

Challenges in the Public Participation and the Decision Making Process

Azizan Marzuki

Universiti Sains Malaysia; Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

e-mail: chik72@usm.my

ABSTRACT The implementation of the public participation process is important for the democratisation of social values and better planning and fulfilment of public needs. The public participation process, however, is sometimes threatened by bureaucratic constraints caused by the lack of a systematic approach and an inadequate public administration system, which contribute to the public exclusion from the process. The exclusion is also caused by the lack of knowledge about public participation and low levels of education amongst the public. With this in view, this paper reviewed four approaches to public participation in four countries: Denmark, the Philippines, Canada and the United Kingdom. The dimensions of public participation developed by Uphoff and Cohen were then used for data analysis, interpretation and conclusions drawn by discussing the grounds for public inclusion and exclusion from the decision-making process.

Key words: public participation, decision-making process, approaches, case studies.

1. Introduction

The implementation of the public participation process is important for the democratisation of social values and better planning and fulfilment of public needs. It is also useful for educating the public especially regarding government development programmes. This will potentially influence social or personal changes amongst community members, which can then be used to incorporate diverse public interests and thus accord people with the right to participate in decisions that will affect their lives.

By participating in the decision making process, the public will realize the importance of their involvement in deciding their future (Chadwick, 1971). According to Slocum and Thomas-Slyter (1995), public participation is a means to convey individual and the society's personal interests and concerns with regard to the development plans, given that these planning activities would consequently affect the public generally and certain groups specifically. According to Beierle (1998, p. ii), public participation exists in the form of '...traditional participatory [for example]

public hearings, notice and comment procedures [as well as] advisory committees. [In addition, public participation includes] regulatory negotiations, mediations and citizen juries'. Other than serving as a means of educating people and enhancing their awareness, public participation is also vital in preparing an efficiently better planning framework as a result of better understanding of stakeholders' demands and needs which thus leads to effective resource planning and management. Interestingly, the act of participating in structuring the development plan enables the citizens to minimise political and administration problems while promoting transparency within the professionals' environment (Lukensmeyer, Goldman & Stern, 2011), which in turn will address perceptions of inequality of power.

To a greater extent, public participation stimulates information exchange between all the proposed development's stakeholders (the public, government and non-government organizations) which will further enhance the mutual understanding and relationship between the stakeholders and resulting in the government and the proposed development enjoying instilled support (Glass, 1979; Cavric, 2011).

From the public's perspective, the act of inviting to engage in the decision making process is considered as a sign of acceptance by the government. The public is affected by the related development plan proposal, and is within the public's interest to allow participation in the decision making process from the early stage of related planning procedure as this will encourage citizens' input in the planning process and present the views of the entire community on specific issues to ensure the proposed plan will mirror their aspirations. In a broader sense, appropriate public participation is a key towards sustainable development given that the proposed development will be structured based on the stakeholders' demands and needs, which include the benefits for future generations.

However, at the heart of this matter rests the issue of conditions that might constrain achieving appropriate public participation. It is learned that public participation efficiency and effectiveness might be compromised by the difficulties faced by the public when it comes to understanding the technical reports and the complex planning issues (Jenkins, 1993). This will consequently affect the public's ability to comprehend the decision making process. According to Bramwell and Sharman (1999), effective public participation is difficult to achieve if the residents are not equally represented within or as part of the whole group of stakeholders. Equal representation refers to the stakeholders' knowledge and understanding on the proposed development specifically and knowledge in planning generally.

This study aims to identify how the public are included or excluded in the decision making process by reviewing different approaches of public participation in four countries: Denmark, the Philippines, Canada and the United Kingdom. The discussion covers various aspects that occur with regard to public involvement in the decision making process. The dimensions of public participation developed by Uphoff and Cohen were then used for data analysis and interpretation and conclusions drawn by discussing the grounds of public inclusion and exclusion from the decision making process. Further, this paper highlights the difficulties in implementing

public participation strategy given that the existing public administration systems as well as legal structure are practiced at inappropriate standards.

2. Literature review

Under the environment school of thought, planning enjoys a long tradition which can be principally dated back to the 1960s (Stuart, 1968; Dam, 1969). Literature review pertaining to planning covers a range of specialization areas, but are not limited to, transportation, health care, tourism, education and environment (Blaug, 1967; Jiang & Homsey, 2008; NSW Department of Planning, 2009). Regardless of the vast diversity of planning fields, planning generally is the act of organizing activities within a framework in order to achieve a desired goal. More specifically, the United States Planning Association (Stiftel, 1990:67) defines planning as a ‘comprehensive, coordinated and continuing process...to help public and private decision makers arrive at decisions that promote the common good of society...[in order] to achieve certain objectives’ (Inskeep, 1991:25). Chadwick (1971) viewed the planning process as ‘a process of human thought and action based upon that thought-in point of fact, fore thought, thought for the future - nothing more or less than this.., which is a very general human activity’.

It is publicly known that individuals affected by any development plan have the power, to a certain limit, to exercise their rights in terms of opinions and needs. WHO (2002) argued that these opinions and needs have to be taken into consideration in the decision making process if proven appropriate. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parcelled out. According to Arnstein (1969) citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society (Arnstein, 1969).

It is important to realize that although public participation would only be allowed to a certain extent, an involvement can only be considered appropriate when the public is allowed to participate actively in the planning process (Litchfield, 1996). Litchfield’s (1996) argument is further supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002) who envisaged public participation as ‘a process by which people are enabled to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them, in making decisions about factors that affect their lives, in formulating and implementing policies, in planning, developing and delivering services and in taking action to achieve change’.

It is highlighted that the main purpose of public participation is to offer the public an opportunity to participate in the decision making process of related development planning. Here, related development planning refers to a stakeholder engagement

with any development plan that might affect physically, mentally or both. However, the success of the process depends on how far the public is allowed to be involved (Hashim, 1986; Lukic, 2011). It is viewed that the proposed development's stakeholders were not accessible to the same rights, meaning that the power of involvement was not equally bequeathed. This negates the purpose and goal of public participation and could potentially create resentment among the non-consulted and therefore, marginalized stakeholders. As Litchfield (1996) suggested, a good participation process needs to be effective, which means the public needs to participate at various stages of planning and development. Unfortunately, Litchfield's (1996) argument seems too difficult to be implemented, as many constraints could hinder the public from the participation process.

Regarding to whether the incorporation of citizens' say in administrative decision making will lead to a more efficient and effective provision of agency's services, the few efforts to analyze the participation-performance nexus offer mixed evidence and have been confined to individual case studies (Kathlene & Martin, 1991; Landre & Knuth, 1993; Moynihan, 2003) or compilation of case studies (Beierle & Cayford, 2002; Thomas, 1990, 1995). Scholars widely recognize that there are administrative costs associated with public participation (Ebdon & Franklin, 2006; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Robbins, Simonsen & Feldman, 2008; Thomas, 1995). Participation is time consuming and has the potential to slow down decision making since the public needs to be informed, and even educated first, in order to meaningfully participate in administrative processes. According to Irvin and Stansbury (2004) "the per-decision cost of citizen participation groups is arguably more expensive than the decision making done by a single administrator" with the appropriate expertise and experience. There are concerns about the loss of control over the process (Kweit & Kweit, 1984; Moynihan, 2003) and also that most actively involved citizens might represent private interests that are very different than the broader public interests (Ebdon & Franklin, 2004; Heikkila & Issett, 2007; Landre & Knuth, 1993; Robbins, Simonsen & Feldman, 2008).

Woodley (1999:302) also documented a negative impact of an inappropriate and unequal public participation involvement due to prioritization of power of involvement to stakeholders with a particular interest. Plainly stated, the power of involvement was limitedly enabled to the remaining stakeholders, which led to local community members' dissatisfaction towards a proposed development which resulted in failure to achieve the local community's support.

Interestingly, public participation in the decision making process in Yogyakarta, Indonesia is literally non-existent. A study done by Timothy (1999) reported a negative feedback from the local community with regards to their rights to be involved in public participation where it is claimed that public involvement was neither practiced nor implemented, in any official development plans in Yogyakarta. Also and more importantly, the local community had not been clearly informed of their rights to public participation (see also Keogh, 1990). Consequently, the local community had not participated in the decision making process of any proposed developments and the absolute power to decide was handed to the government. However, from

the government point of view, it was asserted that although it was within their knowledge with regards to public participation rights, the local community chose not to pay any attention as they were not keen to be involved (see also Murphy, 1988). Regardless, it was highlighted that the government was not anticipating any public participation from the local community for the following reasons, namely [1] the local community's lack of knowledge and understanding in public participation generally and in the decision making process specifically, [2] insufficient resources in terms of managing staff and information and [3] limited budget allocations (Timothy, 1999).

Another case in the tourism industry from Mexico showed that 'the residents feel excluded since such efforts (involvement in tourism businesses) require substantial foreign investment which eliminates them from active participation in the industry' (Sautter & Leisen, 1999:323-324) (see also Tosun & Timothy, 2001). Local residents were eliminated from tourism businesses because of the local government's priority to attract foreign investments. Although the discussions above show local governments in Indonesia and Mexico have established mechanisms for public participation, both cases also revealed that local residents were indirectly eliminated from being fully involved in the participation process due to local government restrictions. In fact, in many developing countries, legal structures do not encourage local residents to participate in local affairs (Hashim, 1986; Mohd Saad, 1998; Akama, 2002).

Studies from India and Turkey indicated that their legal structures have placed a barrier between the resident and the local authority (Tosun, 1998). In fact, the situation in Belize, Brazil is even worse since the stakeholders have no access at all to the consultation process (Few, 2000). Tosun (1998) found that the centralised administration system failed to prioritise local residents' participation in development planning in Turkey. According to Cuthill (2002:87), this problem should not exist if the administrators understand that 'the aim (of public participation) is not to replace one 'power' with another 'power'; rather...to develop collaborative processes based on trust, cooperation and respect between citizens and local government'.

According to another perspective, public participation could also lead to better policy and implementation decisions and can thus be associated with a greater attainment of public programs' goals (Beierle & Cayford, 2002; Fagotto & Fung, 2009; Fung, 2004; Roberts, 1997; Sirianni, 2009; Stivers, 1990). Moynihan (2003) links participation benefits to the performance of public programs: "Public input can provide information that helps managers improve public efficiency—either allocative efficiency through better resource allocation choices or managerial efficiency through information that leads to improvement of the process of public service provision." Roberts (1997) also associates public involvement in agency decision making with a specific managerial style called "generative approach." An important aspect of her argument is that managers can enhance efficiency and effectiveness, when they promote "learning process that develops people's capacity to create new solutions," and "when people are invited to help craft policy and set organizational direction" (1997).

Neshkova et al. (2012) specifically, sought to understand if citizen input can improve the performance of public programs. The evidence indicated that public participation can, in fact, be associated with enhanced organizational performance. Although there are admittedly administrative costs associated with participation, as shown by prior research, results revealed that on average, greater citizen engagement is strongly and significantly related to better performance of public agencies. This study also revealed the inclusion of citizens not only contributes to increased knowledge and understanding on the part of citizens toward government affairs, but also has broader social value related to the performance of public programs. Furthermore their findings imply that public agencies can become more efficient and effective by opening their decision-making processes to the public and taking advantage of the contextual knowledge and practical advice it has to offer. By incorporating citizen participation into the usual business of government, public managers better serve the main objectives of their agencies. Finally, this result demonstrates that participation has practical value and endorses the long-standing efforts of academicians and practitioners to ensure that those affected by government policies can meaningfully participate in the formulation and implementation of these policies.

Although government administrators, officials, and community leaders have long recognized the value of public participation for a variety of purposes, processes, and decisions (Bryson et al., 2013; Yang & Pandey, 2011) and it is undoubted that local community involvement in the decision making process will enhance the outcome of the framework of a proposed development plan, they frequently do not have a good understanding of how to design participation processes to achieve desirable outcomes. Therefore this paper highlights the difficulties in implementing public participation strategy given that the existing public administration systems as well as legal structure are practiced at inappropriate standards. In an ideal situation, a local community is placed under the protection of an appropriate legislation system which gives guidance through the decision making process. Legislation should, in fact, encourage local residents' participation in the decision-making process and not place limitations nor cater only for certain groups or individuals. At a higher level, issues are raised with regards to who is to be blamed and held responsible for educating the local community about public participation and their rights to get involved in the decision making process. As an alternative, cooperation between the government and non-government organisations should be encouraged. Even if difficulties exist, this does not mean that the public participation process should be terminated or at the very least limited, because when local residents fail to participate they may face real problems of exploitation by investors or even by the government itself.

3. Research approach

This study was motivated by Yin's (1994) case study approach and pays attention specifically on 'how' and 'when' questions, in terms of the way it is being posed to identify contemporary phenomenon within real life context. For the purpose of this research, public participation cases in four different countries were analyzed to study the decision making process practiced and to examine the extent of its im-

plementation. In line with the focus of this paper, an in-depth understanding and knowledge on the decision making process were obtained by setting certain criteria on the selected case studies. Accordingly, the selections of the case studies were based on the following four disciplines, namely [1] health, [2] housing planning, [3] urban and regional planning and [4] Local Agenda 21. Quite apart from the disciplines, the case studies selections were based on the following criteria, namely [1] each case has applied public participation in the decision making process and [2] the public has been provided with opportunities to participate to a certain extent in the planning process. The analysis of participation processes was based on three aspects of [1] what, [2] who and [3] how. The analysis has been further elaborated according to definitions and participation dimensions developed by Uphoff and Cohen (1977) and Uphoff (1981), which alluded to [1] decision-making: public participation and involvement that address aspects in problems' identification, activities' procedures and process as well as resources' planning and management, [2] implementation: refers to the local community's contributions in the forms of labour, money, resources, materials as well as time spent on management process and/ or take part in activities that they have agreed upon, [3] benefits: refers to benefits which might be enjoyed either socially, politically and/or economically, are distributed equally and fairly among members of the public participation programme and [4] evaluation: where there is a growing consensus that after an activity has been identified and implemented by the people, they should have the right to evaluate their achievements.

4. Case studies in the public participation process

Four case studies in public participation from four different countries were used to analyse how public participation in the decision-making process were practised and what the constraints arose from the process. In order to have a wider view of the decision-making process, the selection of the case studies were based on several disciplines; health, housing planning, urban and regional planning and Local Agenda 21. The following are the case studies:

1. Calgary, Canada: Calgary Regional Health Authority (CRHA) framework of public participation (Maloff, Bilan & Thurston, 2000).
2. Manila, Philippines: The Metro Philippines marginal settlements housing project in Manila (Viloria, 1992).
3. Denmark: Public participation on the process of regional and municipal planning in Denmark (Kornov, 1997).
4. Leicester, UK: Developing Local Agenda 21 at Leicester City (Roberts, 2000; Wild & Marshall, 1999).

4.1. Public Participation in the Calgary Regional Health Authority, Canada

In the 1990s, participation became internationally a key part of the discourse in the health sector (Thurston et al., 2005). More recently, in Canada, health sector reforms

focused on acute care have taken place under the banner of increasing public input. Similarly, Church et al. [32] identified the need for more research on the many ways that citizens can influence decision-making in the health sector.

In the case of Calgary, Canada Maloff et al. (2000) used the term public participation initiatives to refer to the whole set of activities and processes, and public participation techniques to refer to the methods chosen to engage people. They viewed participation as a number of processes (e.g., setting up the management group, choosing the participants) that may be involved in any initiative and any technique. They argued that for evaluation research on public participation to build generalizable claims, some consistency in theoretical framework is needed. A framework that encourages clear articulation of an initiative would help describe its components, specify the public participation techniques (e.g., advisory councils, public forums, citizen juries, partnerships), the resources used, the objectives pursued, as well as the target of change or desired outcomes, and the environment in which that target is situated. Research based on this framework would make integration of findings more possible. The research reported here used grounded theory to develop a theoretical framework for understanding public participation in the context of regionalized health governance.

Their research project investigating public participation in health policy development was conducted from 2000 to 2003. The overall research design followed the grounded theory tradition and involved case studies of five public participation initiatives in the Calgary Health Region² and a survey of community agencies. The case studies selected for the project vary on a number of characteristics including the population participating, how and when the initiative began, and the mandate of the initiative.

The Calgary Regional Health Authority (CRHA) covers an urban and rural population of approximately 888,000. The CRHA serves the purposes of [1] promoting health to the population and ensuring health protection, [2] deciding on prioritization in health services provision as well as providing an adequately proper accessibility to quality health services and [3] promoting the effectiveness and swiftness of the health services provision in terms of addressing the local community's demands and needs. In order to perform and to accomplish the abovementioned requirements, the public participation process was conducted based on the International Association of Participation's (IAP) (2003) model of public participation matrix. The participation process covers four areas of CRHA, which are [1] function and responsibility, [2] areas of participation, [3] potential participants' identification and [4] the level of participation. The description of the CRHA public participation framework is shown in Table 1. Public participation approach employed by CHRA allows the public to participate in four stages excluding the delegation phase (see Table 1).

The government's initiated public participation process exists in the form of bottom-up process where public and stakeholders exchange information through face-to-face interactions such as meetings and workshops. Whilst the public involvement is allowed, it is still within the CHRA stakeholders' authority and power to exercise

the extent of public involvement. It is learned that individuals that are affected by the proposed plan are offered the privilege of participating in the management and implementation committee. In addition, it is within the stakeholders' justification to dictate the decision-making process at certain stages of the participation matrix. More importantly, the public holds no rights when it comes to implementing the decision-making process. In short, observations on the CHRA public participation process shows that there are differences in public involvement accessibility between the public, the affected individuals and the CHRA officials. It is important to emphasize that this by no means indicate a 'favouritism propensity' issue; on the other hand, the difference in power and authority are essential for management efficiency (Maloff et al., 2000). By adding a degree of limitation to accessibility in public involvement, has enabled the CHRA officials to pay attention on the pressing needs of the affected individuals. This will thus help in addressing the concerns strategically which in return, is in line with the aims of achieving a good final decision.

Table 1
Levels of involvement at CRHA participation process

Level	Objective
<u>1.Information</u> Public ← CRHA	Public is informed about the issue and process; misconceptions are clarified; communication of decision is made.
<u>2.Input</u> Public → CRHA	Public's perceptions, opinions, and advice are sought and may be used in decision-making. Decision-making is retained by the CRHA.
<u>3.Consultation</u> Public ↔ CRHA	Public's informed perceptions, opinions, and advice are sought and may be used in decision-making regarding the issue. Consultation is an interactive exchange. Decision-making is retained by the CRHA.
<u>4.Partnership</u> Public ↔ CRHA	Public participates in a partnership process. Decision-making is joined between the CRHA and the public.
<u>5.Delegation</u> CRHA → Public	Decision-making is delegated to the public.

Source: Maloff et al., (2000:70).

4.2. Public Participation in the Metro Philippines Housing Project

The National Housing Authority and Quezon City Government jointly controlled the Metro Philippines project with the intention of devising and improving an integrated and comprehensive approach of developing marginal settlements. Given that the public has shown notable consideration and positive enthusiasm during the

proposed project's planning phase, public involvement was thus allowed during the decision-making process through consultations with the government officials. The project report shows that the public's representatives were working closely with the government officials during the evaluation and implementation phases.

Throughout the public participation process, the government officials operated at an in-depth level with the public in formulating and preparing housing and facilities' standards, in addition to be responsible for [1] providing the community with development skills and knowledge, and [2] cultivating attitudes and habits of working with multidisciplinary groups. The Metro Philippines participation process is a bottom-up decision-making one where decisions were made through in-person consultations with local residents. Close observations on the Metro Philippines public participation process reveal the government initiative in encouraging the public to get involved in the decision-making process. Although the level of enthusiasm and eagerness shown by the public signal positive acceptance, public participation faced hindrances in the form of the public's lack of knowledge and education in such process. This situation had developed into a time-consuming learning-and-adapting process, and in accordance with the proposed research interest, to emphasize the possibility of this issue incurring '...insufficient attention to the interaction that [takes place] between [stakeholders] and between different forms of public participation' (O'Fairchealligh, 2010:19).

4.3. Public Participation in the Regional and Municipal Planning in Denmark

Denmark's regional and municipal planning framework emphasizes the significance of public participation where the process should be in accordance to the Denmark Planning Act (Kornov, 1997) (see Table 2). More importantly, public participation as well as the decision making process are under the obligation to not place any agreement that might contradict the planning decisions at the higher level. The process also considers social interests in any physical development where it serves the purpose of '*... [studying] the social operations implied in these acts of delegation and on the use of the concept [in order] to understand the conflicts arising when the intrinsic legitimacy of the public is appropriated*' (Contandriopoulos, 2004:321). Decision-making is therefore under the government's control and the public has no rights to participate in the implementation process. Here, public involvement significance is asserted by the fact that the public has the opportunity to influence any decisions by participating at two levels: first, prior to plan preparations, the public can submit ideas and proposals for the planning work, and second, after the proposed plan is published, the public has another chance to submit their objections and amendments.

Similar to the two previously presented cases, the implementation of the plan falls under the responsibility of the local or regional government. Participation in the planning preparations provides the public with the opportunity to get involved in planning for local areas by contributing their ideas and proposals. Interestingly, the

Danish public participation process differs from the Canadian and the Philippines' public participation process, in that the Danish approach employs a top-down public participation procedure. The Danish public participation approach values its public's rights by applying both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods such as public exhibition, workshops and census survey (submitting proposals, ideas, comments and/or objections).

Table 2
Public participation in the regional and municipal planning in Denmark

The planning process for regional and municipal planning	Public Participation
<p>1. Prior to public participation Solicitation of ideas and proposals, Report on previous planning, Deadline of at least 8 weeks, Informational campaign</p> <p>2. Proposed regional and municipal plan Preparation, Contact with others authorities, County or municipality approves proposal</p> <p>3. Proposal published Deadline for objections of at least 8 weeks, Proposal sent to the Ministry of Environment and other state, county and municipal authorities, Proposal assessed by state authorities; regional plan may be vetoed and municipal plan called in.</p> <p>4. Adoption of plan Processing of comment and objections submitted by the public and authorities, Change (if any), Plan adopted if not vetoed or called in, Negotiations if plan vetoed or called in, If agreement not reached the Minister for Environment will decide.</p> <p>5. Publication of the final plan Publication, Plan sent to relevant authorities</p> <p>6. Administration of plan County council ensures that proposed municipal and local plans are in accordance with regional plan, County or municipal council must act to implement regional plan</p> <p>7. Revision every 4 years</p>	<p>The public have the opportunity to submit ideas and proposals for the planning work.</p> <p>The public can submit objections and proposed amendments.</p>

Source: Kornov (1997:177).

4.4. Public Participation in the Local Agenda 21, Leicester City, UK

Leicester City's Agenda 21, Blueprint for Leicester was launched in October 1994 (Roberts, 2000; Wild & Marshall, 1999). It was a policy collaboration undertaken by three different organisations, namely [1] Leicester City, [2] Environ (an environmental charity) and [3] Leicester Promotions (the council's backing company). Jointly initiated by the local government, non-government organizations and private companies, the public participation process undergoes a census study approach. A

household questionnaire was carefully designed and delivered to every household for data collection. Upon inauguration, the questionnaire survey was published in the local newspaper in order to establish the public participation and the decision making processes as well as conveying the invitation to participate in the survey. This was followed by a random sample basis interview to achieve a cross-section of views from people in Leicester. Two workshops were held to seek opinions and suggestions from community groups and specialist working groups (Table 3). Local groups were also included in the 'visioning' workshop for their views on any changes to Local Agenda 21. In this perspective, the Local Agenda 21 tries to address the '...absence of evaluation [as well as] to involve [the public so that it will] enable deliberation among participants' (EIPP, 2009: 4).

Table 3
Participation method used in Leicester Local Agenda 21

Participation method	Outcomes
'Visioning' workshops-certain types of groups representing sections of the community, whose voice may not be heard as loudly as others, were targeted to take part in facilitated discussions where they could express their vision for Leicester. These included groups of young people, ethnic minorities, women, older people, people with disabilities, workplace groups, low income groups and small business owners.	88 groups were involved. Some of these under-represented groups were easier to reach than others.
'Snapshot' questionnaire-a survey was delivered to every household (112,000 households) and distributed through the Leicester Mercury (local newspaper), asking people about their likes, dislikes and aspirations for Leicester. This ensured that everyone would have the chance to put forward their ideas.	803 questionnaires were returned.
'Neighbourhood' questionnaire-a second questionnaire survey was carried out on a random sample basis in several contrasting neighbourhoods, to gain a more detailed picture of the views of a cross-section of people	748 households were interviewed.
Specialist working groups input-each of the working groups was asked to prepare a set of expert recommendations relating to their own topic area, including: guiding principles, key actions and potential sustainable development indicators.	All eight specialist-working groups (representatives from 29 organisations) made recommendations.
Task forces- the council set up eight internal task forces to examine the scope for its own action.	Each task force made a series of recommendations.

Source: Roberts (2000:16).

In assessing the Leicester case study, although the participation programmes applied various types of approaches for local residents to participate, it is understood that the residents' involvement was limited, since the decision-making is still controlled by the initiating body (Wild & Marshall, 1999). Even though the initiating body admits that final decisions will reflect the outcomes of the participation process, it is unclear how all the views would influence the decision priorities and actions since the public is not involved in the process (Wild & Marshall, 1999). However, the case from UK shows that various participation techniques are needed because of resident attitudes and a low level of awareness.

5. Discussion

The four case studies displayed the implementation of public participation process in areas of health care, settlement development, land-use planning as well as sustainable policy preparation. It is learned that the government role and other appointed organizations have been steadily changing ‘...with increasing emphasis being placed on setting overall direction through policy and planning, on engaging stakeholders and citizens...’ (Smith, 2003:1). Further compounding this issue is the realisation that the public, armed with considerable knowledge and more understanding on the public participation process, may suggest a more comprehensive public involvement strategy. This approach, from the public perspective, is considered essential in directing and planning their future which is supported by Hornbein and King’s (2012:717) argument in that there is ‘...no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society...and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion; the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion’. Neshkova et al.’s (2012) statement also concurs with this approach indicating that participation is associated with knowledge sharing.

Citizens often possess local knowledge and can propose innovative solutions that would lead to better resource allocation decisions (Beierle & Cayford, 2002; Fung, 2004; Moynihan, 2003; Sirianni, 2009; Stivers, 1990), and thus better effectiveness. This approach have also been further supported by some other research suggesting that public participation could lead to better policy and implementation decisions and thus can be associated with a greater attainment of programs’ public goals (Beierle & Cayford, 2002; Fagotto & Fung, 2009; Fung, 2004; Roberts, 1997; Sirianni, 2009; Stivers, 1990).

Analysis of Beierle and Cayford (2002) also showed that recommendations made by citizens can lead to more cost-effective solutions than the alternative courses of action which is supported by Sayce (2013) who mentioned that to improve the quality, legitimacy, and capacity of environmental decisions, public participation has begun to include more direct roles for involvement and dialogue, such as formal comments, public hearings, and citizen suits (National Research Council, 2008). In recent years, the public has also helped to inform a wide range of planning and decision-making processes by participating in stakeholder, also referred to as citizen, advisory groups (McCool & Guthrie, 2001).

All four case studies stated that the purpose of the participation process was to benefit local community and stakeholders, serving the purpose of enhancing ‘... knowledge, skills and abilities relating to the development of public policy, with specific emphasis on the meaningful inclusion of stakeholders and citizens’ (Smith, 2003:1), consistent with Roberts (1997) who also argued that managers can enhance efficiency and effectiveness, when they promote “learning process that develops people’s capacity to create new solutions”. It is also in line with Dahl (1989) and Urbinati and Warren’s (2008) findings which stated the importance of public participation stemmed from the principle that those affected by public policies should have a meaningful and equal opportunity to influence policy outcomes. New gov-

ernance scholars emphasize “the collaborative nature of modern efforts to meet human needs” (Salamon, 2002:vii) and encourage public administrators to engage citizens in a more active manner.

Data collection methods employed in these case studies implicitly highlighted the mutual relationship between the government and public which is supported by Neshkova et al. (2012) who stated that citizen input allows public officials to better understand public priorities and reduce wasteful projects, which in turn leads to better efficiency. Based on data analysis of these cases it was also revealed that the participation process allowed local residents to be involved through various consultation approaches, from household surveys to workshop sessions. With regards to stimulating the public propensity on their involvement rights, the government has initiated several approaches in educating the public, namely [1] the philosophy of participation approach, [2] the partnership approach and [3] the focus group approach.

Nevertheless, government agencies still remain the key institutions to initiate the public participation process except for the case in England, where a non-government organisation and private company banded together with the local council to initiate the participation programme. Against this background, it can be said that the cases studied have conveyed the image of participatory democracy with the understanding that ‘...truly participatory problem solving relies on democratic knowledge, [of which], has been accumulated and interpreted with the involvement of a broad range of people’ (Oliver, 2008:412). The case studies also show that even though a lot has been achieved with regards to the participation processes, further considerations should be given to the problem of residents’ response to the programme. It is learned that the traditional public participation methods such as public hearings, review and comment procedures have long been seen as inappropriate in capturing and enhancing the public involvement. In other words, these approaches ‘...do not achieve genuine participation in planning or other decision, they do not satisfy members of the public that they are being heard [and] they seldom can be said to improve the decisions that agencies and public officials make’ (Innes & Booher, 2004:419).

6. Conclusion

Findings from all case studies show many achievements have been realised in the public participation processes, but some problems may exist in terms of approaches used, administration procedures and residents’ negative attitudes. In fact, government agencies remain the key player for initiating the public participation process, except for the case in UK, where non-government organisations, private companies, and the local council initiated the public participation programme. Inclusionary and exclusionary issues in the participation processes do exist unintentionally, but were attributable to limitations in budget, improper approaches used and lack of awareness amongst local residents and the stakeholders. In short, this suggests that future public participation process should consider a more effective public participation

concept where it ‘...enables the public to express [more freely but within scope], and the decision-maker to take account of, opinions and concerns which may be relevant to those decisions, thereby increasing the accountability and transparency of the decision-making process and contributing to public awareness of [the studied] issues’ (Hartley & Wood, 2005:320). Additionally, technology should be adapted and put in use in the public participation process given that technological development is advancing steadily, yet rapidly (Kingston, Carver, Evans & Turton, 2000).

It was also found that the possibility for a successful participation process is high since the case in the Philippines yielded good results although the majority of participants had comparatively low-level educational background. The case from Denmark, on the other hand, showed the importance of legislative and administration procedures in the urban planning system to ensure that an efficient and effective participation process could be realised. Therefore, the similarities and differences of the participation issues and approaches found in all case studies should at least provide some ideas on the important aspects that can be considered in conducting the public participation process. Further studies as well as analysis on more case studies from different parts of the world are also suggested to provide better range of ideas and approaches in order to generalize the public participation process.

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Azizan Marzuki

Sveučilište Sains Malaysia; Sveučilište Flinders, Adelaide, Australija

e-mail: chik72@usm.my

Sudjelovanje javnosti u donošenju odluka - procesi i izazovi

Sažetak

Implementacija procesa sudjelovanja javnosti u donošenju odluka važna je za demokratizaciju društvenih vrijednosti te bolje planiranje i ostvarenje javnih potreba. Tom procesu, međutim, ponekad prijete birokratske prepreke uzrokovane nesistematskim pristupom i neadekvatnim administrativnim sistemom što pridonosi isključenju javnosti iz procesa. Nedostatak znanja o sudjelovanju javnosti u donošenju odluka te nizak stupanj obrazovanja te iste javnosti dodatno utječe na njeno isključenje. Imajući sve to u vidu, ovaj rad razmatra četiri pristupa problemu građanske participacije u četiri zemlje: Danskoj, Filipinima, Kanadi i Ujedinjenom Kraljevstvu. Dimenzije participacije Uphoffa i Cohena korištene su za analizu i interpretaciju podataka kao i zaključke o razlozima inkluzije i ekskluzije javnosti u procesu donošenja odluka.

Ključne riječi: sudjelovanje javnosti, proces donošenja odluka, pristupi, studije slučaja.