

tional and economic expansion, productivity, technical virtuosity—in a word, growth. The purpose of a constitutional polity is the limitation of and participation in power: liberty. The purpose of a covenantal community is the formation of a people, fulfillment of the quality of life: peace and righteousness.

At this point we can each begin to think of ourselves as a citizen and/or as a professional. As we shift from role to role and sometimes are in two, if not all three, in what community are we residing? The technical community of the modern corporation? The volitional community of a constitutional polity? Or in a covenantal community of comfort, affection, and beauty?

These considerations raise the question of *trust*. Trust is, after all, the bedrock of legitimacy. If we don't trust our fellow residents and what they are doing in our common communities, then fundamentally we are withholding legitimacy in varying degrees. The withholding of legitimacy has various consequences in various times, and no one as yet has been able to derive a formula which enables firm predictions to be made.

It is clear, I believe, to most of us that there is a lack of mutual trust amongst ourselves, our managers, our professionals, and our institutions. What then does this mean to those of us who are concerned about public participation in technology assessment?

Philosophers have postulated that there are three elements required for informed action, "memory, understanding, and will." In my view, memory and understanding are not the principal problem areas. But have we the *will* to accept responsibility for ourselves and our actions? Are we willing as citizens, managers, and professionals to design systems by which we cannot only hold ourselves accountable, but also voluntarily offer to show how others can hold us accountable?

For example, I am not a physician and I know little about medicine. If I entrust my health and my life to a doctor I want him to articulate the standards by which he is holding himself accountable. I know that if I need to have a serious operation, I would choose a university teaching hospital because the pathology department there is a mighty rein on unchecked surgery! Question: in any discipline what is the professional technologist's equivalent of a "department of pathology"? To whom does the professional technologist feel a responsibility? In which community does a profes-

sional technologist feel he resides? Where do his loyalties lie and in what degree?

We have no reason to despair. Public participation in the decision processes of our common life may be at a greater level than ever before. It may just be that our expectations are higher than they ever have been, too! Even with these optimistic comments, is it possible that public participation in technology assessment is basically a sham and a fraud? If it isn't, why then is it that citizens and the public are always asked to choose among alternatives which others have designed and presented to them? Why is it that citizens are not asked to specify the world they want and the alternatives which they desire?

Until this question can be honorably answered by managers and professionals, then I believe that the fundamental issues and concerns underlying true public participation will not be addressed. If the concept of public participation in technology assessment is real, it means that bureaucrats and business managers are not going to be able to allocate resources with the freedom and abandon they have heretofore had. Public participation implies a profound involvement in determining what resources are available to the *covenantal community*, and to whom those resources are available. The ultimate question is whether those who have been accustomed to making the key decisions, the bureaucrats and the managers, are willing to hold themselves accountable to the citizenry and particularly to the covenantal community rather than to the polity or the business corporation.

## A WORKING MODEL FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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Demands for public participation have increased dramatically in recent years in almost all publicly financed arenas, including education, transportation, environment, social services, land use, and community development. Of some 40 technology assessments conducted to date, however, less than five have involved the public or public interest spokesmen—and in these five cases,

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the involvement was limited to one-way methods of communication, such as surveys, interviews, and public hearings.<sup>1</sup>

Now that the newly articulated field of technology assessment is becoming more visible to the public eye, there is a growing interest in considering how active and meaningful public participation can become a normative facet of the assessment methodology. In light of the limited state-of-the-art, interest should be focused on several central questions: Who represents the public interest—particularly the multiplicity of public interests? What levels of public involvement are feasible? Who should manage the involvement process? What methods of interaction between lay people and the technology assessors are productive? What costs are involved?

Answers to such questions are not likely to be available until a variety of alternative models have been demonstrated and evaluated. Certainly, the participatory demonstration which was recently launched at Arthur D. Little, Inc. (ADL), in Cambridge, Massachusetts, can offer no answers at this time. What can be shared at this early date are the specifics of the proposed model, the reactions to it from more than 30 public interest representatives who were invited to critique it, and ADL's revisions of the model made in response to the public interest feedback.

Funded by the National Science Foundation, the ADL model calls for continuous interaction between a six-member Public Interest Group Advisory Panel (PIGAP) and the ADL technical team during the course of a nine-month assessment of terrestrial based solar energy. The PIGAP has three functions:

1. To advise ADL on issues to be studied and to provide non-technical judgments on relevant political and socioeconomic consequences;
2. To critique ADL's interim work products during the course of the study, and to review and critique the final ADL report;
3. To prepare an independently written chapter of the final report which offers a process description of the way it interacted with the ADL team, an evaluation of the interaction, an analysis of the substantive impact of that interaction on the study, and recommendations on how future technology assessments might productively involve citizens. (This independent PIGAP analysis will be juxtaposed with a counterpoint analysis of the

participatory process from the perspective of the technical team.)

The original model—proposed by ADL as a “modest approach”—called for a non-technical panel to be selected on the basis of lay interest and/or experience in the energy or environmental field, e.g., social action, environmental, consumer, youth, or religious groups. Selections were to be made by ADL after an extensive search for relevant public interest groups and were to be based on three criteria: (1) their non-technical but serious knowledge of energy and environmental issues; (2) their relative degree of representativeness of relevant public interest constituencies; and (3) their commitment to participating on the panel.

The budget included travel funds for three meetings of the PIGAP during the course of the nine-month study and an honoraria pool of approximately \$5,000 to pay panel members \$100 per day for their work. The work plan specified that both the groundrules and the methods for achieving the desired level of interaction were to be left open to a joint agreement to be arrived at by the technical team and the PIGAP, subject only to the constraints of the honoraria and travel budget allotted in the contract.

Thus, the objectives of the ADL approach are three-fold:

1. To demonstrate that the public interest is best served when representatives of the concerned sectors of the public interest are integrally involved in the process and substance of a technology assessment;
2. To analyze, through the participant-observer method, the costs and effectiveness of the sustained interactive advisory model posited; and
3. To crystallize from the ADL-PIGAP experience improved models and/or techniques for such public participation in future technology assessments.

To search for PIGAP candidates, a member of the technical team mapped the network of relevant public interest groups and pinpointed the specific spokesmen who were reputed to be highly regarded for their analytic skills and influence in formulating their organization's policies on environmental and/or energy issues. Each organizational representative interviewed was invited to suggest names of others to be contacted. Additional candidates' names were derived from reviewing selected public interest literature and congress-

sional testimony. More than 100 names were generated, and these were reduced to approximately 30 by seeking out those organizations and individuals most frequently recommended.

Discussions with the 30 public interest groups on the proposed role of the PIGAP (and the objectives of the solar energy technology assessment) generally lasted two hours. For the most part, reactions were highly enthusiastic: "What a great idea," "It's just what we've been hoping for," or "Finally, we're being invited to sit down at the technology assessment table instead of having to protest at a public hearing."

They were particularly favorably impressed that the PIGAP members would receive a \$100 per day honorarium ("Finally, someone has recognized that the public interest groups really need the money"); that ADL had recognized the importance of negotiating with the PIGAP on a *modus operandi* for interacting with the technical team ("How nice that we can help define our own role"); and that the final report would include both a PIGAP and an ADL evaluation of both their successes and failures ("I like the idea that the PIGAP analysis doesn't get forced into the mold of the usual minority report").

There were, however, some negative reactions—particularly from environmentalists who were exceedingly distrustful of profit-making research firms—including ADL—which they perceived as "industry-biased" and "anti-public interest." Reactions on the negative side of the ledger were as follows:

1. The PIGAP should not be limited to lay representatives. ("Why should we recommend a lay board member when we have a staff scientist who is paid by the membership to advise it on solar energy?"; "Are you trying to create a panel that you can co-opt and manipulate?"; "Shouldn't the PIGAP have independent scientific technical capability?");
2. The number of PIGAP man-days and meetings proposed were insufficient. ("Not enough learning time");
3. The PIGAP should be enlarged. ("No six organizations can possibly represent the highly fractionated spectrum of public interest groups"; "A six-member panel isn't democratic; any citizen who is interested in participating ought to be able to take part in any assessment");
4. The name—Public Interest Group Advisory Panel—should be changed. ("PIGAP is a poor acronym");
5. ADL should not select the panel members. ("It is entirely possible that ADL will make a good decision . . . but . . . other companies who may get future contracts may not devote as much time to the decision of who will be on the panel or may pick people who are not truly representative of public interest views"; "A contractor hired to perform a technology assessment ought not also select persons who will review the assessment"); and
6. It is inappropriate for a profit-making consulting firm to handle public participation in conducting a technology assessment. ("I recommend that the funds available for this purpose be returned to the National Science Foundation, and that interested public interest groups submit bids for the performance of this function.")

The ADL technical team was delighted by the many favorable responses to what it had posited as a first "modest approach" to public interest involvement in technology assessment. In response to the critical responses, it changed several aspects of the proposed model.

Instead of convening a completely lay panel, the composition of the PIGAP will include three lay representatives and three public interest staff representatives, one of whom is a scientist well-versed in solar energy technology. In addition, the budget was restructured so that it allows for four day-long meetings of the PIGAP with the technical team. Further, the honoraria budget was increased to \$7,500, thereby enabling increased options for ADL-PIGAP interactions, e.g., written critiques, field trips, independent analysis, etc.

While the technical team agreed with the criticism that no six organizations can totally represent the fractionated spectrum of public interest groups and certainly can't claim to represent "the public interest," it decided that this issue should be negotiated with the PIGAP after it is created. Thus, if the panel members feel that some significant public interest perspectives are not represented, additional representatives can be jointly selected by the PIGAP and the technical team. The rationale behind this decision is the assumption that there is no such thing as "the public interest," but a variety of sectors of public

interest. While an ideal democratic model might enable all interested citizens to participate, it is unlikely that unlimited numbers of people can be meaningfully involved in the complexities of a solar energy technology assessment. The ADL model, therefore, opts for organizational surrogates of various sectors of the public interest and trades off depth interaction for large numbers of public interest actors.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, while ADL agreed with the criticism lodged against the PIGAP acronym, it decided to invite the PIGAP to select a better name. The rationale for this decision was strictly pragmatic, since the name had been selected reluctantly during the proposal-writing stage, after considering the acronyms which would have resulted from alternative names, e.g., Public Interest Panel (PIP), Public Interest Groups (PIGs), and Public Advisory Panel (PAP).

Space limitations of this mini-symposium preclude a full discussion of two criticisms—that a private contractor should not select the members of a public interest panel and should not manage the public participatory process. ADL delayed the formation of the panel for several weeks while a member of the technical team informed those spokesmen who had raised the issue of contractor selection of the firm's willingness to consider viable alternatives. After several individual discussions and an informal group meeting, no consensus was reached, and there remained different definitions of what would be viable, ranging from selections made by NSF or the League of Women Voters, to nationwide balloting among public interest groups.

As a result of these discussions, three representatives concluded that while they were initially

pleased that ADL had opened the door for public participation they had become convinced that the firm should not be managing the participatory process. They felt that ADL should return the demonstration funds to NSF so that a coalition of public interest groups could apply for a grant to select the panel members and independently manage the process.<sup>3</sup>

NSF staff, when asked by ADL to review the issues, declined to select members of the PIGAP or the organizations from which they were to be drawn. They also said they were quite satisfied with the integrity of the approach being used, particularly in light of ADL's commitment to negotiate with the PIGAP on the work plan and on the question of enlarging the panel.

Since other participatory demonstrations in technology assessment have not been articulated and exposed to public interest spokesmen as the ADL model has, it is not known whether the reactions to it are typical or atypical. They are offered here as a possible harbinger of issues which may be raised as the momentum for public participation builds.

While the ADL model does not embrace the idea of a participatory process independently created and managed by public interest groups, some members of the ADL team are interested in experimenting with such a model in a future technology assessment. For the present, however, the team is committed to carrying out the current demonstration and to opening the results to public view. Hopefully, other technology assessment teams and public interest representatives will experiment with other models and share their findings. If this happens, the public interest will be well served.

#### Notes

1. Vary Taylor Coates, *Examples of Technology Assessments for the Federal Government*, Staff Discussion Paper 208, Program of Policy Studies in Science and Technology, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C., January 1970; and Martin V. Jones, *A Comparative State-of-the-Art Review of Selected U.S. Technology Assessment Studies*, The Mitre Corporation, May 1973.
2. The PIGAP includes representatives from Environmental Action of Colorado, League of Women Voters, National Council of Churches, National Tenants Organization, Natural Resources Defense Council, and

The Wilderness Society. Each representative is expected to react to the ADL study in terms of the perspectives of their organizational constituency; ADL will not be asking their organizations per se to take an official position on the study findings.

3. Space limitations of this mini-symposium preclude a full description of the representatives' points-of-view, since they had somewhat different perspectives ranging from general advocacy of an independently managed participatory process to specific criticism about ADL's potential management role in light of the firm's well-known proprietary multi-client study on solar climate control.

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