**Conclusion: Collaborative Governance as an Arrangement for Shaping and Implementing Policy**

This collection of articles discusses collaborative governance arrangements, both from the theoretical angle and from the empirical angle in the Israeli context. These arrangements emerged against the background of changes in the functions of the state and in the division of fields of responsibility, power, and implementation due to the involvement of diverse players in shaping and implementing policy. To a large extent, these policies are the product of the growing involvement of numerous sectors in public activity, the blurring of the boundaries between these sectors, and the trend to privatization in many countries, including Israel. These policies have their origins in the late twentieth century, and have intensified in the early years of the new century, combining with such trends as multiculturalism, the willingness to enhance public participation in decision making, and the reinforcement of communitarianism. These changes created the need to improve management, planning, and resource development capabilities, and subsequently inspired attempts by governmental bodies to seek new modalities for shaping and implementing public policy. One of the main approaches during this period was the reinforcement of regulatory mechanisms, based on the assumption that regulation and inspection would improve governance in an era of changes in the functions of the state as an institution. However, the various changes also led to a need for tools of a different type.

The book examines another modality that has also been adopted in response to the changes that began during this period; it offers an arrangement that brings together, in an institutionalized setting, stakeholders from different sectors in order to shape and implement public policy. This arrangement is known as collaborative governance. Such cooperation is not a new phenomenon – representatives of different sectors, interest groups, and stakeholders have always made connections with the institutions and representatives of government in order to advance various interests. The interesting feature of these new arrangements is that the connection between the sectors and stakeholders is now characterized by a different pattern of action. Firstly, these arrangements are more formal. Secondly, they include and manifest a wider range of stakeholders than in the past. Thirdly, these patterns of action seek to respond to the difficulties faced by national and local government institutions in the current era, which has brought far-reaching changes in governance capabilities.

Accordingly, cooperative endeavors of this new type, between numerous stakeholders, sectors, and organizations – based on the more formal collaborative governance approach – have gained new importance as a policy tool. A growing number of initiatives by local and central government are managing to consolidate the connection between different stakeholders as a modality for implementing policy. The rising prominence of these trends on the practical level has been mirrored by greater research interest in the phenomenon. The research literature highlights new characteristics created by the response to the difficulties of the current age. These arrangements represent numerous voices in decision-making processes. The goal of the arrangement is to express a broad public interest by means of a deliberative mechanism reflecting this interest and remaining sensitive to changes in it. This arrangement is grounded in professional knowledge, leadership, and forms of action that facilitate the expression of as wide a public as possible.

Despite the above, some questions regarding the ramifications of the modalities of collaborative governance remain unresolved. In their current incarnation, do processes of participation strengthen the function of the state and its responsibility toward citizens, or are they liable to contribute to a further retreat in the governance capability of the state and in its responsibility toward citizens? In this collection, we examined the nature and relevance of collaborative governance arrangements while focusing on two central questions: 1) Do collaborative governance arrangements help to promote public value? 2) Does collaborative governance reinforce democratic processes? These questions serve as the connecting thread between the articles presented in the five sections of the book.

**1. The Sections of the Book**

Section One discusses the contribution made by collaborative governance arrangements to the democratic process and to action by public administrative bodies. The chapters suggest that these arrangements do not reflect a paradigmatic change, but rather offer a response to a need that emerged following administrative reforms and following years of deficient representation in the democratic system and in its institutions. In other words, although a key goal in the collaborative governance approach is to ensure the deeper expression of democratic participation, the authors in this section claim that in the current stage, and particularly in the Israeli context, the theoretical and practical sources of this approach do not necessarily indicate the strengthening of democratic foundations.

Talshir’s chapter, “Participatory Democracy and Collaborative Governance: Can They Go Together (against the State)?,” highlights the desire to increase participation through collaborative governance. However, she argues, the arrangement in its current format actually weakens the state, and the increased number of players in collaborative governance may challenge the legitimate democratic bodies. Accordingly, there is a need to create a collaborative governance model that restructures the state’s role through the opening of policy networks and that ensures that the democratic anchors are maintained during this process, without impairing the principle of democratic equality. Gofar’s chapter, “Collaborative Governance through the Prism of Deliberative Democracy,” offers a comparison between the collaborative governance arrangement and deliberative democracy. The chapter argues that collaborative governance is not based on an independent democratic theory, but rather manifests multicultural democracy in an institutional form. In other words, while the participatory/deliberative democracy has its foundation in democratic theories, collaborative governance is rooted in theories concerning the strengthening of governance. The democratic issue emerges by way of an ancillary question regarding the character of the tool.

Thus it would seem that in order to strengthen democratic components, there is a need to emphasize the importance of representation in these arrangements and to identify weaknesses in the patterns of representation, the forces represented, and the responsibility of the various players who serve as partners in these arrangements.

Lahat and Sher-Hadar’s chapter, “Collaborative Governance as a Policy Tool: When to Use It and (Also) When Not?,” indicates that the collaborative governance arrangement, as a form of action used by public administrative organizations, is not a governance arrangement that stands on its own and replaces the existing arrangement. Rather, it adds a further layer to the preexisting instruments. In certain conditions, its selection may offer an advantage, whereas in others it provides no added value, and may impede policy making. Collaborative governance may help shape policy given two conditions: Firstly, when the policy makers require reinforcement and enhancement from professional knowledge they cannot acquire for themselves – for example, when the Ministry of Education needs to formulate clearer policy regarding the activities of NGOs in schools. The second condition is when policy makers require value-based consensus in order to reinforce the legitimacy of policy. An example of this is the attempt made to define a common social ethos in Israeli society, which requires diverse voices from across Israeli society to sit together. Thus an association through collaborative governance may be undertaken due to a normative need, i.e. on the basis of the belief that this is how government should take decisions, or on the basis of a pragmatic need, i.e. due to a constraint that otherwise would not allow the decision to be made.

The chapters in Section Two discuss collaborative governance arrangements in local government and their impact on local democracy. These chapters show that the well-known weaknesses in the status of local authorities, relative to central government, are also reflected in the implementation of collaborative governance arrangements. In other words, while collaborative governance arrangements contribute to the strengthening of local democracy, they do not constitute a tool that has power in its own right. It also emerges that collaborative governance does not solve the problem of the power relations between central and local government.

Schiffer’s chapter, “Local Collaborative Governance – A Way to Circumvent an Outmoded Legal Framework?,” suggests that the collaborative governance arrangement has not substantially changed the relationship between local and central government. The principle of consensus, which is central to these arrangements, has not created real change in the power-based nature of the relations between these two governmental systems as seen in the past. It can also be seen that in the context of the power struggles between central government and local authorities, collaborative governance arrangements may strengthen the power of weak local authorities, thereby leading to changes in the balance of power between the different strata of government. Accordingly, despite the relative contribution collaborative governance makes to resolving certain issues, such as the creation of trust between players within the locale and the promotion of educational programs under the responsibility of the local authority, it does not in itself lead to substantive change in the problems of trust between the two levels of government.

Al-Saraya and Bressler-Gonen’s chapter, “Local Collaborative Governance in a Minority Society: Bedouin-Arab Society in the Negev,” suggests that in a minority society collaborative governance can help local government to expand the range of services the local authority offers and enhance its ability to implement policy. The reason for this is that the partnership grants legitimacy to all the bodies involved in the process. The chapter shows that these processes helped to make local government a pivotal player for diverse other players: For central government, as a body granting legitimacy to the investment, and for civil society – as a body reinforcing trust with them and with citizens. Thus the collaborative governance arrangements implemented by the local authority helped to build a bridge between a minority population and the institutions of state, in contrast to the processes previously used for shaping and implementing policy, which were characterized by mistrust.

Section Three offers an examination of collaborative governance arrangements implemented in the regulatory sector. Both chapters offer insights regarding participation in regulatory processes in the era following the reform in public management. Tallias’s chapter, “Collaborative Regulation: Collaborative Governance in the Field of Regulation,” presents the concept of “collaborative regulation” and the possible development in the role of state regulation, including by means of positioning it as part of the processes of voluntary regulation. Harel’s chapter, “Reducing Aspects of Collaborative Governance in Standardization Processes in Israel” illustrates the dependence of collaborative governance proceedings on political support from the stakeholders, as well as the power wielded by the state, which enables it to act in a manner contrary to the direction of collaborative governance and to reduce the joint process. Among other aspects, the chapter exposed the significance of the state’s conduct in the national and global arenas in the context of standardization – an arena that is inherently characterized by participatory proceedings and that involves other countries and organizations. Thus, by way of example, the chapter discussed the regulatory price paid for the reduction of the number of players in the Israeli arena.

The chapters in Section Four discuss collaborative governance arrangements from the perspective of civil society. Bar Dan’s chapter explores the role of civil society organizations within these arrangements and notes one of the key difficulties: Contrary to the ideal expectation of balanced partnership processes, she claims that in practice stratification emerges within civil society. Strong organizations gain prominence at the expense of weaker ones, and significant power gaps can be seen between governmental and social organizations, in a manner that disrupts the partnership processes. Horowitz and Rom’s chapter, “The 5x2 Initiative: Expanding STEM Excellence in Israel – Collective Impact as a Model of Collaborative Governance,” presents a specific instance of the adoption of collaborative governance, in a process designed on the basis of an action model developed in the United States. The chapter illustrates a delicate process of building trust in the field of science education in Israel, permitting flexibility in the division of functions between the partners. The authors note the changing role of the state in these arrangements. Thus, for example, it emerged that the status of partner transformed the state into a leader in certain components, particularly those consistent with the priorities of its leaders.

The final section presents practical examples of collaborative governance. The two examples – the regional sustainability partnership at Ramat Hanadiv and the local collaborative initiative in Kiryat Malachi – illustrate the inherent potential of these arrangements for the inculcation of public values. These include the importance of diversity among the stakeholders; the significance of the formal and informal relationship between the players; the centrality of the component of trust; and the importance of state institutions in collaborative governance processes, even when the initiative is not theirs. The examples also show that the human factor plays an important, and sometimes critical, role in the success of the process. However, the action mechanisms and the organizational pattern of the arrangements also make a significant contribution to balancing political relations and promoting public values.

All the sections of the book illustrate the essence of collaborative governance as an institutional arrangement that offers a response, if only partial, to the challenges of the current era, when genuine problems in governance are repeatedly being raised on the agenda. Alongside the advantages offered by collaborative governance, however, questions remain regarding the functions of the state, the ability of these arrangements to maintain public values and interests, and their significance for the democratic system. We will now examine these two questions in greater depth.

**2. Collaborative Governance and Public Values**

In the Introduction, we discussed the role of public values in administrative work. Among other factors, we noted that, by definition, public values are formulated in various societies through a process of dialogue. Accordingly, they are constantly defined and redefined and are not absolute. As we noted, public values are the product of the collective, multidimensional, and politically-mediated expression of citizens’ preferences. These values are constantly redefined through an ongoing process by means of social and political interactions (Moore, 1995; O’Flynn, 2008; Smith, 2004; Stoker, 2006). Accordingly, there would appear to be a structural correlation between collaborative governance arrangements and the basic definition of public values. Thus, for example, if there is an interest in promoting principles of inclusion in the education system, a collaborative governance model will represent diverse players reflecting the variance in population groups (such as groups with disabilities, different ethnic groups, and so forth). The fact that the collaborative governance arrangements include dialogue mechanisms that bring different stakeholders to the table to shape policy will inevitably lead to the promotion of public values and will at least create the possibility of broader democratic participation. However, the chapters in this book show that despite the potential contribution to certain public values, various factors influence the ability of the arrangement to lead a successful process. These include the strengthening of trust between the authorities, and between the authorities and the citizens; enhancing access to the public arena; creating greater equality in power relations, and so forth. In addition, the subjects presented in the various chapters identify weaknesses that should be taken into account when implementing these arrangements:

1. **The reason for the association**: Collaborative governance arrangements demand complex processes in administrative and political terms. Accordingly, one of the main conclusions that emerged is that policy-makers should promote collaborative governance arrangements when the use of other tools has failed to lead to the shaping or implementation of policy. In other words, the chance that collaborative governance will work well increases the more it is apparent to those involved that there is no other alternative. By comparison to privatization processes, collaborative governance arrangements are perceived as a more conciliatory means – not the overt transfer of powers and budgets to non-governmental sectors, but rather an arrangement that proposes the integration of different players, offers shared information, and seeks to promote consensus among all the participants in an arena with multiple players and sectors. The advantage of this approach lies in the ability to manifest the relative advantages of the different players and to recruit them to the implementation of policy. However, this is a tool that also raises inherent difficulties in implementation. Accordingly, before rushing to implement a collaborative governance arrangement, it is worth examining two issues. The first is whether simpler modalities or different policy tools are available that could solve the problem, such as public outreach, subsidies, or regulation; and whether the decision to choose a different modality might prove more effective in terms of the public interest. The second is what contribution – in terms of democratic values – will be made to society or to the community through the adoption of collaborative governance in the specific instance, and whether this will help to secure the common goal. For example, can these arrangements strengthen knowledge and expertise that cannot be secured by other means, or can they contribute to the legitimacy of public action in a manner that cannot otherwise be achieved?

2. **Power relations between the players**: Collaborative governance arrangements are one of the responses to the multiplicity of players in the policy-making arena and in the process of implementation. It might be assumed that when applying this mechanism, a solution would be found to the preexisting power relations. The chapters in this book show that preexisting power relations between the players exert a clear influence on the manner of implementation of the collaborative governance arrangements. In some cases, when central and local government institutions are weak by comparison to an increasingly strong civil society, these arrangements can contribute to governance. However, when central government, or civil society organizations, are strong, they may be unwilling to relinquish their power on entering the partnership. In these cases, the arrangement may not offer any advantage, primarily since these arrangements will not entail substantive collaborative governance. We saw this, for example, in processes in the field of education in which collaborative governance arrangements were developed, initiated by local authorities or by civil society organizations; a tendency could be seen for the players from central government or social organizations to preserve their power. In other words, the participatory framework did not necessarily create change in the preexisting patterns of power. Accordingly, when structuring collaborative governance arrangements, the way the different players enter the partnership and the level of their trust in the mechanism are important factors. To what extent are they willing to relinquish power in return for partnership? How much more important to them is the joint task as opposed to maintaining the interest of their own organizational territory? All these factors determine the fate of the partnership and influence the manner in which the formal arrangement itself is institutionalized. These factors also determine the significance of the process and its democratic ramifications, as well as the chances that it will make a substantive contribution. The genuine recruitment of all the players in a manner that creates trust can lead to meaningful results. Conversely, the retreat of players from the process and their return to hierarchical patterns of action that ignore the agreements formulated through the collaborative governance arrangements may weaken the collaborative character and the effectiveness of these arrangements in terms of governance.

3. **Trust between the players**: Most of the chapters in this book, as well as numerous studies in other countries, suggest that trust is the most vital link in collaborative governance arrangements. Recognition by the partners of the need to build relations of trust is a basic condition for association in a collaborative governance arrangement. It was found that these arrangements are sometimes based on existing trust, sometimes the arrangements themselves create and maintain trust between partners, and in some instances both patterns can be seen. Trust is based largely on expectations, on the level of vulnerability, and on a belief that the partner’s expectations will be met and that things it holds dear will not be damaged during the joint process (Klijn et al., 2010). It is difficult to gauge exactly how important trust is as a central component, since this is an abstract concept based on gradual accumulation. Some degree of trust already existed when the players entered the partnership; another part was created during the process, influenced by external constraints. How can we evaluate whether trust was eroded or reinforced? Nevertheless, there is agreement that trust is a very important element.

 The description in the previous chapters identifies two key variables that influence the consolidation of trust: The level of institutionalization of the collaborative governance as a formal arrangement, and recognition of the joint interest. It was found that the more permanent and organized the character of the action, and the more the partners adhered to it, the greater the level of trust and the observance of the rules. A further side-effect is growing mutual recognition of the role of all the players and the place each one fills in a clearer arrangement. For example, the chapter by Inbar Horowitz and Michal Rom emphasizes the importance of the structure and management of the meetings between the various stakeholders as the foundation for creating the trust that permits joint action. A second example is provided in the chapter by Naomi Appel and Lihi Lahat on the regional sustainability partnership. This instance shows that the infrastructure of the meetings in itself, the forums developed on various levels, including regular arrangements and meetings, became a central factor in creating greater commitment and trust between the players. In general it can be argued that the evidence shows that when players entering into an arrangement recognize the joint interest and the reason why they have joined the partnership – i.e. what they can contribute to the arrangement and how it can contribute to them – the level of trust and sharing between the players increases. A joint interest can also lead to the strengthening of the joint action.

4. **The missing or required policy component for success**: The various chapters yield the conclusion that the collaborative governance arrangement may contribute more to promoting public values when its participants need to create legitimacy for policy; when there is a need for additional, and usually specific, knowledge in order to make decisions; when bureaucratic mechanisms are delaying decisions and their implementation; and when there is a need to create legitimacy for governmental institutions among weakened and excluded population groups.

5. **The missing or required policy component for non-success**: The chapters suggest that policy makers will avoid collaborative governance (or will discontinue an arrangement that has been established) when: They already had or have enough power to set policy and to control its implementation without partners; the partnership is expensive or complex for them; they have enough power to withdraw from the mechanism; or when the arrangement established is one for the sake of show and is not based on full mutuality, as required (i.e. it constitutes a channel for transferring information or creating legitimacy without mutual responsibility for the full process of shaping and implementing policy).

**3. Democratic Aspects of Collaborative Governance, and the Question of Accountability**

Collaborative governance arrangements relate to the reallocation of resources, authorities, and power, and accordingly they may constitute a manifestation of the democratic process (Sorenson & Torfing, 2009). Moreover, while the participants in collaborative governance engage in the democratic act, they also present an alternative to the classic and hierarchical democratic structure (Booher, 2004; Pierre, 2009). Two key principles influenced by these changes form the focus of interest: Representation and accountability. Several chapters focused on these issues: Do collaborative governance mechanisms manifest, or perhaps even reinforce, democratic processes? This question leads to two substantive secondary questions. The first relates to the character of the arrangement: are collaborative governance arrangements indeed democratic – and perhaps even more democratic, in the sense that they enhance the partners’ participation and create an opportunity for substantive equality – as a means for improving policy setting? The second question is related to the ramifications of the state’s accountability: how does the arrangement influence the accountability of public officials? Does the mechanism increase the state’s accountability, or is it actually liable to lead to the weakening of accountability in the areas subject to its authority? And is it possible to promote an arrangement that will constitute Democratic Collaborative Governance (DCG)? The chapters of this book suggest that these issues still constitute a challenge for collaborative governance arrangements.

One of the basic components used to define democracy regards it as a political system in which government is based on a fair and open mandate from all eligible citizens (Hague, Harrop & McCormick, 2016). In the narrow sense, democracy can be defined as a method for collective decision making, one of whose chief components is equality between its participants (Christiano, 2018). The articles in the book suggest that collaborative governance arrangements in Israel indeed enhance the possibility for the participants to make their voices heard and to do so more equally than in the past. In other words, more diverse stakeholders are indeed present in these arrangements. Examples of this include actions in weak local authorities, the regional sustainability partnership, the 5x2 project, or various practical initiatives implemented in Bedouin society. In at least some cases, however, it is unclear whether the governance arrangements led to substantive changes in the existing power relations and to substantive equality between the partners in the process. In other words, collaborative governance arrangements may constitute a more inclusive arena for the players to make their voices heard, but they do not necessarily enhance their ability to influence policy. Accordingly, they do not in themselves constitute more democratic arrangements. It can also be argued that even if collaborative governance can contribute to strengthening democratic processes, this does not mean that every gathering for such an arrangement automatically creates substantive equality. Thus an examination of the contribution these arrangements make to strengthening democratic processes requires an analysis of the identity and status of the players and of their power before this question can be determined.

Additional aspects are also instructive on the relationship between these arrangements and the democratic process. In some of the initiatives described in the various chapters, collaborative governance arrangements developed due to a pragmatic need, and not necessarily due to normative aspects. Accordingly, these arrangements did not provide a substantive solution to the democratic deficit, i.e. to a value-based changing of priorities, manifesting the preferences of different groups in the population. In some places, collaborative governance arrangements reinforce manifestations of democracy among population groups whose voices would not be heard at all had they not participated in the initiatives. Examples of this include the Bedouin citizens (and in particular Bedouin women) in the Negev, or the representation of the preferences of voiceless groups in weak local authorities.

The ability to meet the demands of the collaborative governance arrangement raises a question concerning the responsibility of the state or local authority. The question whether collaborative governance arrangements necessarily require the authority to relinquish power and direct responsibility toward the public in order to involve other players fully has not been fully clarified. It is important that the use of collaborative governance arrangements in areas that impact on broad sections of the public be led by the empowered representatives of the state, since in the final analysis the state will bear the main responsibility. However, at least some of the examples presented in the book were actually initiated by players from civil society or the business sector. We have seen that despite their innovative character, collaborative governance arrangements did not always manage to break down old patterns of behavior between organizations and governmental authorities.

In this context, it is worth noting the aspect of accountability and its significance in terms of the collaborative governance arrangements. On the one hand, the expectation is that a larger number of players will be involved; on the other, the formal and legal responsibility not only remains intact – citizens continue to regard the government as responsible – but in the current area, following the new reforms in public administration, the problem of accountability actually becomes more acute. The danger is that the pragmatic dimension of collaborative governance mechanisms may fail to consider the values it serves and accordingly, in practice, may replicate the same value-based principles it was ostensibly established to confront (Dahl & Soss, 2014). Thus, for example, if the goal of collaborative governance is to offer an alternative and a balance, as well as more inclusive mechanisms that involved diverse stakeholders and players, in response to the trends toward privatization and “market”-driven economic perceptions, it is important to consider carefully whether these arrangements actually change or perpetuate these trends. The adoption of arrangements that appear to be more democratic does not automatically serve democratic principles. Accordingly, collaborative governance arrangements challenge democratic arrangements (Booher, 2004). The following is a list of factors that encourage the reinforcement of the democratic approach and the resulting proceedings, based on the chapters in this book:

1. **Pragmatic need motivates normative change in democracy**: The collaborative governance mechanisms developed due to a pragmatic need resulting from the new public administrative reforms. In normative terms, this process destabilized the classic democratic structure, based on clear institutions and processes and on a normative affinity between responsibility and authority. Collaborative governance mechanisms require a different conceptual approach to this affinity, whereby the starting point is that the motivation behind these mechanisms is to promote public values.

2. **Creating pluralism**: Collaborative governance arrangements are not sufficiently grounded in conventional democratic theories. The pluralistic dimension on which the collaborative governance arrangement is based may be the product of programmatic, rather than normative, necessity. Moreover, when a player that holds power does not see any value in the process, or has no interest in relinquishing authority, pluralism is not a key value in setting policy. In such cases, the other players must consider whether there is any point participating in the partnership.

3. **Innovation in the political process**: in practice, collaborative governance mechanisms manage political processes. In this sense, the deliberative process that forms an integral part of this practice allows an unusual glimpse into political processes. We can see that collaborative governance arrangements are still influenced by the bureaucratic process of the distribution of resources. However, the process allows a greater degree of budgetary flexibility, and perhaps even a measure of pluralism, in decisions about the allocation of sources, in a manner that may restructure the relations between players from different sectors and policy.

4. **Development in civil society**: Collaborative governance arrangements may manifest the existing power relations in civil society, and may not necessarily lead to a balance between the players in the process. Powerful organizations may be manifested more prominently than others, thereby preserving the power relations rather than creating change in patterns of action in civil society. Accordingly, in this arena, too, it is important to ensure balance and to reinforce weaker players in the deliberative process of collaborative governance. This can be achieved by two means: firstly, by ensuring that they are partners in the process; and secondly, by ensuring that they have sufficient information and capacity to make their voices heard in a balanced manner in the process.

**Collaborative Governance: An Epilogue and a Preface**

Cooperation between diverse players inside and outside of government is not a new phenomenon. However, collaborative governance, as an arrangement, seeks to institutionalize the process of setting and implementing policy through a participatory, deliberative, and consensual process in a manner that includes more stakeholders and is more formal and binding than in the past. In this sense, collaborative governance is a policy tool that adds to the range of policy instruments to which authorities have access in order to shape and implement public policy. As a practice, collaborative governance arrangements are also becoming more widespread in the Israeli context.

The chapters of this book have raised questions regarding the advantages, disadvantages, and limitations of collaborative governance as a governance arrangement in a democracy. In the Israeli context, these arrangements appear to have permitted a degree of openness that offers a solution to centralization and to failure to implement policy in numerous fields. By way of example, they created motivation to make progress in issues where no movement had been forthcoming for years (such as mathematics teaching, the environment, or advancing weakened local authorities); they facilitated the coalescing of joint interests in a manner that secured advantages of scale, as in the case of the sustainability partnership; they permitted the expansion of the range of responses to a problem, as in the case of the 5x2 Initiative; they encouraged the recruitment and pooling of resources, thereby enabling the implementation of policy, as in the field of education in the local authorities; and they legitimized processes among populations that have been suspicious of state institutions, such as Bedouin society. However, and in the same context, the impact of the recognized defects in public administration mechanisms in Israel were also apparent, such as the tendency toward centralization; also apparent was the impact of defects in collaborative governance mechanisms themselves, such as their inherent democratic deficit, which impedes and even prevents the desired change. Since collaborative governance arrangements in Israel have been based on a strong and broad normative democratic foundation, this has led most of the existing mechanisms to confine themselves to essentially pragmatic achievements.

We are confident that the examples presented from the Israeli case will help strengthen the theoretical literature on this subject and enhance the understanding of processes in other countries. Key components of the collaborative governance model (trust, leadership, the history of power relations between the players, operational mechanisms, and the context in which the collaborative governance arrangements are maintained) are all relevant to understanding developments not only in the Israeli context, but also in other democratic countries.

Lastly, we should highlight the main theoretical contribution of this book, beginning with the modular definition it presents and its guiding questions: What contribution does collaborative governance make to promoting public values and strengthening the democratic process? Regarding the definition, we have seen that various forms of collaborative governance are manifested in practice. The modular definition formulated on the basis of the discussions in the research group, which helped examine the empirical cases, shows that it is possible not only to offer a different definition of collaborative governance, but it is also possible, within a single definition, to identify different levels of implementation of these arrangements. This perspective allows us to present different action practices within the borders of the definition of collaborative governance, focusing not only on the question of what exists or not, but also examining the development of these arrangements over time.

The second contribution derives from the answer to the two questions that guided the discussion in this book: the ability of collaborative governance arrangements to promote public values and strengthen democratic processes. We found that various factors influence the ability of this mechanism to contribute to the advancement of public values and of more democratic processes, while other factors may weaken these same aspects. As noted, these factors are related to the environment of the association; the preexisting power relations between the institutions; and the content of the relevant policy. In this sense, the selection of the collaborative governance mechanism can reasonably be expected to promote public values and democratic processes when: Firstly – there is no other way to promote public policy; secondly – the mechanism is based on a clear awareness on the part of the institutions of state (central/local government); thirdly – diverse stakeholders are represented, ensuring stronger and more balanced manifestation of different voices in the process; and fourthly – the mechanism includes an honest and open process for substantive deliberation about the modalities relevant to the issue at hand.

Thus it has been found that in order to create collaborative governance mechanisms in Israel, there is a need, at least, to reinforce the components of trust; to redefine jointly the common interest; to be aware of the tendency to perpetuate preexisting power relations; and to ensure a genuine desire for the joint discovery of different modalities. Conversely, the defective implementation of collaborative governance is liable to perpetuate and even reinforce the trends that the new arrangements were supposed to remedy. This will weaken the elected governmental bodies, their governance capacity, and their legitimacy to set policy for the public benefit.

At this stage, collaborative governance is not a governance arrangement that replaces the existing arrangements. Rather, it is an addition to the existing instruments. Its strengths are more apparent in terms of its ability to cope with the institutional challenge and to strengthen the pragmatic capabilities of governmental bodies; its weaknesses lie in the democratic challenge: Can this mechanism manifest different voices in society in a substantive manner and create greater balance between the preferences of different population groups within policy processes?

The attempt to create alternatives to the traditional format of public administration is almost as old as the history of bureaucracy. The introduction of management methods drawn from non-public sectors and the expansion of the borders of the organization in terms of its participants are not in themselves sufficient to create paradigmatic change in public management. The combination of the weaknesses of the state, the crisis in governance, the blurring of institutional boundaries, and, above all, the changes occurring in democracy creates a window of new opportunities to introduce paradigmatic changes. In certain conditions, these changes may lead to collaborative governance.

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