and was internally consistent as well (standardized Cronbach $\alpha = .73$).

Independent Variables. Managerial attitudes toward citizen participation were measured by an additive index of four items with a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly agree” (1) to “strongly disagree” (7). The index satisfied the uni-dimensionality assumption in a factor analysis, and had a standardized Cronbach’s alpha of 0.68.

For the eight stakeholder factors, respondents were asked to rank-order which groups in their community promote public participation most enthusiastically (1=greatest source of encouragement to 8=least source). Responses were reverse coded. The practicality (barrier) factors were measured in a similar way. Respondents were asked to rank-order the five biggest obstacles among 11 options (1=biggest obstacle to 5=fifth biggest obstacle), and responses were reverse coded.

Analytical Procedure

A correlation matrix was produced, but is not reported here due to space limitations.⁴ No correlation coefficients had a value above .70, indicating that multicollinearity may not be a problem. Since we included two sub-samples, we did not use population size as a control variable. Instead, we created a dichotomous variable (1=large communities, 0=small communities) to serve as a control. Similarly, since the sample included both cities (n=287) and counties (n=141), we created a dichotomous variable (1=city, 0=county) for statistical control. In addition, we tested the hypotheses in the sub-samples (city vs. county; large vs. small) separately. The pattern of the results from sub-samples was not significantly different from that from the

overall sample, although some moderating effects did exist. Considering space limits, we decide to focus on our major framework and report only the results from the overall sample.

In order to use regression analysis, we recoded stakeholder pressures and participation barriers into dichotomous variables. High stakeholder influence (1) included original responses of 5, 6, 7, and 8; low stakeholder influence (0) included original responses of 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4. Strong barriers (1) included original responses of 3, 4, and 5; weak barriers (0) included original responses of 0, 1, and 2. Multiple linear regression analysis was then used to test the hypotheses. We also ran ANCOVA with the original stakeholder and barrier variables, which generated very similar results (e.g., R^2 , β and significance).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Level of Involvement and Participatory Values. Table 2 presents means and standard deviations for all the continuous variables as they appeared in the overall sample and in the two sub-samples. Although we used factor scores in testing the hypotheses later on, we calculated index scores for the level of involvement by adding responses together. On average, the results show that while local governments use citizen involvement mechanisms with relatively high frequency (M=3.60; SD=0.62), they are less likely to use citizen input in decision making (M=3.04; SD=0.77). On average, respondents also report slightly positive views toward citizen involvement (M=4.87, SD=1.05). Public managers from larger communities reported more positive attitudes toward citizen participation. Larger communities also had higher levels of use of involvement mechanisms.

[Table 2 here]

Who Promotes Involvement. According to respondents, elected officials are the leading proponents for citizen involvement (Table 3). About 56 percent of the respondents considered elected officials as the most enthusiastic proponents, and 86 percent of the respondents listed elected officials as one of the top three proponents. Government agencies and citizens were also perceived as enthusiastic in promoting citizen participation; 59 percent of the respondents placed government agencies and 56 percent placed citizens on their top three list. Respondents also reported local media and nonprofit organizations as proponents for involvement, but not as strongly as the above groups. The business community, political parties, and religious groups are cited less frequently as proponents for citizen involvement.

[Table 3 here]

What Impedes Involvement. The barriers to citizen involvement are shown in Table 4. “Citizens don’t have time” was cited as the number one obstacle, with 71 percent of the respondents placing it on their top 5 list. Approximately 61 percent of the respondents placed “citizens promote their own agenda” on their top 5 list. A slight majority chose “citizens don’t trust government” (54%), “inadequate government-citizen communication” (53%), and “participation objectives poorly defined” (51%), on the top 5 list. “Citizens don’t have expertise” (48%) and “agencies don’t have enough financial resources” (46%) are also important concerns.

Power struggles appear on the top 5 list for about one third of the respondents (33% for “department heads want to control agenda” and 31% for “elected officials want to control agenda”). About 30 percent of the respondents included “administrators don’t have time” on the top 5 list. Trust between elected and career officials is not considered a major factor (12%).

Caution has to be made of these results because the results are based on self-reported data from public managers.

[Table 4 here]

Regression Results

Regression results are reported in Table 5. All regression assumptions were met⁵ and all models fit the data well with F tests significant at the .001 level.

[Table 5 here]

Regarding Factor 1 (adjusted $R^2=.15$), involving citizens in strategic decision making, ten variables were significant at least at the .10 level: Responsiveness to participatory values, south, form of government, education, elected officials, nonprofits, businesses, citizens' lack of expertise, administrators' lack of time, and administrative officers' attitudes toward citizen participation. The model for Factor 2, the use of involvement mechanisms, had a greater adjusted R-square (.34) and 11 variables were significant at least at the .10 level: Responsiveness to participatory values, south, population, region, form of government, education, elected officials, media, citizens' own agenda, citizens' lack of time, and administrators' lack of resources.

Discussions

In general, our three propositions are supported by the results. Citizen involvement efforts by local governments do reflect bureaucratic responsiveness to participatory values, stakeholder pressures, and administrative practicality. In addition, when we compare the adjusted

R-squares, it seems that the responsiveness framework better explains the use of involvement mechanisms than the use of participation in strategic decisions.

Responsiveness to Participatory Values

Responsiveness to participatory values, measured by public managers' attitudes toward citizen involvement, is statistically significant across the two models. In fact, responsiveness to participatory values had the largest Type II Sum of Squares among all independent variables in the models, indicating that it perhaps has the greatest explanatory power. This finding comes as no surprise. Public managers determine who will participate, how they participate and how the values and concerns shared by the public are incorporated in the decision-making process and how they are reflected in the outcome. Not only are public managers accountable for results, but they are the ones who determine how the results will be realized. Their values and priorities influence the participation processes and they can enable or constrain meaningful involvement from taking place.

Responsiveness to External Stakeholders

Our results also support the participation literature on community politics and power structures (Aleshire 1972; MacNair, Caldwell, and Pollane 1983; Stone 1989), as advocacy by various community groups does affect the level of citizen involvement, and the salience of the group does influence the involvement outcome.

- Elected officials are perceived by respondents as the strongest proponents of citizen involvement, and our regression results show that they do have a positive impact in all three models.

- Nonprofits are identified by respondents as a major promoter of citizen involvement, and the regression results suggest their pressure does make a difference in the use of citizen input in strategic decision making.
- Businesses are not perceived by the respondents as very enthusiastic in promoting citizen involvement. However, the regression results illustrate that they make a difference in the use of citizen input in strategic decision making.
- Although managers perceive citizens as major promoters of citizen involvement, citizen advocacy is not significant in either of the regression models.
- Religious groups and political parties are not perceived as major proponents for citizen involvement, and they don't have a significant impact in either of the regression models.
- The media is ranked by managers as the fourth proponent, yet it has a significant negative impact on the use of involvement mechanisms.

Responsiveness to Administrative Practicality

Table 5 shows that some barrier variables do affect the level of citizen involvement, as suggested in the literature (King and Stivers 1998; Kweit and Kweit 1981).

- While administrators' lack of time is not viewed by respondents as a major barrier to citizen involvement the regression results show that it has a negative impact on the use of citizen input in strategic decision making.
- Lack of administrative resources is not significant in explaining the use of citizen input in strategic decisions.
- Citizens' lack of time is perceived by our respondents as the biggest barrier to involvement, but the regression results demonstrate the lack of time has a positive impact in both models.

- The regression results also showed that “citizen lack of expertise” has a negative impact on the use of citizen input in strategic decisions.

Control Variables

- Education has a positive effect in all three models, which is in line with the literature that identifies education as the most powerful predictor of activism and participation (Crenson 2003).
- Governments in the south are more likely to have higher levels of citizen involvement in both dimensions and this finding differs from the political participation literature that finds either a negative or no relationship between southern states and political participation levels (Oliver 2000).
- Large population categories are associated with higher levels of involvement mechanisms, but not in the use of citizen input in strategic decisions.
- Council-manager forms of governments have a positive impact on the use of involvement mechanisms, but a negative impact on the use of citizen input in strategic decisions.

Conclusion

At the outset, we want to acknowledge this study’s limitations. The study is based on managerial perception and future studies may want to use objective measures of citizen involvement efforts to verify our results. Nevertheless, we believe the study has merit for several reasons. As cognitive organizational theories suggest, perception is as important as reality in explaining managerial decision making (Weick 1995). Previous studies have suggested that self-reported data can provide valid indicators of organizational properties (Lincoln and Zeitz 1980). Perceptual data are widely used in citizen involvement studies (Ebdon 2002; Poister and Streib 2005; Wang 2001), as well as political participation studies (Oliver 2000). Another limitation of

our study is with the sample. We included two sub-samples with populations from 25,000 to 49,999 and 250,000 to 499,999 respectively. While our analysis controlled for the two categories, future studies may include communities with different sizes. Finally, this study has the limitation of any cross-sectional studies. The results demonstrate associations, not causal relationships. Future studies could use time-series designs to capture the time dimension. Other control variables, such as political culture, religious influence and social capital might be included in future inquiries as well.

This study expands the empirical literature on citizen involvement as initiated by local governments. It illustrates that the use of involvement mechanisms and the use of involvement in strategic decision making are two different dimensions. Although citizen involvement mechanisms are likely to be adopted, citizen input is less likely to be used in strategic decision making. Involvement mechanisms can be adopted in a passive way without requiring too much administrative attention and without creating a threat to administrative order and power. In contrast, involving citizens in strategic decisions is more risky, requires more administrative attention, and will likely affect administrative order and power. This distinction is critical because many citizens feel that managerial-driven participation efforts are hollow exercises, where managers open the process to the public to demonstrate their willingness to listen and increase transparency, yet they hold on to and control the outcome (King and Stivers 1998; Timney 1998; White and McSwain 1993).

The regression results support the bureaucratic responsiveness model we proposed. The most important factor in citizen involvement decisions is the attitude public managers hold towards the value of participation. Those who advocate for greater citizen involvement need to recognize that the ultimate decision to meaningfully include the citizens in administrative

processes is up to the public manager. The potential tension between the public's desire for greater involvement and the prerogative of public managers to act as the authoritative voice should be acknowledged.

While public managers in local governments have significant control over administrative processes and outcomes, their attitude and actions can be influenced by the expectations and pressures of salient external stakeholders. Public managers will respond more positively to salient groups such as elected officials, the business community, and nonprofit organizations because of the perceived power and legitimacy of their relationship with the administration. The very nature of these relationships predicts the shape and structure of participatory mechanisms, as well as whether the results from the participation will be valued by public managers.

The results also suggest that while barriers, such as lack of expertise on the part of citizens, may hinder citizen involvement in strategic decisions, administrators may proactively respond to some participation barriers by providing more participation opportunities and support. While public managers cite citizen constraints as the biggest impediments to meaningful participation, our analysis demonstrates that administrative lack of time is the biggest barrier.

Notes

1. Langton (1978) differentiates four categories of participation: citizen action, citizen involvement, electoral participation, and obligatory participation. We are interested in the second category.

2. We compared municipal managers/business administrators with respondents who hold other positions at the time of the survey, and no statistically significant difference was found regarding the dependent variable and major independent variables.

3. We followed the procedures in Hair et al. (1998) and Hatcher (1998) to determine the appropriate number of factors. The scree plot supports a two-factor solution, which satisfied the interpretability criteria (Hatcher 1998): At least three items have significant loadings on each retained factor; the items that load on a given factor share some conceptual meaning; the items loading on different factors seem to measure different constructs; and the rotated factor pattern demonstrates simple structure.

4. If interested, please contact the authors for a copy of the matrix.

5. The normality assumption is satisfied based on residual plots and Shapiro-Wilk test for normality of the Jackknife residuals. The homoscedasticity assumption is also satisfied based on the residual plots and the chi-square test produced by the SPEC option in SAS. There are no multicollinearity problems based on examination of tolerance and variance inflation values, as well as the Eigenvalue index.

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Appendix: Measurement

Dependent Variables

- Use of Involvement Mechanisms: 6-item index based on 5-point scale. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they utilize 6 mechanisms to include citizens in the governing process (1=consistently to 5=never): (1) public hearings; (2) community/neighborhood meetings; (3) citizen surveys; (4) citizen focus groups; (5) citizen advisory boards/committees; and (6) issue oriented committees. All items were reversely coded.
- Use of Citizen Involvement in Strategic Decision Making: 4-item index based on 5-point scale. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they involve citizens in 4 strategic decision-making issues (1=consistently to 5=never): (1) strategic planning; (2) clarifying program goals and objectives; (3) developing strategies to achieve goals; (4) developing program/policy alternatives. All items were reversely coded.

Independent Variables

- Responsiveness to participatory values: 4-item index based on 7-point Likert scale. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree the statements (1=strongly agree to 7= strongly disagree): (1) involving citizens in the decision making process takes more effort than its worth; (2) in most instances, the administration would have come to the same decision without citizen input; (3) the value of public participation is overrated; and (4) I'd like to see more people get involved in the decision making process (reverse coding).
- Seven external stakeholders: Respondents were asked to rank order the extent to which each of the stakeholder groups promote public participation enthusiastically, with 1=greatest source of encouragement and 8=least source of encouragement. (Codes reversely and reclassified the variables into dichotomous ones, as specified in the text).
- Six barrier variables: Respondents were asked to rank order the top 5 obstacles to meaningful citizen participation in their community, with 1=biggest obstacle to 5=fifth biggest obstacle (Coded reversely and reclassified the variables into dichotomous ones, as specified in the text)

Control Variables

- South: 1=South and 0=non-South (ICMA classification).
- Metro Status: 1=Central city in an MSA or Suburban located in MSA. 0=independent.
- Population: 1=population from 250,000 to 499,999; 0=25,000 to 49, 999.
- Government Type: 1=city; 0=county.
- Form of Government: 1=Council-Manager form. 0=Non-Council-Manager from.
- Area: Area in 1000 square miles.
- Affluence: Median Household Income in 10,000 dollars.
- Education level: Percentage with Bachelor degree or higher.
- Race: Percentage of white population.

Table 1: Demographics of the Responding Local Governments (n=428), 2004

Categories	Overall		Smaller population		Larger population	
	R (n=428)	SF (n=428)	R (n=377)	SF (n=823)	SF (n=51)	SF (n=110)
Population						
25,000-49,999	88%	88%				
250,000-499,999	12%	12%				
Region						
Northeast	16%	16%	17%	17%	12%	17%
North Central	27%	27%	27%	28%	24%	22%
South	32%	32%	31%	34%	37%	34%
West	25%	25%	25%	21%	27%	28%
Form of Government						
Council-Manager City	55%	55%	60%	55%	20%	17%
Mayor-Council City	12%	12%	12%	15%	8%	10%
Commission County	13%	13%	14%	17%	10%	17%
Council-Administrator County	11%	11%	8%	7%	37%	29%
Council-Elected Executive County	8%	8%	6%	6%	25%	27%
Metro Status						
Central	23%	23%	13%	14%	100%	97%
Suburban	48%	48%	55%	52%	0%	3%
Independent	29%	29%	32%	34%	0%	0%

Note: R=Respondents; SF=Sampling frame

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Variables

Variables	Overall		Small size		Large size	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Control						
1. Area	2.92	48.2	3.04	51.34	2.03	7.84
2. Education	0.27	0.15	0.27	0.15	0.26	0.08
3. Affluence	5.60	1.93	5.67**	2.01	5.11	1.04
4. Race	0.80	0.16	0.81**	0.16	0.74	0.16
Independent						
5. Resp. to participatory values	4.87	1.05	4.80***	1.04	5.32	1.03
Dependent						
6. Use of particip. mechanism	3.60	0.62	3.58 [#]	0.61	3.74	0.65
7. Decision-making participation	3.04	0.77	3.02	0.76	3.18	0.81

Note: 1. Small size means populations from 25,000 to 49,999; large size means populations from 250,000 to 499,999.

2. [#] significant at the .10 level; ** significant at the .01 level; *** significant at the .001 level. It indicates the results of the difference of means test for small communities and large communities.

3. Area was measured in 1,000 square miles, population measured in 10,000 individuals, education measured by the percentage of population with bachelor's degree or higher, affluence measured by the median family income in \$10,000, and race measured by percentages of whites.

4. Index scores, rather than factor scores, were used for the two dependent variables because they make more intuitive sense here.

Table 3.
Perception of Who Promotes Public Participation in the Community?

<i>Promoters</i>	8 (%)	7 (%)	6 (%)	5 (%)	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)
Elected officials (n=407)	56	19	11	6	4	2	2	1
Government agencies (n=381)	13	23	23	15	12	8	3	3
Citizens (n=381)	13	24	19	11	9	8	6	10
Local media (n=387)	9	11	18	24	13	12	9	4
Nonprofit orgs. (n=357)	7	10	12	14	18	22	12	5
Business sector (n=364)	3	8	11	20	21	16	12	8
Political parties (n=329)	2	7	9	8	13	14	20	27
Religious groups (n=328)	3	5	3	6	9	11	30	33

Note. 1. Respondents rank-ordered the eight potential promoters (8 = most enthusiastic and 1 = least enthusiastic).
 2. Numbers in parentheses are sample sizes.
 3. Total percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 4.
Perceived Obstacles to Meaningful Citizen Participation in the Governing Process

<i>Obstacles</i>	<i>1st</i> <i>(%)</i>	<i>2nd</i> <i>(%)</i>	<i>3rd</i> <i>(%)</i>	<i>4th</i> <i>(%)</i>	<i>5th</i> <i>(%)</i>	<i>Total</i> <i>(%)</i>
Citizens don't have time	36	13	8	7	7	71
Citizens promote their own agenda	16	15	11	10	8	61
Citizens don't trust government	12	12	12	9	8	54
Inadequate Government-citizen communication	10	9	13	11	10	53
Participation objectives poorly defined	4	11	11	12	14	51
Citizens don't have expertise	6	12	14	9	6	48
Agencies don't have enough financial resources	11	9	8	9	9	46
Department heads want to control agenda	4	6	7	7	7	33
Elected officials want to control agenda	5	7	6	5	8	31
Administrators don't have time	3	6	5	8	8	30
Elected officials don't trust agencies	2	2	3	1	4	12

Note. 1. Respondents chose five biggest obstacles (1st = the biggest obstacle ... 5th = the fifth biggest obstacle).

2. Numbers in parentheses are sample sizes.

3. Total percentages may not equal the sum of the five categories due to rounding.

4. Items are not listed in the original order, but rearranged based on their importance.

5. n=405.

Table 5.
Regression Results Explaining the Level of Citizen Involvement in Local Governments

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Control Variables		
South (1=south)	.25**	.14*
Metro Status (1=metro)	-.07	.05
Population (1=large)	-.04	.33*
Government Type (1=city, 0=county)	-.12	.36***
Area	-.00	-.00
Affluence	-.02	-.03
Form of government (1=council-manager)	-.21*	.30***
Education	.88*	1.30***
Race	-.20	-.11
Pushing Factors (External Stakeholders)		
Push by elected officials	.37*	.28*
Push by nonprofits	.19 [#]	.09
Push by religious org.	-.15	.01
Push by media	-.10	-.23**
Push by business	.27**	.09
Push by political parties	-.03	-.13
Push by citizens	.00	-.08
Dragging Factors (Administrative Practicality)		
Drag by citizen distrust in gov.	-.09	.01
Drag by citizen own agenda	-.07	.12 [#]
Drag by citizen lack of time	.15 [#]	.15*
Drag by citizen lack of expertise	-.17 [#]	.09
Drag by admin. lack of time	-.28*	-.03
Drag by admin. lack of resources	.01	.16*
Administrative Attitudes (Participatory Value)		
Attitudes toward citizen participation	.15***	.14***
R ²	.21	.39
Adj R ²	.15	.34
F	3.95***	8.77***

Note: 1. [#]p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

2. Reported are parameter estimates β

3. Both SPEC χ^2 and normality plots show the absence of heteroscedasticity

4. Shapiro-Wilk test and normality plots show the presence of normality

5. Factor 1= Involvement in Strategic Decision-making; Factor 2= Use of Involvement Mechanisms.