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FROM PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TO STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT:
THE ROCKY ROAD TO MORE INCLUSIVENESS

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**FROM PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TO STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT: THE ROCKY
ROAD to MORE INCLUSIVENESS**

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Abstract

Surviving always "at the edge of extinction," public participation in environmental decision making has an uncertain and problematic history. From its emergence from the urban planning and delivery system efforts of the 1960s to many siting and non-siting uses today, it remains a battleground, with few successes and many failures. While some compelling structural, organizational and cultural explanations for this state of affairs exist, we offer a further one - a too-limited definition and vision of public participation. We then argue for a more inclusive process such as stakeholder involvement (SI) to enable a more viable approach to decision making.

We argue that the narrow conceptualization offered in the term "public participation" (PP) is partly responsible for the meager results of decades of efforts by earnest practitioners. Because of the limited, unique, and self-selected publics that respond to the major PP mechanisms such as public hearings, PP has become largely the province of organized activist groups and is largely accepted as such by most parties, including PP professionals.

Three central problems result from this limited approach. First, the great majority of unorganized, inactive interests and publics are usually not engaged by conventional PP modes. Hence the input gathered by and the actors involved in most public involvement efforts may be unrepresentative. Second, by concentrating only upon this particular segment of external publics, the major interests of other private and public stakeholders as well as critical internal stakeholders have gone unacknowledged in PP processes. But whether acknowledged or not, competing interests always seek to shape, direct or block decision making to fit their interests. Hence, much effort in organizing and attempting to implement narrow PP plans is ineffective or wasted.

Third, most agencies have designed PP as a two-party adversarial system, thereby encouraging conflict and hostility among the parties. In SI the process is altered to enable iterative, interactive multi-party interchange, laying the base for possible negotiation and tradeoffs among internal as well as external stakeholders.

We review the roles of Congress, federal agencies/proponents, local governments, activist groups and PP professionals in creating the current limited PP processes. We discuss trends and prospects for moving to broader based, more inclusive SI approaches. The emerging SI approach presents major methodological and organizational challenges, but offers the promise of outcomes more likely to be legitimated and potentially more lasting.

I. Introduction & Background

Stakeholders and professionals in the field of public involvement in public or private sector decisions are well aware of the gridlock affecting siting and other decision processes. However, few remedies or prescriptions for improving the process have proved effective. This paper reviews the ongoing

shift from public participation (PP) to stakeholder involvement (SI) approaches and suggests that part of the problem arises from the limited PP frameworks in use and biases of PP professionals.

The many failures in the area of public participation seem not to discourage repeated efforts, however, since the need for legitimated decisions (i.e., those which garner public acceptance or at least public tolerance) remains high. The few successes which have been documented reveal no simple formula or template. Rather they demonstrate that despite (or perhaps because of) the steady decline in social capital possessed by government and agency decision makers in the public arena, PP successes are tailored to specific situations, require committed managers, and often involve pro active PP going much beyond legal requirements (Peelle & Farhar 1995).

Many possible causes or explanations for PP weaknesses and failures have been proffered, in addition to the usual advice about conducting the PP process more in line with the conventional wisdom about "how to do PP." But before adding to the proliferation of articles in either sphere, we step back briefly and review the status and viability of PP efforts and current trends.

This article is based about equally upon an extended PP literature review conducted over the past 5 years and upon my 25 years of involvement in public participation, community case studies and social impact assessments. These efforts involved work for government agencies, communities and counties in eleven states, and some private sector entities. We will focus primarily upon agency efforts to characterize communities and involve various publics in the characterization, evaluation and decision processes pertaining to furthering some agency objective or project.

The scope of the paper includes different perspectives on PP and SI by the major actors, definitions of PP and SI, the impact of narrow PP definitions on PP processes, the non-representative nature of PP and SI, changes underway in the transition to SI, advantages and disadvantages of SI, trends in SI, and problems in the transition. The conclusions and observations attempt to evaluate and partially synthesize the evidence and my experience into an overview of the field.

II. Different Perspectives on PP and SI

To demonstrate our view that narrow conceptualization of the whole area of public participation is part of the problem, we turn now to some definitions of PP and SI by the major actors. These actors are Congress, proponents of the project or action, local governments, activist publics (both for and against), and PP professionals. We discuss the latter group in the next section on definitions.

Congress has defined PP very narrowly, not only as to types of participants, but also in terms of PP mechanisms. Often only public hearings are specified as "public participation." The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the first of the major pieces of environmental legislation requiring public involvement, merely specified that a (belated) public hearing shall be held. A decade later, a requirement for earlier public involvement was added by the Council on Environmental Quality in the form of a scoping hearing. "Public" is not defined nor is there any requirement that the input be representative. Like most such laws, it does not specify how the public input obtained shall be integrated into agency decision making nor even that it be used at all. Implementation of PP is left almost entirely to the agencies who are given minimal guidance. In practice, the laws are written by

Congressional staff and lawyers and implemented by technocrats with little expertise or interest in PP. Congressional ambivalence about PP has led to "administrative marginality" for PP in agencies (Rosenbaum 1983).

Proponents include both government agencies¹ and private developers. In the absence of legislative guidance on PP, agencies often develop their own guidance which can be quite lengthy and detailed. Agencies increasingly use arcane quantitative tools to assist their decision making such as cost/benefit analysis, contingent valuation or multi-attribute utility analysis. As framed by agencies, most siting and other decisions are technically defined, requiring expertise provided by internal experts. As a result, information developed by non-experts (citizens) is often seen by technical experts as either questionable or irrelevant.

Thus the role of expertise and access to expertise has become the focus of numerous disputes between activist groups and agencies in PP processes and a contributor to an adversarial "us" vs. "them" atmosphere. Funding for independent expertise controlled by citizen groups is a continuing issue. Public disputes between "their experts" and "our experts" and arguments over the admissibility of information have become common, particularly with the advent of "advocacy science" as practiced by national environmental public interest groups (Mitchell 1979, Klapp 1988).

There is little recognition of the non-technical expertise which citizens can supply (Wynne 1991). Citizen values, preferences and other non-monetary and non-technical concerns have often been omitted or disallowed.

Seeking to change this emphasis, DOE's efforts in recent years focus more directly upon including activist publics that have been previously excluded from agency decision making. Examples are the extensive PP efforts being made in Federal Facilities Compliance Act implementation, Hanford site cleanup and the various defense waste site specific advisory boards (SSABs) (Beck & Gallagher 1995). Elaborate guidance documents have been issued recently (see for example the Public Participation Desk Reference by DOE EM or Effective Public Participation under the NEPA {1994}).

Some of the most innovative PP processes have been undertaken by private developers as in the voluntary siting of a waste facility by Browning Ferris Industries in Eagle, NY (English et al 1993).

Organized activist groups are the primary subset of publics which take part in PP activities, as they seek more recognition for their views and objectives in agency decision making. Two types of organizational activists are involved: 1) those from major national environmental groups with mass membership, professional staffs and a bureaucracy of their own, and 2) those from local grassroots organizations formed to protest some siting or action perceived to threaten public health and/or property values.

Access to the complex set of scoping reviews, public hearings, remedial action and feasibility studies, reviews of FONSI's, EAs and EISs in NEPA, RCRA, Superfund and other government processes unfolds according to detailed internal patterns and schedules. In general, only organized, attentive publics such as activist groups can respond effectively and in time to such PP opportunities. In my experience and from review of some of the extended public comments made at hearings, such organized groups make up the vast

¹ Though we focus upon DOE in this paper, much of the discussion applies to other federal as well as state agencies when they act as proponents.

majority of citizens who take part in the formalized PP opportunities and processes which are offered. The "public" that turns out is thus primarily a mix of professional public stakeholders (paid staff of activist groups), local grassroots anti-project activists, and whatever members of these groups that can be mobilized. Few from the great majority of unorganized, inattentive publics ever appear.

Activist groups define themselves as "representatives of the public," which label is usually accepted by all other PP participants except one (local government representatives). In fact, except for the Sierra Club, policy is determined in most mass membership environmental groups by a small coterie of elites on self-perpetuating boards with little input from "members" except for financial support (Mitchell et al 1992).

In contrast to the national environmental groups with large mass membership are the numerous, small, local grassroots groups that arise to protest siting of most waste management facilities, whether for solid, hazardous or nuclear waste. Using populist rhetoric and a variety of technical support measures, the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste, for example, has in the past decade helped create and mobilize a national network of grassroots groups now numbering over 7000 (CCHW 1995). Under the tutelage of the national organization, the goals of these groups progress from Not-in-My-backyard (NIMBY) to Not-in-Anybody's-Backyard (NIABY).

Public participation by these two types of groups is distinctive: the professional stakeholders (staff) and at-large members of national environmental groups will participate in agency PP events, while the grassroots groups generally prefer to stage their own attention-getting activities, either in conjunction with or independent of the agency's scheduled PP events. (See Benford and Hunt 1992 on "dramaturgy" in building protest organizations).

Local governments and their elected representatives in towns, cities, counties and special districts often represent local interests in PP activities. They are often at odds with activist groups about issues such as economic development versus the environment, and who shall speak for local residents who are not present. Local elected officials have sometimes made commitments to proponents about siting acceptability only to discover that their power to decide such controversial questions falls far short of their legal authority. On the other hand, they object to unelected groups such as activists claiming to represent their constituencies. This tension is apparent at non-siting cleanup PP projects as well as in siting efforts.

On occasion local governments will initiate and pursue PP activities with reluctant or indifferent agencies (unlike the siting situations above) when they see this as being in their interests. One example is the Michigan community which insisted upon involvement in statewide PBB cleanup despite the absence of formal collaborative processes and the intention of state and federal agencies to overlook their claims. The community's unified problem-solving approach that was representative of most community interests, its long-term persistence and positive outcomes are documented by Aronoff & Gunter (1994).

III. Definitions of Public Participation & Stakeholder Involvement

PP professionals have their own multiple definitions of PP, stakeholders and stakeholder involvement. The dual roles of PP professionals as analysts and actors are sometimes not acknowledged in their conceptualization and

resulting definitions. We review selected definitions in the literature and then offer our own definitions of PP & SI.

English et al (1993) define stakeholder involvement broadly as a mix of formal and informal mechanisms serving three purposes (information elicitation and exchange, advice-giving, and decision making). They see SI as being more inclusive and more targeted than PP, augmenting but not replacing PP. Like many such definitions, PP is not clearly differentiated from SI, leaving the relationship and boundaries between the two somewhat vague. These unclear boundaries are compounded in the field of public involvement by the widespread adoption of "stakeholder" labels and terminology within ordinary PP, making it hard to tell exactly which game is being played without a very close look.

As seen in Table 1, Babiuch and Farhar (1993) have collected 16 definitions of "stakeholders" by PP professionals. While not exhaustive, we take this listing as roughly representative of what PP professionals are thinking on this issue. Most characterize stakeholders at least implicitly in terms of their 1) self-awareness, 2) individual or organizational involvement, and/or 3) activist orientation. Ten of the 16 mention groups or organizational units, while four use "group" as the only identifier of "stakeholder." Half mention unorganized aggregations such as persons, people, attentive -inattentive publics, populations or constituents. Most are silent on private sector or other stakeholders such as regulators or "vested interests" (one mention each). While some definitions may explicitly or implicitly include a wide array of public and private stakeholders, as well as organized and unorganized people that are affected, it appears that most professionals still limit their view of stakeholders to organized, activist, self-identified publics.

This pattern of narrow, incomplete conceptualizations is also widely seen in the PP literature (Peelle & Farhar 1995) where PP is generally viewed as proposed in the "ladder of public participation" (Arnstein 1969). In this ladder, citizen power is the only relevant variable, varying from zero to 100 per cent. Most versions of this ladder merely regroup the categories but leave the concept unaltered (e.g., Hasen & Simmons 1989). Here the focus is primarily upon the "public" in PP, albeit an activist stand-in for the public, rather than upon a broader array of publics.

A more balanced approach may be seen in the scale of participation proposed by Hance et al (1988) in which PP processes vary from complete agency power to complete citizen power. This approach implicitly recognizes the key role of internal stakeholders within agencies in formulating decisions for which some form of public input is sought, but still does not include other stakeholders such as regulators or private sector entities.

Generally, PP professionals have not only gone along with the limited PP definitions in legislation, but have bought into and encouraged the perception that **only activists** matter, that activists **are** the public as they claim. This view accepts the operational characteristics of "interest" and "activity" as **defining** characteristics of "the public" and implicitly ignores or deletes the vast unorganized public from consideration.

Admittedly, narrowing the definition of "public" helps keep the PP process more manageable by reducing the number and types of participants. It also avoids the difficult development work required to invent mechanisms for involving the unorganized, inattentive majority. The net effect, however, is to continue leaving unrepresented the interests of the majority and probably skewing the results of public input efforts. Thus, we professionals not only

contribute to the problem of narrowly focused decision making involving publics, but in some respects, **we are** the problem.

Author's definition. We attempt to avoid prescriptive, normative definitions and seek to define PP and SI as actually practiced. Our focus remains on agency-initiated PP processes though many citizen-initiated PP efforts also occur.

PP is a highly variable process of public involvement in agency/proponent decision making in which the agency shares information about the proposed action and seeks some sort of information (facts, values, opinions) from some (rarely all) public stakeholders. The range of public involvement processes varies from minimal to maximal in terms of quality and quantity of public input. In a minimal process, perhaps only reactions to completed agency plans would be sought. At the other extreme, public participants become partners and are invited to shape the decision process as well as the decision. In such (maximal) siting decisions, local host participants may also be given authority to veto the final decision.

SI as usually practiced differs from PP in that SI explicitly includes additional categories of stakeholders, e.g., internal, private industry, and regulators as well as external activists. Internal stakeholders include agency staff such as project managers, administrators and technical staff. Whereas internal stakeholders are very much involved in PP, this is usually an unacknowledged, behind-the-scenes role. The **explicit, iterative, give-and-take interaction** between internal and external stakeholders is the distinctive feature of SI. Thus SI is both a more inclusive, interactive process and potentially a source of more legitimate, durable decisions than is "public participation."

The use of the term "stakeholder" in all sorts of PI processes helps obscure real differences between PP & SI. The relationships between PP and SI are unclear and shifting during the on-going transition.

IV. The Non-Representative Nature² of Public Participation/SI

None of the above definitions of actual or normative practice of either PP or SI, however, gives any role to unorganized, inattentive, and inactive publics which make up the vast majority of the general populace. Though the significant differences in views of activists and the general public have been known for decades [see Verba and Nie 1972) for example], it has become common practice in PP to accept activist publics as surrogates for the general public, as illustrated in the previous section. The evidence, unfortunately, supports the claim for this being a principal gap and flaw in PP practice.

Where is the "public" in public participation? This state of affairs is a remarkable instance of allowing euphemism to substitute for analytical thinking, of replacing common sense knowledge with an easy operational compromise. There needs to be acknowledgement, at least, of this major difference between what we claim to be doing and what is actually going on. Our fiduciary responsibility to the body politic and all publics and stakeholders requires no less.

² While the vast majority of evidence supports the position here, we note some contrary evidence. For an analysis of the representativeness of participants in hearings for three different U.S. Forest Service projects, see Gundry and Heberlein (1984). Only one of the projects involved a controversial issue.

We suggest that major consequences flow from this omission and unacknowledged substitution, helping to undermine the legitimacy of PP/SI processes even as PP/SI processes are justified by professionals as necessary to rebuild legitimacy of decision making processes in society through agency action.

V. Impact of Narrow PP Definitions on PP Processes

The interactions (effects)³ of these narrow PP definitions on PP processes are many and pervasive. Impacts are felt internally in the implementing agencies, and externally in the reaction of public participants to the outcomes (or lack of such). The likely principal causes include centralized siting processes (Kraft 1988), the adversarial, legalistic PP framework (Forcade 1984), and the lack of Congressional guidance to agencies as to how PP is to be factored into agency decision making, resulting in administrative marginality for PP (Rosenbaum 1983).

Without a specified way to use the public inputs sought in decision making, there is often no evidence that public input has made any difference to the outcomes, even when their input may have been seriously considered. With no guidelines either from Congress or internally on what to do with public inputs, agencies use their enormous administrative discretion to conduct the balancing of contradictory or disparate inputs in an *ad hoc* manner, or not at all. Internal technical experts may resent the rough-and-tumble of adversarial PP processes and assist in burying the "extraneous" information which PP now produces. Justifying tradeoffs of differing values is always difficult, and melding them together into an integrated whole is seldom accomplished under these circumstances.

The net results are often gridlock and its familiar litany. Oftentimes adversaries are encouraged to become more entrenched (O'Hare et al 1983), excluded external stakeholders find ways to challenge or block the outcome, unrecognized internal stakeholders may have incentives to discredit or discard the public input, the agency's authority is further delegitimized, distrust is amplified, and cooperation and negotiation among stakeholders is discouraged. In addition, the standard PP process provides little opportunity for stakeholders to develop ownership of the problem while obscuring or overlooking the inter-stakeholder discussions and tradeoffs that may be needed for legitimated decisions.

The narrow definitions of PP are self-reinforcing and dysfunctional. By defining "public" to mean primarily people outside of the agency or proponent group that is administratively responsible for some mission or project, the basic approach has been framed as a two-party interchange between non-expert outsiders and insiders with both decision power and expertise. Non-expert outsiders have incentive to attack and discredit the inside experts, and vice versa. It thus becomes very difficult to develop common cause or shared concern among internal and external stakeholders.

Furthermore, the quasi-judicial, adversarial PP frameworks thus facilitate and motivate all parties to do battle. The discouraging results have convinced some PP professionals that PP may not make a positive contribution to decision making at all (Kraft 1988, Bord 1988, Rosenbaum 1983), at least not PP ventures in this chilly, hostile and adverse institutional context.

³ We acknowledge that the relationship between narrow PP definitions and constrained institutional arrangements is unclear. For instance, which came first? It is not established which is cause and which is effect or if both result from some other common cause.

While Congress probably did not intend such outcomes from its encouragement for PP, some suggest that the limited Congressional view of PP is a result of both Congressional ambivalence about PP and symbolic interest rather than basic support. Congress did not consider the PP element carefully (Kraft 1988 & Rosenbaum 1983). Unanticipated effects include the widespread use by activists of NEPA as "a ticket to sue." Certainly the mandated schedules and deadlines included in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act and its amendments have adversely affected many PP initiatives which die in the regular rounds of budget cuts and regrouping to meet deadlines.

The new Congressional majority may well be negative towards ongoing pro-active PP efforts, perhaps restricting PP officially as well as implicitly through budget cuts, just as did the Reagan initiatives of the early 1980s. Reducing agency funding had the effect then of relegating PP to the margins of administrative attention and shifting the burden of PP to states (Rosenbaum 1983).

VI. Changes Underway in the Transition to Stakeholder Involvement

Now we survey the new terrain of SI. We review some early and current examples of PP projects which employ(ed) broader stakeholder focus, the advantages and disadvantages of SI, some trends toward SI, and problems of the transition.

For at least a decade, various features of broader SI have been discussed (Wiltshire 1986, CF Handbook 1983), employed in ethnographic analysis (Gerlach 1988), or utilized in real-world PP efforts (Lynn 1987). The Tennessee MRS attempted siting in 1985, for instance, successfully utilized internal experts to bridge the expert-citizen gap in reaching consensus decisions on safety and mitigation conditions (Peelle 1987, 1990). Stakeholder analysis has long been a regular feature of political science analysis as seen in a modern example, e.g., Feldman et al (1994).

A. Examples of a more inclusive approach

Starting in the early 1980s, the Bonneville Power Administration undertook major pro-active efforts to involve its many stakeholders (environmental activists, power users, industrial customers, bond holders, state and local governments, and internal agency staff) in discussions and negotiations which led to successful out-of-court resolution of two highly contentious problems in northwest power management (Johnson 1993, 1994).

Demand side and other collaboratives in non-siting PP efforts have included activists, regulators, and industry representatives working together to reach agreement in policy and other contentious matters. These efforts have been urged by PUCs and legitimated by the courts (Raab & Schweitzer 1992; Schweitzer et al 1993).

SI in DOE cleanup efforts is illustrated by the technology development efforts involving contaminant plumes. In an innovative approach, internal technical and agency personnel, regulators and activists were all involved at the beginning of technology development (Peterson and McCabe 1994).

Voluntary siting & co-management partnerships have been quite successful in two Canadian sitings of hazardous waste facilities and are the substance of other siting attempts in both the U.S. and Canada (Armour 1990, Richards 1993, Rabe et al 1994). These efforts involve a joint problem solving approach, shared authority for decisions, and local host area residents having the final

say (veto power) on the proposed project. For various reasons, voluntary siting has not worked well in the U.S (Peelle 1994).

B. Advantages and disadvantages of SI

A principal advantage of SI is that by recognizing the key role of internal stakeholders and including them in discussions and interactions with other stakeholders, the groundwork is laid for a more problem-solving rather than adversarial approach to agency decision making. Muting the hard and formal edges in current PP processes between expert-insiders and non-expert outsiders is an important move toward less adversarial and hence possibly more solution-oriented SI. More open and more frequent informal exchanges are possible between experts and citizens. **Mutual education** of stakeholders becomes the focus, rather than the one-way "education" of outside stakeholders.

A second major advantage of SI is that by explicitly recognizing many stakeholders not normally included in PP interactions (industry, regulators, internal agency, technical experts), the arena is altered from a two-party to a multi-party system. Not only is this restructuring a major step in adjusting the decision context toward reality, it also enables vital inter-stakeholder interchange and exploration, laying the basis for balancing and negotiating interests and possible consensus. These are the basic validating components for the trade-offs in a final decision.

In a less adversarial process, true consultation with external and internal stakeholders can be ventured. As is being done in some SI activities, each group is acknowledged and its participation legitimized, offering promise of a more cooperative, shared concerns process. Both these changes allow more flexible, innovative public participation.

The disadvantages of SI are the changes required and difficulties encountered in emplacing and implementing it in the institutional context. Because of the increased number and type of participants, SI is necessarily more complex. Managing such processes requires different skills than most agency managers now possess. SI also requires more expert time to implement and may be more open-ended, requiring more flexibility. Being responsive to a wider array of stakeholders also expands the envelope of uncertainty for agency managers - directly contradicting their needs for decision predictability and closure. In this transition period, we may continue to see PP efforts that are incomplete in their utilization of SI approaches, as well as throwbacks to old PP strategies.

C. Stakeholder involvement trends

We can expect more laws designed to foster or require developer - stakeholder interaction (English et al 1993), such as solid waste siting laws in Wisconsin and Illinois, and LLW siting laws. Voluntary siting approaches have been adopted in several compacts/states such as Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, Maine, and Michigan for LLRW. It is not yet clear, however, that these voluntary siting efforts recognize the full complexity of making voluntary siting work in the U.S.

The increasing use of collaboratives among large groups of stakeholders can be anticipated, building upon more than a dozen such efforts between utilities, regulators and stakeholders in several states as well as the housing mortgage insurers efforts in the federal government (Farhar and Eckert 1993).

All of these efforts, however, while they focus upon including a larger variety of stakeholders in deliberations, do not include more representative publics. They continue to rely upon organized activists in environmental, consumer or local grassroots organizations as surrogates for the larger, inactive public(s).

D. Problems in the transition

With all this ferment and activity in SI, it would be easy to herald the new approach and anticipate better solutions to many of PP's long-standing and near intractable problems. But despite many hopeful signs and the new language, most of the same old PP problems remain.

For instance, SI will be just as vulnerable to interruptions, budget cutting, and lack of priority among agency managers and state and national legislatures. Agencies still possess enormous discretionary authority over internal decision making, especially in view of legislative silence on PP priority. After decades of contentious and skeptical participation, old ways of interacting must be overcome before decreased adversarial interactions in SI become a reality. We are still confronted by the basic problem of defining the public(s), specifying **who decides** who is the public, and determining if representatives truly are representative (Wolfe 1991). Few mechanisms exist for expert-lay dialogue. Technical experts may require assistance and retraining before they can participate usefully in dialogue with citizens. And finally, can PP professionals adapt to these new ways of conceptualizing publics and operating in a broader SI context?

New problems presented by SI include how to arrange for input, interaction and accommodation among larger numbers of stakeholder groups. Serious SI will require confronting how to facilitate three-way and multiple interactions among stake-holders. Reaching accommodation among larger stakeholder groups is not necessarily easier. Stakes differ significantly among broad categories of stakeholders (O'Hare et al 1983), and each stands to lose significantly if his/her interests are not fairly considered in a SI process. For instance, the project manager may risk his/her career, local residents risk health and safety, professional stakeholders (activist groups) may risk organizational survival and growth, technical experts face censure from employers and their professional organizations if they focus upon involvement with non-experts, and local governments may risk their economic as well as political viability.

Questions of equity among the larger stakeholder group emerge more pointedly than they do in PP. There are at least two types of equity concerns. For instance, some stakeholders are paid to participate (project managers, technical experts, industry reps) while others are not (local residents, most environmental group members). Second, should the "stakes" of some stakeholders be counted as weighing more in the group deliberations than others? Local residents may claim multiple interests as employees, residents, parents, land-owners, while non-resident environmentalists claim to speak for the environment and future generations.

The legacy of distrust persists and may be exacerbated with more stakeholders unless skillfully managed and facilitated through this unmapped terrain. How are tradeoffs and balancing to be decided when stakeholder groups do not reach accommodation? All these new problems as well as the old PP problems need development, testing, and evaluation by PP professionals and others.

Few methods for involving non-organized stakeholders exist, with the possible exception of the citizens jury (Crosby et al 1986, Jefferson Center 1994, Tonn

& Brown 1995). While well developed after 20 years of refinement in public policy venues, the jury has not actually been used for waste management, natural resource, or siting problems. In another example, random number tables and standard social science methodologies were employed to contact the unorganized, scattered residents in "linear communities" affected by SAC low-flying routes (Schweitzer et al 1993). Public opinion polling, focus groups, stratified sampling, computer/TV connections, selected incentives and other innovative combinations of techniques could be employed in inventing, developing, and testing the needed approaches. More priority should be given to efforts for involvement of inactive publics in order to address this hiatus in PP and SI.

Some problems involving stakeholders may be **intractable** regardless of what process is employed. Few guidelines exist.

VII. Conclusions and Observations

Our review of the PP terrain leads us to some conclusions about PP and its inadequacies, as well as some observations about the evolving transition to SI. Before moving to conclusions, we briefly sketch the cultural and institutional context within which agency PP and SI efforts take place.

A. The broader context for PP and SI in agency decision making

Our focus upon agency and participant-level involvement in agency decision making has assumed the existing context for these activities: a complex interaction among many structural, institutional and cultural characteristics of American society. These factors are possible causal or contributing factors for the difficulties with PP in administrative decision making. Much of this is incomprehensible to non-Americans because of this context which we acknowledge briefly.

Possible contributing factors for PP difficulties and failure include three major types: structural, cultural, and organizational factors. Our discussion essentially began with the organizational factors below, but has assumed the contextual factors given under structural and cultural as follows:

- structural** - decentralized U.S. decision making structure
 - ready public access to the courts which have taken a major role in defining administrative implementation of environmental policy
 - a widening gap between experts & citizens
 - inadequate tradeoff-balancing mechanisms (O'Hare et al 1983)
- cultural** - post-industrial paradigm shift
 - adversarial litigious U.S. culture
 - changing relationships between government and the governed as seen in the decline of deference and withdrawal of consent of the governed (Laird 1989)
 - impatience with complexity, favoring simple criteria and simple "solutions"
 - waning of compromise in political culture [not allowing search for compromise & pragmatic solutions (Ronge 1982)]
- organizational** - agencies favor formal, legalistic decision modes over consensual, informal modes
 - reluctance of managing bureaucracies to share power with citizens or other outsiders

While the interaction between and precise roles of each of the above are not well defined, we expect that few will be absent from whatever combination of factors is found to be central to our current dilemma.

B. Conclusions and Observations

PP as generally practiced has three major flaws: a) not including a broad enough array of stakeholders in the process to enable viable decisions, b) not enabling continuing interaction **among** stakeholders, and c) using nonrepresentative publics, e.g., organized activists as surrogates for "the public."

It would appear that the old narrow PP definitions and conceptualizations are in part responsible for the meager results of PP processes in controversial areas. Within the adversarial, legalistic, formal PP structures set up by agencies, controversy and hardening of positions were nearly inevitable results. In a sense, PP fits the old reactive, top-down, technocratically driven, damage control mode of decide-announce-defend strategies.

During the transition now underway, there is a great deal of talk about SI and some real movement. Doing more than merely adopting the "stakeholder" labels, however, requires hard work, since new mechanisms need to be invented and tested and old ones need refinement. The outcome of this transition is uncertain because most of the old PP problems (defining the public and deciding who can speak for them) remain while some new ones unique to SI now emerge.

SI addresses **two** of the three major PP flaws listed in our conclusions (not including a wide enough array of stakeholders and not encouraging continuing interaction among them to enable viable decision making). But SI still leaves the other major PP flaw untouched - that of utilizing non-representative publics (activists) in a manner potentially unresponsive to the needs of the major unrepresented, unorganized publics. Both PP and SI consider stakeholders who are **interested** and **active**. We need now to move to more inclusive, pro-active methods to also include those who are inactive but **affected**.

It is probably significant that most of the documented PP "successes" contain important features of SI. They are signposts on the path to better decision making, as well as incentives in the transition.

The one- or two-way communication characterizing PP is replaced in SI by three-way or multi-directional communication and dialogue. Inter-stakeholder dialogue changes the focus from the "us vs." "them" arrangements to a multi-centered information exchange.

In a restructured arena involving both internal and external stakeholders, SI offers the promise of a less adversarial, more inclusive process in which many stakeholders engage in mutual education through dialogue. Out of this personal knowledge may emerge the greater understanding and shared concerns with the prospect of negotiation, and actual problem solving.

While direct democracy vs. representative democracy is a valid issue in the body politic, PP professionals should be wary of our contributions to further delegitimizing representative government and elected representatives through continued facile acceptance of unelected activists as fully representative of the unorganized public(s). We need to remember that the public is more than activists or public interest groups and their lobbyists. More care should be exercised in our conceptualization of publics and their legitimate representatives.

Actually including non-organized publics directly will be the most difficult task. Making this change and moving from the standard operating practice of PP in which organized activists are accepted as surrogates for the general

public will require making both institutional and attitudinal changes among all the current actors in PP as well as PP practitioners. Some activists will likely object to losing their favored access in agency SI processes if we succeed in inventing ways to actually involve more representative publics.

New methods for accomplishing more inclusive SI need development and testing. We can build on what we already know while actively testing mechanisms such as the citizens jury and trying innovative combinations with computer and TV access etc. in conjunction with accepted social science techniques such as random and stratified sampling, focus groups, opinion polling, and others.

We still have a long way to go to achieve **real participation** by representative, affected publics in decisions that affect them. Our institutional arrangements for decision making are still far from "embracing the great plurality of public and private interests" that are affected (Rosenbaum 1983).

But SI is a step in the right direction. Stakeholder involvement represents a considerable institutional advance over two-party adversarial PP processes. It remains to be seen whether we can fulfill its promise of better, more legitimated, durable decisions.

Table 1

DEFINITIONS OF "STAKEHOLDER"

1. Publics, well or poorly organized, who are affected by public policy. These publics are considered stakeholders even when they are not aware of their status as such (Redelfs and Stanke 1988, p. 65)
2. A population that would likely exert an influence on the proposed action or be affected by it (Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for SIA, Mar. 1992, p.20)
3. Parties-at-interest in the impact situation (such as proponents, opponents and regulators) (Wolf 1988, p. 21).
4. Affected parties whose interests are at stake because of a proposed action (Finsterbusch 1980. p. 71).
5. Parties-at-interest are persons or groups impacted by the action who may either gain or lose, depending on the nature of the impact (Porter et al. 1980, p. 55)
6. Stakeholders are groups-at-interest that perceive themselves to be affected, either positively or negatively, by energy policies, programs or technologies (Farhar 1990, p. 3; Farhar 1985, p. 329). Affected groups-at-interest involved in public policy debates (attentive publics) and affected publics not involved in public debates (inattentive publics) are both stakeholders (Farhar 1990, pp.3,8; Willeke 1981, p. 305).
7. The variety of publics and groups whose interests are or will be affected by the outcome of some proposed action or change in situation (Peelle and Reed 1991, p. 14).
8. Organizations with a vested interest, either directly or indirectly, in energy efficiency and renewables that could be instrumental in facilitating or impeding successful implementation of the program (U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Conservation and Renewable Energy, July 1992, p. A.7).
9. Parties in the private or public sectors who may be affected by the technology and are involved in the technology assessment process through interviews, workshops, hearings, surveys, conferences, or other techniques (Hansen 1981, p. 25).
10. People who might be directly and adversely affected by proposed projects (Millard 1983, p. 22).

11. Groups who are currently subject or will be subject in the future to impact from a project or policy (Little and Krannich 1988, p. 25).
12. Groups who are immediately affected by a project or policy, as well as groups who will be impacted in the future (Francis 1975, p. 385.)
13. Parties/constituents who are interested and/or affected by DOE decisions (DOE 1991, pp. 2.2, 3.3).
14. Organizational units in society, such as education, religious, labor, cultural and political, that may be directly or indirectly affected by a technology (Crane and Friedman 1985, p. 3.7).
15. Organized social groups who aim for different policy goals and possess a plurality of values (Peters 1986, p. 154).
16. Identifiable but not necessarily socially connected groups with similar behavioral patterns relative to a proposed action (Willeke 1981, p. 305).

Source: William Babiuch and Barbara Farhar, 1994. **Stakeholder Analysis Methodologies Resource Book**, Appendix A, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Golden, Colorado.

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