Discover Together:
Attempting to alter understanding
and practices in governments' work with citizens

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There is growing recognition that public organizations need to experience significant change to respond to the environment of the 21ˢᵗ century. While these agencies evoke impressions of stability and rigidity, scholars are increasingly calling for a "new public governance" that focuses the organizational and institutional capacities of government on engaging citizens, collaborating with external partners, and creating measurable public value (Ansel and Torfing 2014; Bryson, Crosby, and Bloomberg 2014; Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh 2011; Osborne 2010). The focus of this volume seeks to draw together some of the best thinking in that movement around the theme of co-production. Leaders in public organizations that administer human service programs in the United States and elsewhere are echoing scholars' call for more responsive and collaborative governance. To better serve those in need, they recognize that public organizations charged with delivering services must begin to work with those outside of government to better address the multiple and intersecting needs of individuals and families (Oftelie 2010).

Thus within both scholarship and practice, there is a desire to move public organizations in the direction of greater collaboration with external actors. Of particular relevance in this shift is the manner in which governments engage with citizens in the production and delivery of public services (Osborne, Radnor, and Nasi 2012). As the various chapters in this collection emphasize, contemporary conceptions of citizen engagement view citizens as co-creating and co-producing, rather than merely informing, service delivery. Much of this literature investigate the circumstances under which individuals and communities act as governance partners, and the various forms that co-production takes (Bovaird 2007; Nabatchi, Sancino, and Sicilia 2017; Osborne and Strokosch 2013).

However, in our review of this literature, there is limited understanding of the processes that accompany such a shift.   How do public organizations move away from a focus on the citizen as a customer and towards a conception of the citizen as co-equal in developing and implementing government programs? What factors enable and constrain this change? What tools of organizational change might be applied to increase the capacity of this rather significant shift in understanding and operational routines to take place?

In this paper, we provide some initial answers to these questions. We ground our analysis in exploration of how differing governance conceptions of citizen roles become solidified in management practices. These existing practices can, in turn, constrain movement towards co-production even when senior managers may evoke principles consistent with new public governance or develop initiatives that aspire to co-production. Our analysis draws upon our experience working to support public organizational redesign in agencies providing publicly-funded human services. We begin by contrasting two differing conceptions of the role of the citizen in public governance. The first, an aspect of New Public Management, views the citizen as a consumer of public services. The second, part of New Public Governance, views the citizen as a co-producer of government programs. We highlight differences between the two conceptions in relation to both citizens involvement in the production of services and how these ideas influence what government actors actually do.

We then use case study data to illustrate the differences and analyze the factors involved in moving from one conception to another. Empirically, we focus on the implementation of an initiative developed by local government in a midwestern state in the U.S. This initiative was designed to promote citizen engagement and collaborate to alleviate poverty concentrated in one community. We show how local government staff involved in implementing the initiative

struggled to shift from practices that viewed the citizen as a customer. Though staff conceptually agreed with the significance of engaging citizens as partners in developing and implementing policy, the existing organizational structures and practices made it difficult to realize this ideal.

Although this study is of a failed case, our analysis also draws attention to a set of tools and resources that may help public organizations move in the direction of greater engagement and citizen responsiveness. While numerous studies investigate the institutional and organizational factors that are associated with responsive governance, only a few explore the tools and practices that might help public organizations build the capacity to do so (Hendriks, 2009; Voorberg, Jilke, Tummers and Bekkers, 2018; Weber and Khademian, 2008). Our analysis suggest that the co-creation of material artifacts, staff development and training opportunities, and presence of external and internal translators may help organizations negotiate a transition from old to new forms of governing. But these practices alone are insufficient to overcome the authority embedded in the existing structures and practices embedded in traditional bureaucratic organizations well practiced in the new public management.

Moving to a New Public Governance

Although public organizations are increasingly emphasizing greater engagement and collaboration, this has not always been the dominant approach. As other chapters in this collection note, three governing paradigms have characterized public administration theory and practice over the last century (Ansell and Torfing 2014; Bryson, Crosby, and Bloomberg 2014; Salamon 2002; Ferlie and Ongaro 2015). Traditional public administration, which developed in the early 1900s, grew as a response to challenges such as industrialization, urbanization, and a concern with market failure. This approach prioritized efficiency, as well the separation of

politics and policy administration. A primary function of public organizations was to implement politically defined goals. New Public Management (NPM) emerged in the 1980s out of a concern that rigid bureaucratic structures and a lack of competition resulted in public services that were ineffective and costly. NPM was characterized by a belief in economic rationality and an emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness. It prioritized entrepreneurial leadership within public organizations. In practice, this approach often involved instituting market-like mechanisms in public settings, empowering public managers, and integrating performance measurement to assess outcomes and progress (Hood, 1995; Ferlie, et al 1996; Osborne and Gaebler 1992). More recently, scholars have begun to articulate the need for a New Public Governance (NPG) to enable more effective responses to the increasingly complexity of policy problems such as inequality and climate change and rise of challenges about the legitimacy of public institutions around the globe. This paradigm views engagement with citizens and collaborative relationships with external stakeholders as integral to public institutions in their roles of developing effective solutions to contemporary problems (Ansell and Gash 2007; Ansell, 2011; Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh, 2012; Torfing, 2016). In addition to valuing efficiency and effectiveness, NPG prioritizes democratic values such as deliberation and dialogue as integral to the work of public organizations (Ansell and Torfing 2014; Nabatchi and Leighninger, 2015). It also provides the opportunity to re-establish legitimacy of the public sector in the face of many global challenges.

The two most recent governing paradigms (NPM and NPG) differ on many dimensions – perhaps most notably, on their conceptions of the role of individuals and communities in the governing process. Under NPM's market-oriented approach, citizens are conceptualized as customers (Osborne and Gaebler 1993). Attending to the preferences and needs of citizens is

seen as one component of a larger strategy of improving governmental performance through introducing competition into the design and delivery of services. Yet, Thomas (2013) distinguishes several noteworthy aspects of such as conception. First, when individuals act as customers, they typically seek a product or service with a personal rather than a community value – such as a driver's license. Second, the responsibility of the public agency is to provide that product or service, sometimes at a cost. Under such a conception, priority is placed on streamlining and centralizing the process through which citizens contact and access services, responding promptly and courteously to customer inquiries, and developing mechanisms for contacting citizens and assessing their needs and preferences. While the preferences of citizens are valued, the public manager clearly retains responsibility for producing the public service, while the citizen is the service recipient (Alford 1998).

NPG's conception of citizens as co-producers positions individuals and communities as partners in both governing and service delivery. Citizens may assume responsibility for initiating, designing, and implementing products and services with both personal and community value (Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers 2014). Viewing the citizen as a partner elevates a different set of priorities. For example, it becomes important to consider the circumstances under which citizens will participate in the co-production – particularly when the product or service does not simply satisfy a personal need (Bovaird, et al. 2015). Put another way, it is not just citizens' needs and preferences related to the product or service that are important, but also their needs and preferences related to the process of producing that product or service (Nabatchi and Amsler, 2014; Osborne, Radnor, and Nasi 2012). In addition, because individuals and communities often may have different preferences than public managers, negotiating across groups with different ideas becomes critical to consider (Fung, 2015).

While many scholars document this conceptual turn, few studies investigate the processes of organizational changes that must occur within public organizations where leaders want to move in this direction. In this chapter, we document an attempt to move a public organization in the direction of greater co-production with individuals and communities outside of government. In our case study, we focus specifically on the tensions that emerged within local government as it sought to work in a more collaborative way with community members. The agency had both a strict hierarchical structure consistent with traditional public management and institutionalized NPM routines focused upon efficiency and performance management. Examining the tensions that emerged as the organization attempted to co-produce strategy and services helps to illuminate the social mechanisms at work. It also illuminates the resources necessary to build the operational organizational capacity if local governments want to move in the direction of citizen as co-creator of services and co-producer of public value (Nabatchi and Amsler, 2014).

Field Case and Research Methods

Discover Together was a place-based initiative developed by one suburban Minnesota county in 2017. The initiative's goal was to create more effective strategies for assisting people in need (technically, those living below 200% of the U.S. federal poverty line). Senior organizational leaders and county elected board members were interested in moving beyond conventional approach to health and human service provision to more 'generative' approaches, defined as focusing upon "generating healthy communities by co-creating solutions for multi-dimensional family and socioeconomic challenges and opportunities" (Oftelie, 2014).

The county board selected a city with a growing and high concentration of poverty as the first locations for the work and conceived of it as a Collective Impact Initiative (Kania and

Kramer, 2011) engaging community members to develop a common agenda for solving specific problems. A team from the Future Services Institute at the University of Minnesota was engaged to design and work with staff, building new organizational capabilities for this type of community engagement and collaborative governance. In early 2017, the facilitators and staff engaged people from various community perspectives in a Core Team to oversee the project and govern operational development. The Core Team functioned as a learning lab, where new strategies and activities could be launched with rapid adjustment. By the end of the initiative's first year, the Discover Together Core Team consisted of six county staff members, six members of the community, and three people from the Future Services Institute team.

The first phase of the project involved exploring conditions within the community in more detail, identifying assets and concerns. Researchers and Core Team members investigated how the history of intergovernmental relationships influenced the potential of the initiative. In fact, this initial data collection uncovered many community assets that altered how the community was understood. Although the secondary data analysis of demographic and economic factors described a city with a "high concentration of poverty," engagement revealed a very different place. Affordable housing, high quality schools, ample public space (including the parks and accessibility to the river), and the "small town feel" made it appealing for young families. Commutes to the center city were short and neighbors knew one another. There was a palpable loyalty and community pride present and many people interviewed recounted a long-standing norm that children grew up in the city and then returned to raise their own children. These "born and raised" families possessed a deep loyalty to the community, investing their time and money in local churches, schools, and community events. This understanding significantly reframed senior county managers understanding of the community.

However, the interviews and meetings also identified growing community needs. Affordable housing meant the community was appealing to families earning low-incomes and the number of children qualifying for free and reduced lunch in the schools was increasing. Children from such families have multiple needs and government agencies were struggling to respond. Some services were provided by the county government at a regional service center, others provided at local nonprofit agencies or at the city government office. Limited transit options made it difficult for parents to access some of the services. And children's needs were acutely felt in the public schools. Some saw the cause of these challenges in a more macro view; since the communities' industrial meat packing plants shut down in the late 1970s, economic development had been a challenge. There was a lack of adequate well-paying jobs, commercial and entertainment space, and the community struggled to support small and medium sized businesses. Ethnic and racial dimensions were also at play. Community members talked openly of the contrast between "new families" moving in who were more likely Latino and East African contrasted with "old families" of older, white-ethnic households. The older generations wrestled with this change more than the youth. However, national current events involving the Trump administration's strict stance on immigration created a sense of fear within the Latino community surrounding deportation, the breakup of families, and relating with the government in general.

The Core Team develop a purpose statement and set of principles to direct their engagement activities, naming the initiative "Discover Together," to signal both the county government's desire to co-create new relationships and bring their resources to help rebuild a sense of collectivity in the city. In the second project phase, the Core Team decided to host engagement events in natural gathering spaces, such as an annual festival, art fair, business park,

and citywide garage sale. Each of the more than twenty events prioritized a different topic of conversation, from general questions about the city to specific questions about education, transportation, health and wellness resources and community space. The goal was to continue to gather information about the community and generate ideas that could be developed and tested as potential solutions to community needs.

By the end of the calendar year, the Core Team shifted its focus to action, while continuing to host engagement events. "Action teams" were formed to address communication, supporting grassroots efforts, welcoming ethnically diverse families, local business planning, housing development and affordability, and improving transportation. The scope and scale of each team's activities varied. For example, while one team created a welcome packet and corresponding website to connect new residents to the community, another focused on convening local business owners to understand their concerns and develop responses to economic development issues.

Research Methods & Analysis

The analysis presented here draws upon qualitative data collected throughout the project's first year. Future Services Institute staff, as well as Core Team members, used multiple methods to collect date: participant and structured observations of meetings and events; interviews and focus groups; document and secondary data analysis. We captured notes from site explorations of the city. The Core Team met over twenty times throughout the year and we documented the content of the meetings, activities and action items, and points of agreement and contention across participants. The Future Services Institute team also met monthly with county staff to discuss the initiative's progress, which we recorded in detailed field notes. Engagement events also provided an important source of data, including photographs and structured reflection

forms. We provided a summary document of each engagement event, noting participant observations, reflections, and possible next steps.

The second phase of the initiative also included a developmental evaluation to provide rapid cycle feedback to Core Team members about the initiative's progress and to shape its ongoing strategy (Patton, 2010; 2016). We conducted semi-structured interviews with ten core team members and, throughout the year, created status reports to document the initiative's progress to date. We also held focus groups with community members to inform this analysis. This interview and focus group data enhanced the semi-structured interviews 20 were conducted with prominent community members during the initial phase. Following each Core Team meeting, the lead facilitator also created a "harvest document" summarizing the activities and anticipated next steps. These, as well as new products developed as solutions to the community challenges, were included in our data-base.

We used NVivo to help support our systematic, inductive analysis of this rich data set. We were interested in documenting the timeline and evolution of the initiative as well as investigating points of success, tension and disagreements. In our analysis for this chapter, we present tensions that centered on differing conceptions of the role of community actors as citizens in the initiative's implementation.

Negotiating Distinct Frameworks of Governing

Conflicting approaches to public governance were evident throughout the implementation of the Discover Together initiative. Leaders' espoused vision for the effort and it design itself reflected many elements of the NPG, such as an explicit conception of citizens as co-generating the initiative and co-producing solutions. However, the existing structures and management

practices of the local government agency reflected NPM and traditional public administration approaches. Numerous tensions emerged as Core Team members (typically either front-line county staff or community members) and facilitators worked to reorient the governments focus and activities. Formal leaders, in spite of the elective board's approval of the initiative, routinely defaulted to trying to steer activities more in line with existing structures that cemented governmental authority. In studies about the authentic collaboration needed in public sector co-production, several dimensions are understood to be significant (Purdy, 2012): understanding of participant roles, experience with operational processes, and the actual content of the initiative. Tensions around these dimensions were evident in this case.

The original idea came to county leaders as they learned about a successful ten-year effort in another local government in California that reconceptualized its provision of health and human services as co-produced services. This idea was appealing. Yet county leaders recognized they did not have staff with the skills needed to engage diverse communities. Complying with state and federal laws had created siloed operational processes and structures, and such practices distance county staff from people turning to them for assistance. A taken-for-granted assumption in the organization about residents was they were primarily recipients of public services. Consistent with the NPM jargon, county staff routinely referred to them as "customers," reinforcing the idea that residents consume programs. Even though they aspired to innovate like their colleagues in California, county leaders struggled to overcome the perception that citizens should be primarily served in the Discover Together initiative. They expressed trepidation about actually engaging community members as co-equal participants in governing the shape, strategy and outcomes of the engagement process.

For example, while government staff who participated in Discover Together did so as paid employees of the county, community participants were not compensated. This issue became important when community leaders, particularly among those not employed by government entities such as the city or school district, wanted to participate. Residents were understandably wary of being asked to volunteer their time to an initiative that provided with uncertain benefits for an indefinite amount of time. External facilitators raised this issue with county leaders in both internal project team meetings and in formal evaluation documentation. Yet, it was not given much attention by senior managers. Several community members declined to participate in the governing body because of this decision. In the end, the community members on the Core Team were those with either a formal role in the city or school district or retired leaders who had flexibility in their time.

A second dimension of collaborative action that needs to be altered through co-production is operational processes. As noted earlier, local government practices reflected traditional public administration and NPM, although senior leaders initial saw the Discover Together initiative as a way to build new operational capacities. The county government staff involved eagerly participated in training activities about engagement methodologies and embraced conceptual frameworks about what to expect in complex, community initiatives. Yet the county had deeply established practices of hierarchical decision-making on even the most basic issues. Staff were used to providing detailed project planning and emphasizing measurement to demonstrate results; senior managers evoked these practices regularly, quelling others excitement about operating in ways that allowed for emergent strategy in this project. For example, in addition to biweekly Core Team meetings that were supposedly governing the Discover Together initiative, there were weekly meetings among county staff, where they

advocated for in-depth project planning and tried to anticipate what might occur. They prepared power point presentations of county measurement dashboards and social determinant of health frameworks for Core Team members. Most project decisions – even small decisions such as the provision of refreshments at a meeting – required approval from senior county managers.

Future Services Institute facilitators pushed for an adaptive project structure to accommodate the emergent nature of the collaborative work. Core Team meetings emphasized co-creating the team's purpose and core principles, and used participatory methods to cultivate fluid participant roles, and reflected an evolving project plan. Facilitation team also advocated for project activities that followed the purpose statement and core principles, rather than an external set of goals. In fact, facilitators regularly challenged the lead county staff, pointing out the disconnect between the espoused goals and operational practices, even drawing upon New Public Governance research to support their argument. However, county operational practices were so deeply engrained that formal leaders did not feel able to embrace the new practices to work in a more flexible and adaptive fashion.

The final dimension important in authentic public sector collaboration (Purdy, 2012) is the content of the initiative itself. Although rising poverty rate in the city had been a primary motivation, the community's strong sense of pride discovered in the first phase of the project didn't align. Larger discussions about race, economic development, and community change were more important and community engagement activities uncovered that the government should help invest in community assets to develop solutions for issues such as shared community space and economic development. Creating gatherings of business owners or a web-site to welcome new visitors to the community were important to reinforce the community's historical

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character as a vibrant and welcoming place. This was the essence of what the community members wanted residents to 'discover together.'

Yet county leaders routinely returned to the issue of poverty. After only a few months after the project's launch, one board member repeatedly focus attention to the problem of poverty and questioned the initiative's success in addressing that complex issue. Interviews with government leaders indicated that they struggled to track how investing in community assets could be a legitimate goal. In response, county leaders tried to use their positional authority and role of lead convener to refocus the initiative's discussions on combatting the increase of poverty in the community over time, rather than other issues. While they could understand the importance of community assets, they reconciled their own understanding by seeing them as 'social determinants of health' rather than as things with intrinsic value.

Throughout the implementation of Discover Together, the competing governance frames encouraged participants to pull the initiative in opposing directions. County leaders and project managers had definite understandings of participant roles, operational processes, and the content of the initiative that were reinforced by organizational concerns driven by efficiency, hierarchical power relationships, and an emphasis on measurement and demonstrating results. In contrast, county frontline staff, community members, and the external facilitation team promoted the idea of public value over efficiency, elevated community members as co-equals in project planning and decision-making, and reinforced a flexible and adaptive approach to project planning. Though Discover Together had several key achievements from the perspective of the community, by the end of the first year, county support began to wane. Senior county managers were disappointed. Building relationships and supporting community efforts to become more welcoming and inclusive did little to achieve the leaders' goal of reducing poverty, at least in the

short term. As a result, the County shifted resources from actual community engagement to building internal capacity for engagement and collaboration in the next year.

Resources that Promoted Creation of Collaborative Governance Capacity

While this case was not a co-produced community initiative, there are many lessons relevant to building knowledge about co-production can be learned from this experience. In particular, while managerial authority was formalized in practices aligned with NPM, a number of resources developed helped to decenter that authority and enable some participants to advance community-based knowledge consistent with the NPG ambitions. Our analysis reveals that co-created material objects, training opportunities and the presence of internal and external translators were particularly important for enabling county staff to think and work differently with community members.

Co-Created Material Objects

Material objects played an important role in bringing people together and enhancing social capital when diverse stakeholders were attempting to jointly address a public problem. During the initiative, Core Team members created an array of material objects, including large posters with compelling visuals, newsletters summarizing insights shared by meeting attendees, graphic representations of engagement events, a five-minute video of the initiative, and formal reports. These were used strategically both in the community and in formal settings (such as the county board meeting) to facilitate awareness and understanding of the initiative's process and goals.

The importance of material objects is consistent with existing scholarship, which recognizes that while engagement techniques are important (Bryson et al. 2013; Creighton 2005;

Nabatchi and Leighninger, 2015), material objects such as physical setting, supplies such as butcher block paperand sticky notes, and visual products such as graphic newsletters assure effective engagement (Girard and Stark 2007). Material objects can influence subsequent events by drawing attention to certain insights, creating records, or inviting a deeper listening and engagement. In other words, they become significant artifacts when they are used to alter relationships and results (Latour 2005; Sandfort and Quick 2017). They literally can provide a type of 'map' to help orient individuals and groups about appropriate actions in the face of uncertainty (Swidler 1986; Giorgi, Lockwood, and Glynn 2015; Pavitt 2006; Seidel and O'Mahony 2014).

Models drawn collaboratively on large newsprint or a video developed to highlight the many voices touched by an initiative like Discover Together may bind people together sufficiently so that they collectively agree to work together. This was demonstrated repeatedly at almost every meeting of the Discover Together Core Team. When people were engaged in shaping the vision, the strategy, the tactics, with their hands clutching markers and their ideas flowing onto newsprint, they volunteered to take the next step in the work together. Artifacts represented intention, but can also shape attention. Issues that need further exploration, resolution of controversy, hopes for future development – these all were captured and shared through the material artifacts generated by the diverse group of professionals and citizens working on Discover Together.

In this regard, material objects can function as a mechanism for challenging formal, institutionalized power (Boland and Tenkasi 1995; Kravcenko and Swan 2017). In sociology and organizational science, a rich literature has developed that considers the work material artifacts do in shifting power and crossing knowledge boundaries. Developing the concept of

"boundary objects," this research stresses both how interactions can be triggered by material artifacts and their potential role in collective learning and action (Carlile, 2004; Kravcenko & Swan, 2017; Seidel & O'Mahony, 2014; Star & Griesemer, 1989). Because boundaries are drawn to demarcate areas of specialized knowledge and to establish claims of power, material objects can help decontextualize the knowledge and enable coordination by neutralizing professional identities and knowledge claims (Kravcenko and Swan 2017; Carlile 2004). Objects are one means to bring perspectives into dialogue and "enable conversation without enforcing commonly shared meaning" (Boland & Tenkasi, 1995: 362). As such, they are potential resources for shifting the authority of public organizations towards being more open to co-production.

Training Opportunities

To support the development of new practices and ideas consistent with co-production, county staff on the Discover Together Core Team engaged in training workshops about community engagement. Right before the launch of the initiative, members were given the opportunity to develop skills in facilitation and community engagement through a three-day Art of Hosting and Harvesting workshop. Art of Hosting is a method of engaging participants in meaningful dialogue to motivate collective action (Lundquist, et al 2013; Holman, 2010; Wheatley and Frieze, 2011). It seeks to recognize and harness the complexity of social systems, facilitating engagement across a diverse set of actors in a system. As such, it provides solid building blocks for developing the generative capacity of public organizations. The training workshop provided a chance for participants to experience established engagement techniques, such as World Café (Brown and Issacs 2005) and Open Space Technology (Owen 1997) s, and then learning directly about how to use such techniques themselves. The workshop also taught

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specific methods for collecting information from individuals, which was later applied in the initiative's pop-up engagements.

County Core Team members also gained experience with rapid-cycle learning techniques including developmental evaluation. This evaluation approach is well suited for complex implementation settings, such as collaborative governance initiatives that seek to innovate rather than simply implement a program (Patton 2010, 2016). Rather than stress accountability to formal project plans, rapid-cycle learning techniques like developmental evaluation encourage individuals to monitor implementation effectiveness in relation to improving public value. It allows for quick shifts if an initiative gets off track.

In Discover Together initiative, the developmental evaluation was particularly useful in helping participants make sense of the collaborative work and understand its progress. The rapid-cycle data collection and analysis efforts enabled Core Team members to revisit the central purpose and guiding principles of the initiative, thereby reinforcing these components of the design. At the same time, the evaluation helped structure a process that seemed to be the antithesis of the county's typical way of working. For example, after the first five or six months of the initiative, evaluation memos helped to flag some of the tensions described here; the themes were discussed openly at Core Team meetings. But senior county managers did not respond to them in a way to alter their own practices. When asked about this later in interviews, senior managers talked about their internal struggles; they believed the initiative was valuable for providing more information to the local government about citizen needs, but they also valued accountability for measurable outcomes in the short-term. These were difficult to point to

in the first nine months. So while training and structured learning opportunities were built into the effort, they were not powerful enough to motivate senior managers to challenge the NPM expectations of measurable outputs in the short-term.

Seeing the amount of capacity needed for authentic engagement, some senior managers tried to refocus efforts in the second year on internal training. They pulled together a cross-agency work group to highlight successful engagement efforts and supported half day training sessions to build more shared knowledge and resources. The work group members held peer learning sessions, developed a strategy for sharing resources, and tried to capture the attention of executive managers. But after months of activities and still no official signal recognizing sanction about the significance of the work, resignation began to set in. People actively questioned how all this good work would really "change" the default top down management approach in the county. They shared experiences where more bottom up energy was quashed and, ultimately, decided to abandon their efforts as a collective group. While they individually were grateful for the short-term support, the internal 'capacity building' training activities were not sufficient enough to overcome the top-down authority structure.

External and Internal Translators

Finally, in the Discover Together case, external and internal translators were very important in trying to implement a new way of governing. The Future Services Institute team worked continuously with county staff to help them understand the new approach and learn practical techniques to implement the approach. Shaping meeting agendas, requesting participation in engagement events, developing authentic relationships with community members

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by meeting them for coffee or lunch – staff were encouraged both to reconsider their established ways of carrying out the minute details of every day work and to consider the unintended consequences of conventional practices. As staff built their own understanding, they became more adept at explaining its value, the techniques, and rationale to others within the county. Yet the facilitation team also had to spend considerable time helping these county staff negotiate between the two governing approaches, identifying key differences between the old and new, and helping staff build the language and arguments – including drawing upon the research basis of collaborative governance and co-production – to defend the new approach to detractors within the county.

Internal translators also played critical roles in this respect, as they understood both the value of the new governing approach as well as the county's routine practices. They regularly would discuss their internal strategy for developing buy-in, motivating other units to attend engagement events, or figuring out the most effective way to communicate to the County elected governing board. In practice, the most effective internal translators tended to be Core Team members who worked at the frontline or supervisory-level. The power of the co-production activities – such as seeing citizens as expert in their own lives, or alterating conventional government processes – were abundantly clear to these leaders.   However, members of the Core Team who held senior management positions clearly felt more accountable to the traditional, hierarchical structure and accountability practices.

The importance of internal and external translators in Discover Together is consistent with other research on collaborative governance and knowledge brokering (Cillo, 2005; Dobbins, et al 2009; Gray and Ren, 2014; Haragadon, 2002; Kramer and Wells, 2005; Michaels, 2009; Phipps, et al, 2017). External brokers provide crucial links between new research and ideas and

the organization, identifying the problem needed to be solved, developing goals and cultural values that support change, and holding people accountable for changing their practice. They understand the organizational and larger policy context. Internal brokers play similar roles but often possess deeper knowledge of existing communities of practice and nuances of local knowledge. Both facilitate the flow of information. By understanding multiple schemas, or frameworks for understanding and interpreting new stimuli, they can help resolve ambiguity and move a group forward.

Implications and Conclusion

This chapter provides an in-depth look at a case in which local government espoused the goal of co-production of human services and desired to move toward a more engaged and collaborative form of governance. Our analysis here stitches together field experiences and a rich body of work on collaborative governance and innovation. In the end, Discover Together illustrates specific points of tension that a public organization must navigate if it is interested in making this dramatic change. It is an failed case of collaborative governance but one which we believe holds important lessons.

Paying attention to how boundary objects are developed and deployed in co-production may be fruitful to move public organizations towards implementing new public governance. Additionally, the importance of training and sharing a common language is recognized as an important part of supporting public sector innovation (Bailey, 2012). And working with external and internal translators can provide important resources to support the institutional change. For example, a study of public health decision makers in Canada (Dobbins, et al 2004) found that use of co-created material artifacts, advocating for reinforcement of new ideas through training or performance assessment, and managers who could act as role models for the new change were

particularly useful. Interesting, although these strategies were all deployed in the Discover Together cases, the application of these resources did not build adequate momentum for change.

As others have noted (Purdy, 2012), collaborative action changes conventional roles, operational processes, and the overall initiatives undertaken by government. The Discover Together effort ambitiously embarked upon such a change. Although some Core Team members and external facilitators worked tirelessly at highlighting community priorities and tried strategically to introduce new management practices and to use artifacts and trainings to translate between internal and external worldviews, it was not sufficient to ultimately destabilize the top down hierarchical structure or deeply rooted understanding of the 'citizen as consumer' reflected in the agency's management practices. Senior managers were engaged in other initiatives and did not really commit to the type of changes espoused when they launched the co-production initiative. They had their frameworks – such as the social determinants of health – and that was not going to be challenged by community members articulation of the assets found in the community that could be applied to addressing poverty. And, given the hierarchical authority structure in the organization, without its commitment and willingness to change its own roles or understanding of the overall initiative, authentic collaboration could not be sustained. Although the initiative provided tools and resources to support county staff as they negotiated between old and new approaches to governing, they were not able to activate sufficient authority to challenge those at the top about the importance of this new way of working with citizens.

Global conditions bring new urgency to the aim of making government more responsive to and aligned with the needs of citizens (Ansell, 2001). While the goals of the NPG are laudable, this case study helps to remind us that the road ahead might not be a straight one. Yet, this analysis suggests that scholars can help draw attention to the operational implications of the

new NPG vision by focusing on a number of important questions: How exactly do public organizations move from a governing approach characterized by an emphasis on market mechanisms and citizens as customers to one prioritizing collaboration and co-production? What capacities do public organizations need to develop, and how do those capacities differ from what was institutionalized in the last eighty years? What resources effectively challenge the conventional authority of hierarchies or performance management to bring about productive changes that enable citizens to be involved in authentic co-production? Serious investigation of these questions can help assure that public organizations step more directly into their roles supporting the creation of public value. Given the urgent need to be more effective at collectively responding to our most pressing social problems, researchers should be poised to assist in this process.

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