**Reviving Regional Cities/Towns: the Case for Catalytic Innovation**
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**Introduction**

The only people who can bring about sustainable revival to towns and cities in decline are those who live and work there. Despite this being obvious, we have yet to learn how to harness the power of diverse people working together over time to achieve a common good. By town and city revival, we are talking about 'thrival' – not just survival or economic security but resolving some of society's deepest problems. It is our contention that to achieve thrival, we need a disruptive innovation, or in this instance, a 'catalytic innovation' that will bring about social change. It will achieve this through scaling and replication that breaks apart previous arrangements of who gets what, and creates a new value network. This article proposes that the new value network to be created is public value that recognises the contribution of cooperation. The term 'public value' has mostly been used by the private sector to refer to its purpose of creating economic value for shareholders. For the public sector, however, it refers to its purpose of creating public social value toward the common good (Moore & Khagram, 2004). Importantly, public sector researchers have noted that increased public value can be achieved through governance that can more effectively solve problems that the public cares about, so enhancing the quality of life for all constituents and for future generations (Evans & Reid, 2013), (Stoker, 2006). This is the starting point for the following paper.

A catalytic innovation of this nature would preference co-decisional governance between everyday people and governments over top down or bottom up decision-making. To achieve this, it would incline towards co-creating public wisdom over relying on expert advice, and would preference 'power with' everyday people rather than 'power over' them. We are not suggesting the overthrow of our current systems of democracy or even of more totalitarian regimes. As the Reign of Terror following the French Revolution and the Salem Witch trials show, indeed like the recent Arab Spring, mob behaviour and revolution often result in just another form of 'power over' and rarely fulfil the future they promise. However, we are suggesting a radical change in power relations, so everyday people have a strong sense of efficacy, of being the "co-authors" of their joint lives (Sen, 2001). We believe this would be catalytic in the same sense of the term used in the physical sciences to represent a material that speeds up or enables another series of chemical reactions. Namely, that becoming co-authors in the destiny of their community in a particular aspect, has the potential to stimulate far more broad, positive action and mutually beneficial reaction, including economic development, social capital and trust.

Catalytic innovation can provide solutions that are good enough to address unresolved social problems in ways that the status quo cannot. While disruptive innovations change the market place, catalytic innovations positively impact social problems. The following quotes are informative as to how this can occur

*"When you disrupt a familiar system, you change perspective— you change the way a community can define themselves to inspire future innovation."* Matthew Manos, CEO CauseCast.

Social change disruption, catalytic innovation - whatever you want to call it, the application of new ways of thinking about thorny issues that face our world is crucial to bridging the disconnect between different stakeholders and forging a unified path. Innovation in social change is as important as innovation in business in making breakthroughs and succeeding. And because it's social change we're talking about, I'd argue that innovation is even more vital than in the business sphere, because inadequacies and inefficiencies in the channels around changing the world often mean the difference between life and death.
(http://www.causecast.com/blog/disrupting-the-business-for-social-responsibility)

How can we achieve such catalytic innovation?  Rather than imagining it to be like a technological disruptive innovation which sweeps the marketplace, we believe it's more likely to be radical, but incremental change - one step at a time, gathering public value, including social, economic and political capital, until it accrues sufficient momentum to bring about social change. This process already has gathered some momentum – stoked on the one side by dissatisfaction with democratic governments, and on the other, stimulated by innovations in governance aimed at empowering people to improve public value. Such innovative governance initiatives include deliberative democracy initiatives across the globe (Hartz-Karp and Carson, forthcoming, 2017): empowered community development work, in particular Asset Based Community Driven/ABCD (see section 2.2)  in both developing and developed countries (Kenyon & Black, 2001), and co-decisional initiatives such as Participatory Budgeting (see section 2.3) which have proliferating across the globe (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke, & Allegretti, 2012). It is our contention that we need each of these methodologies working in tandem (as well as others) to create a more holistic, integrated methodology and process that can achieve scaling and repetition. Describing such an integrated methodology and process is the intent of this paper.

## 1. Aiming towards Catalytic Innovation

### 1.1 Breaking apart Assumptions

A catalytic innovation as described above firstly requires the surfacing and breaking apart of the underlying assumptions of social and political life, in order to create new arrangements that value the contribution of cooperation. We begin with political life, examining assumptions about how a democracy does and could operate:

The first assumption is that elected officials, representing the people have been given a 'mandate' to make decisions on behalf of the people. However elected members are only very rarely representative of the demographics of the people they represent, being overwhelmingly more male, educated and wealthy than those they

represent (Hollander, 2003). Given the increasing lack of participation in political parties and in voting at elections (where this isn't required such as Australia), as well as the frequent changes of the political party in power, and the oft bemoaned similarities between what the major parties are promising, as well as the increasing distrust of citizens in their government (Edelmen, 2015), it makes the notion of elected members having the 'mandate' to make decisions on behalf of the people, somewhat moot.

The second assumption is that politicians together with 'experts' know best and hence should make all the important decisions. We have outlined the assumptions underlying this pattern of decision-making in the following chart (See Diagram 1)

**Diagram 1: Democratic Governance – Underlying Assumptions and Resultant Actions**

| FROM | TO |
|---|---|
| *Assumption: selected representatives, technocrats and experts should make the decisions, hence:* <br> **Action**; **Officials frame the issue.** <br> **Data is analysed, often with 'expert' advice. Officials devise solution(s) shaped by risks, costs, political ideology.** | *Assumption: everyday people have the capacity to collaboratively resolve tough issues, hence:* <br> **Action**; **Officials determine how decision-making power is best shared in this case.** |
| *Assumption: the public is disinterested, self interested and/or ill informed, so public is unlikely to add value to the policy or decisions, hence:* <br> **Action**; **Officials consult/inform and listen to stakeholders, experts and interested others to discern expert views and public opinion. Efforts are made to inform/educate and to invite people to: "have your say".** | *Assumption: resolving complex issues requires diverse viewpoints, egalitarian deliberation and commitment to the outcomes being influential, hence:* <br> **Action**; **The broad public is given opportunities to frame the issue, suggest ideas, develop discourses, and create possible options, providing a clearer idea of the 'public will' on this issue.** |
| *Assumption: Since proper process has been implemented, expert opinion considered and public opinion canvassed, the community will comply, hence:* <br> **Action**; **Inputs contrary to the government will, are seen to be largely unhelpful; officials may modify the solution to mollify, or keep it 'as is'. Plans are finalised and officials formally advise the public.** | *Assumption: Deliberative, collaborative governance will enable wiser, more implementable decisions, with the capacity to be reflexive, hence:* <br> **Action**; **Mini publics are convened to deliberate the issue– a microcosm of the population is comprehensively informed, consider different viewpoints, exchange reasons, explore values and options, assess options, search for common ground and develop recommendations.** |
| *Assumption: with education/PR/information, the public will see the wisdom of the government solution, accept it and move on.* <br> **Action**: **Decisions continue to be made the same top-down way i.e. using power over.** | *Assumption: if the public feels involved throughout it is more likely to co-own and co-enact solutions* <br> **Action**: **Decisions as to the pathway forward are made collaboratively with the broader public, i.e. using power with.** |
| **RESULTS** <br> **If Plans are Implemented, or are delayed, not implemented or are ineffective** <br> Public feels unheard, disaffected and/or angry. Officials think public is self interested, or un/misinformed. Public resists implementation. Officials defend it. Assumptions are reinforced. | **RESULTS** <br> **If Plans are Implemented and Effective.** <br> The new assumptions are reinforced. <br> **If Plans are delayed, not Implemented or ineffective.** <br> Negative public outcry is mitigated since it was their fellow citizens who deliberated and decided. |

*From (Hartz-Karp & Weymouth, (Forthcoming 2017))*

### 1.2. A new model for Catalytic Innovation to increase Public Value

The alternative to the current mode of democratic governance described in Diagram 1 proposes that the most effective governance mode will provide continual

opportunities for 'power with'. The aim is to create a 'virtuous cycle', where people in the community feel both responsible and capable of resolving difficult issues, and there is sufficient trust between the people the government to share power, so public wisdom is integral to decision-making. For such a virtuous cycle to become embedded, however, there needs to be repeated co-decision-making over time. Moreover, for this virtuous cycle to move from local to region/national, possibly even global dimensions, it needs to be 'scaled out' to reach more and more people and 'scaled up' to deal with increasing complexity (Weymouth and Hartz-Karp 2015).

***Diagram 2: Catalytic innovation to realise public value through co-operation***
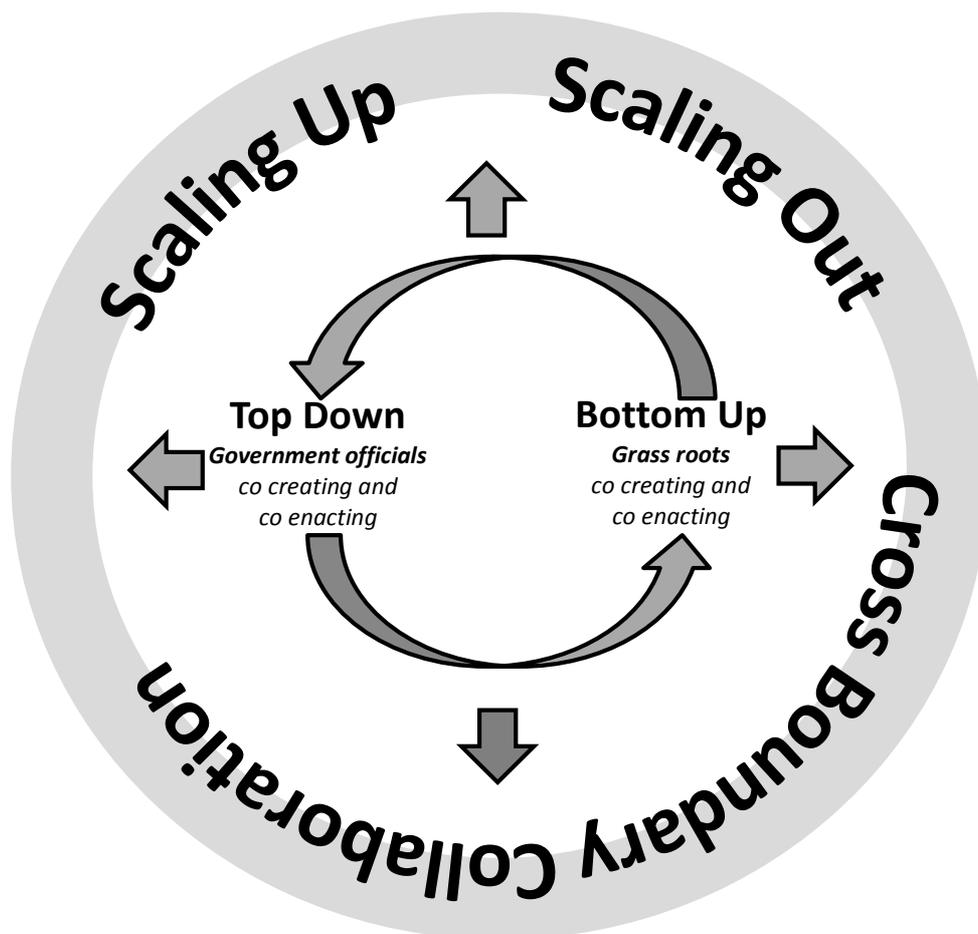


Diagram 2 illustrates 3 complementary strategies for generating catalytic innovation to revive regional communities. It shows: 1/ the harnessing of grassroots, bottom-up energy and initiative from the local public, and the enabling of this energy and initiative by local government. 2/ the willingness of local government to share power with their constituents to resolve problems and co-create solutions. 3/ powerful synergies created scaling out and scaling up initiatives, including via cooperation across governance boundaries. In the model we propose, all 3 strategies work to reinforce and assist each other to create powerful social change towards vibrant public value.

## 2. Methodologies working in tandem to create a more holistic, integrated methodology and process that can achieve scaling and repetition.

### 2.1 Deliberative Democracy – a Case Study in Western Australia

Deliberative democracy work over 4 years in the City-Region of Greater Geraldton Western Australia over 4 years provides an example of how deliberative democracy can stimulate city-region sustainable revival. This work was not a series of deliberative democracy initiatives, but rather a sustained methodology for resolving tough problems and opportunities as they emerged. Deliberative democracy plans were continually altered to respond to emerging exigencies; deliberation designs were contingent on the purpose and desired outcomes; reflexivity – reflection and adaptation was integral to each phase in the process. Although the following chart presents these deliberative initiatives as if it was a planned process, in fact the chart evolved inductively. As opportunities and challenges that arose were dealt with using deliberative democracy initiatives, the chart became a way of showing how one deliberation built on the next and how outcomes were incorporated into the operations and planning of the City-region. (See Diagram 3).

Diagram 3: Deliberative Collaborative Governance in Greater Geraldton (from (Weymouth & Hartz-Karp, 2015))
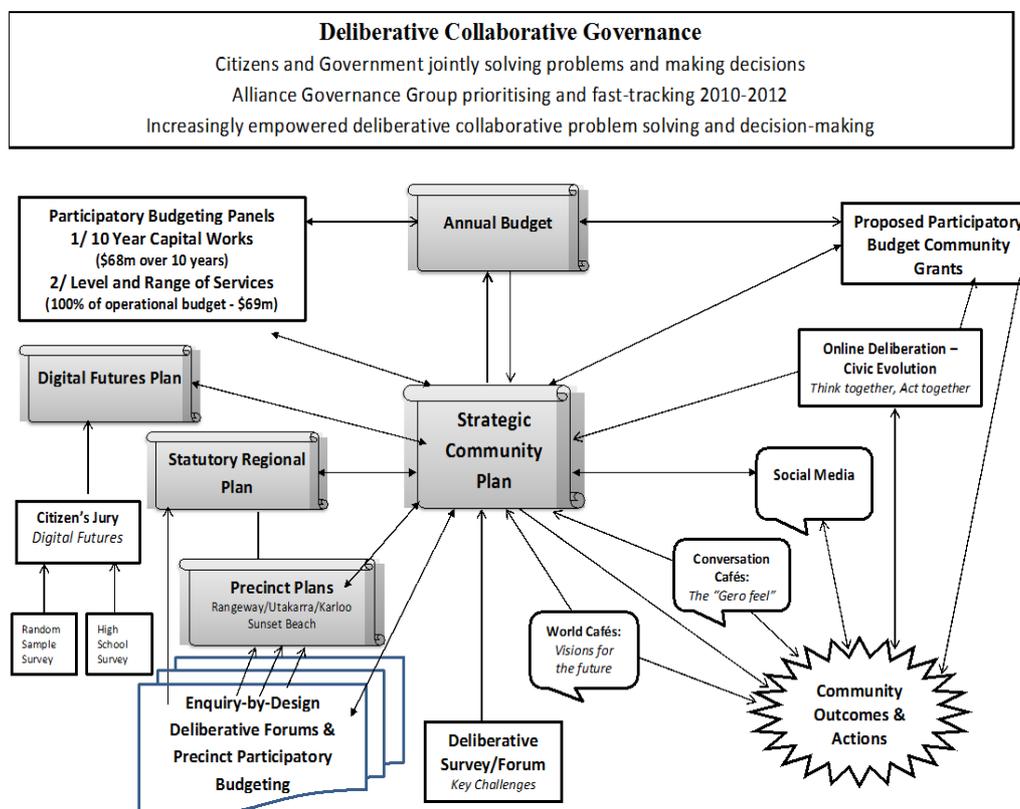


In a unique partnership between Curtin University and the City of Greater Geraldton, a long term action research project commenced in 2010 to help revive the City-Region, respond to sustainability challenges it was facing. The University

functioned as an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party, working alongside the City and its constituents. Following on from a large public launch, an inclusive Alliance Governance Group was instituted to oversee the process, trialing a new form of collaborative governance. The Alliance Governance Group, which included key industry and community decision-makers as well as several randomly sampled residents, played an important role in securing credibility with all parties, making the process transparent and giving nervous elected Councillors more confidence in the notion of 'sharing power'. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of operation, however, all parties mutually decided to disband The Group because of lack of decision-making capability on the issues of importance – that was left with the elected Council.

Geraldton, like many regional Australian county towns, had few social groups operating in the community apart from sporting groups. To bridge this gap, at the outset of this initiative, community members were invited to volunteer to become 'Community Champions', responsible for learning and implementing small-group deliberative techniques in the community. They conducted 36 World Cafés on the future of Geraldton, involving roughly 400 residents, afterwards submitting their groups' ideas for change to the Alliance Group for prioritization. Simultaneously, online groups submitted their proposals for change, using an innovative online deliberation platform, CivicEvolution (now called WeCo123). The priorities established were fast-tracked for implementation by the City.

A large-scale Deliberative Survey was undertaken to gather public views on key sustainability challenges facing the community. A randomly selected sample of 3,000 residents received detailed questionnaires and were invited to attend a 'deliberation day' to learn more about the issues. In a Deliberative Poll, where around 200 participants once again filled out the community survey (to calibrate the results so they would be representative of the population demographics) listened to different perspectives, cross-examined speakers, discussed the issues raised in small groups and without coming to any decisions, filled out the survey for a final time. Both City and Council decision-makers said they were "very surprised" at the findings that most respondents wanted the City to be far more proactive in creating a sustainable future for the region, including supporting action to achieve carbon neutrality and to resist mining companies push for a fly-in-fly-out workforce. These very supportive community views were even more pronounced after the day's deliberation when respondents learned more about the issues from various viewpoints. Social media accompanied all these initiatives to maximize exposure of the issues and encourage public interaction. The widely read newspaper was more successful than the City in encouraging comment on community proposals.

During deliberations, the community had frequently talked about wanting economic development but not wanting to lose "the Gero feel". To understand what this meant, in 2011, Community Champions held small-group face-to-face deliberations called Conversation Cafés in the local cafes (with signs with time and topic posted in their windows, and cheaper coffee offered to participants). The outcomes of these discussions became background information for the deliberative workshops on City Region planning that followed.

The State Government required Geraldton to develop a new 'Statutory Regional Plan', due to a prior amalgamation with other local governments to form Greater Geraldton. To ensure that the Plan was co-developed by the people, a large-scale 21st Century Dialogue with an integrated Enquiry-By-Design workshop was held over a three-day period. A community group of just over 300 participants (1/3 randomly sampled, 1/3 invited stakeholder representatives and 1/3 respondents to broad advertisements) deliberated over 3 days. In parallel, a multidisciplinary expert team created geographical picture plans from the people's ideas and priorities. The outcomes of this process became the foundation of the new Statutory Plan that guides future City Region planning policies and decisions.

The results of the public deliberations held to this point were integrated into a Community Charter—the first time such a document had been developed. While in some ways this document mirrored the sustainability stance the City had been taking, in other ways it was far more ambitious, particularly in terms of civic engagement and proactive strategies for sustainability. The Community Charter later became the backbone of the 'Strategic Community Plan', also demanded by State Government. As per State regulation, this plan now drives the funding and operations of the City-Region.

In 2012, the planning effort moved from region level to precinct planning, starting with the area that housed the most socio-economically deprived residents which had been neglected and under-funded for decades. A key focus was to renew the area while ensuring that disadvantaged residents would not be driven out by gentrification. The 2$^{nd}$ area selected offered an opportunity to develop an activity hub in a relatively soulless residential area, since government land had become available. Residents worked with planners to re-design their precinct in two Enquiry-by-Design deliberations, each conducted over several weeks. To involve residents in immediately being able to bring about some change to their neighbourhood, each precinct deliberation concluded with a Participatory Budgeting process in which local residents were empowered to determine how $50,000 would be allocated in their precinct. Residents put forward proposals, voted on them, and decided which projects to support, up to the $50,000 limit. Participant representatives then worked with the City to implement them. To continue this effort to keep the people involved in improving their neighbourhood, the City also helped residents establish a local 'Progress Association' in each area, providing each community with a more direct link with the City administration.

When Geraldton won the international IBM Smarter Cities Challenge and nationally, had been named a recipient of the early roll-out of the new National Broadband Network, it was deemed critical to elicit broad public buy-in to a more technologically innovative future. A survey was sent to a large random sample of the population as well as to high school students for their views on their digital future – how the City-region could maximize their opportunities. Survey recipients were asked to join a deliberation group of 20 'Community Trustees' (similar to a Citizens' Jury). Over several sessions the Trustees 'cross-examined' the views and proposals of the team of visiting IBM global experts and offered their opinions. The IBM team used their feedback in their final report. The Community Trustees also developed

their own ideas for the Region's digital future. The community digital plan that took shape was delivered formally by the Trustees to the Federal Minister for Communication who visited the Region, and this report was later integrated into the City's plan for a digital and carbon-neutral City Region.

In 2013, the elected Council decided to significantly increase the City-Region's rates and taxes, which unsurprisingly, provoked considerable public anger. In response to an official compliant lodged by lawyers on behalf of the citizens, I a mediation process, the Council promised more collaboration and transparency in budgetary decisions in the future. Specifically, they committed to pioneering Participatory Budgeting, a process for empowering people to make decisions on the allocation of a budget – usually only a small proportion, but in this instance the entire budget. The participants of both PBs were selected via stratified random sampling. The first PB Panel of 30 participants deliberated over 5 Saturdays to determine the allocation of the ten-year capital works budget. The elected Council accepted the PB Report's recommendations without change. The second PB of 40 participants deliberated over 8 Saturdays on the range and level of City Region services, allocating 100 percent of the operational budget. These deliberations were a combination of a Multi Criteria Analysis and 21$^{st}$ Century Deliberation using the CivicEvolution platform (now WeCom123), which enabled more complex and transparent decision-making.

By instituting public deliberation as the expected way to respond to problems and opportunities over the 4 year period of this action research, Greater Geraldton demonstrated that everyday people are both able and willing to take responsibility for making decisions collaboratively and in the common good. Moreover, it demonstrated that government can free itself from the influence of organised, moneyed interests and "promote the good of the many" (Jefferson, 1939, p31). However, on the worrying side – the momentum for this political and social change has not persisted over time, especially given changed circumstances. The City-Region has since undergone changes of personnel in all key leadership positions in both the administrative and elected bodies, together with a significant economic downturn caused by the mining 'bust' in Australia. From follow-up interviews of people in the region, it would appear that the willingness of the City-region decision-makers to continue experimenting with co-decision-making has all but disappeared. So, what could have been done differently to ensure its longevity?

We know that globally, some co-decisional initiatives have become institutionalised. For example, Participatory Budgeting (see 3.3) has not only persisted but proliferated across the globe. Although one can point to many reasons for this, e.g. the financial support of the World Bank, the most relevant factor in our view is the constituents' outrage when a change in government has tried to either get rid of or diminish the power of the PB, making it consultational rather than co-decisional (Ref). In short, the local people made it almost impossible for political or economic change to disrupt the PB initiative. This did not happen in Greater Geraldton. In our view, this could have been because the action research overly focused on only one half of the equation - opportunities for deliberative democracy and ongoing co-decision-making that gave everyday people the sense of co-

authorship of their joint lives. The other half of the equation – helping to lay the groundwork to enable grassroots initiatives to spring up, unaided by government, was not given enough attention. In times of stress, and reduced socio-economic status, individuals' sense of efficacy (and health) tends to be highly vulnerable (Cáceres and Marmot, 212).

It is our contention that as the socio-economic capacity of a town significantly declines, this is also likely to exacerbate individuals' sense of powerlessness. So, in regional towns that have lost or are without a firm economic base, people feel significantly less in control over their personal /family lives and their joint community life. This is not helped if the town is without any economic drivers of value to governments, often resulting in towns being neglected and without resources, including hope, for economic revival. Traditionally, community development has played an important role in this regard

## 2.2 Community Development that maximises empowerment
Community development has been an important means of helping those living and working in communities in need, to develop social, economic and environmental gains. Sometimes, such support has been criticised as being imposed upon the people, rather than the joint creation of a community's future. However, there are now many community development processes that firmly work with the grass roots. This approach is exemplified by the principles of ABCD, Asset Based Community Driven development.

### Asset Based Community Driven - ABCD Principles
- Success is an inside job. Meaningful and lasting change comes from within.
- People act responsibly when they support and care about what they create. There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.
- Social connectedness and building relationships are critical.
- Focus on community and resident resources, capacities, strengths and aspirations (i.e. assets) instead of dwelling on needs, deficiencies and problems
- A community's strength is directly proportional to the contribution of its people's abilities and assets towards the wellbeing of the community

(Kenyon, 2014)

However, it is our contention that community development's bottom-up grassroots initiatives can also be lop-sided in that it is often unable to maximise the resources and persistence needed for sustained economic revival. In our view, we can significantly bolster the likelihood of sustained revival if we focus on connecting top down with bottom up initiatives – a new form of cooperation. This could result in a more effective model - a meeting of top down and bottom up energy, commitment and good will. Hence, if deliberative democracy and community development could progress hand in hand, also supported by co-decisional Participatory Budgeting (described below) – each one could support, build on, and enable the other. The mutual trust, cooperation and vibrancy so engendered would have a greater likelihood of sustaining economic and social/political revival and giving momentum to catalytic innovation to increase public value

**2.3 Co-Decisional Participatory Budgeting (PB)**

A Participatory Budget (PB) is the name given to a family of disparate processes across the globe that empowers everyday people (non elected citizens) to allocate at least part of a budget. Additional characteristics said to be critical if a process is to be called a PB are as follows: a/ it's based on how a limited budget is to be used; b/ the City is involved, not just a neighbourhood; c/ it's repeated over years; d/ it includes some form of public deliberation; and d/ there is some accountability that the budget allocation reflects the public's will (Sintomer, 2013).

Because budget decisions are so critical to everyday life, and are visible, tangible, immediate changes, they are an ideal way to get everyday people in that jurisdiction involved in decision-making for the whole community. For this reason, e.g. in the goldfields area in Western Australia, a PB is planned as the 1st way to get everyday people as well as stakeholder groups involved in the growth plans for the city/region which have State government funding. Similarly, there is clear evidence of the effect that PB's have on municipal spending (Spada, 2009) and some examples across the globe of PBs being implemented to stimulate local economies and bring life back to declining localities (Sintomer, Röcke, & Herzberg, 2016).

**2.4 Coordination across sectors: Examples of Government/Private Sector Top-Down Initiatives Enabling Grassroots Bottom-Up initiatives**

City revival should not be a case of grassroots bottom-up, or government top-down, or cross boundary (geographic and sector) initiative. Instead, to create public value, each sector and geographic area needs to cooperate, foster, build upon, and support the other, because such cooperation simulates powerful synergies. There are numerous examples of governments assisting grassroots innovation, so enabling far more potent results. The support given is often dependent on the level of government – local, regional or national. Such support includes:

- Land use regulation and property ownership (zoning, development approvals and conditions, rent relief, common use facilities)
- Direct resourcing (tax subsidies, direct spending, grants, hypothecation, tax incentive financing)
- Regulation and Legislation – (local laws, special districts)
- Indirect resourcing (advice, information, training)

Often the support is a combination of these mechanisms. For example, the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS), functioning over 3 decades in Australia, creates socio-economic value by providing unemployed people support to start new small businesses. The scheme is controlled by the federal government, run by the private sector which contributes indirect resourcing through business start-up

training, certification and mentoring, with direct resourcing by government to subsidise owner income and rental assistance for a start-up period.

Support for social enterprises has the potential to profoundly impact increased public value. For example, the Montreal RESO initiative is a community development corporation working for economic and social revitalisation across five neighbourhoods in Montreal's southwest following community decline in the 1980s . The corporation was set by and facilitates local activity by training, joint ventures for land development, and a job seeking agency. This provides a particularly good example of the importance of the enabling approach. The observe was demonstrated when an attempt to copy this initiative in a nearby provide was unsuccessful because it tried to impose a similar structure without grassroots support - failing to achieve deep co-ownership (Morrissette, 2008). Another example in the UK, the Sunderland City Council's scheme encouraged public sector staff to start their own social enterprises. Although laudable, this program was mostly unsuccessful because of lack of budget and training support to the applicants (Duniam & Eversole, 2013, p. 17). Instead, the City has shifted its focus to internal measure like policies and training to preference procurement from local suppliers(OECD & EU, 2015). In Australia, the City of Melbourne started "Enterprise Melbourne" to encourage the development of both social enterprises and micro businesses (http://www.onlymelbourne.com.au/enterprise-melbourne). A similar program was run by Parramatta City Council in New South Wales and found to be successful in its provision of seed funding, mentoring, networking and knowledge sharing (Miller, 2011).

An exciting initiative in Eastern Australia, the Community Chef program, has demonstrated how local governments across a region can cooperate to create social enterprises. Fourteen local governments collaborated to create several enterprise entities and construct a $124 million facility for the production and distribution of meals to take advantage of economies of scale and deficits of quality in the existing market (Darebin", 2014; Zivkovic, 2015).  There is even recognition in statute for the value of this sort of collaboration with the provision in Western Australian Law for Regional Organisations of Councils (ROC's). An example of this the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council (EMRC) in the Eastern Region of Perth. Constituted under State legislation it was an initiative of 6 adjacent local governments in1993 to gather economies of scale in waste management. Since then its role has expanded to meet community requirements for sustainability services and regional development as well as take advantage of opportunities for reduction environmental funded by other levels of government (http://www.emrc.org.au/perth-solar-city.html). Historically, at least in farming communities, regional cooperation, particularly in the form of Cooperatives, has been an integral part of agricultural development. Rather than building on this, however, cooperative strategies across regions have not been a key driver of regional town revitalisation. This is a significant opportunity to exploit to create enduring public value.

Notably, however, there are often systemic challenges to town and city governments supporting empowered decision-making by their constituents. While on the one hand, democratic governments often support citizen 'consultation' in the

development of policy, frequently, there are legislative (as well as attitudinal) problems to co-decision-making with constituents. For example, in Australia, local government is a statutory body mandated by legislation, and organised as a formal bureaucracy, with the elected body, the local Council, having final decision-making power, especially over the budget. Hence, while co-decisional Participatory Budgeting has flourished elsewhere in the globe, in Australia, it has not.

The USA has managed to get around such systemic challenges by creating PBs using the combined discretionary budget given to each Councillor each term. In Australia, as planned but not implemented in Greater Geraldton (see Diagram 3) but implemented by the City of Melville, their 'Robin Hood' PB utilises the local government grant scheme that enables communities to decide on community projects up to $100,000. The City of Melville combines the resourcing of the PB projects that receive the highest number of public votes, with indirect and regulatory resourcing. This includes compulsory education and mentoring to improve the design and presentation of proposals submitted by grassroots organisations, training for internal regulatory requirements to help proponents stay within the law, and alternative sourcing advice for unsuccessful projects (http://www.melvillecity.com.au/projectrobinhood).

**Summary**

Change is never easy. Willingness to share power when government incumbents feel it is their prerogative to make decisions is especially difficult to achieve. However, if the intent stays firmly on the government task being public value management, then the ability of citizens to affect policy outcomes, i.e. more citizen-empowered decision-making, is critical (Evans, 2009). Following international research, the investigators stated the outcome was clear, that there had to be "community ownership of governance problems and solutions to provide the conditions for accountability, legitimacy and sustainable futures as well as….'value for money'" (Evans & Reid, 2013). This research also noted as follows:

> "The democratic benefits of a public value approach are particularly significant in communities experiencing stress due to rapid social change (e.g. adverse demographic trends) or various crises from economic downturns to environmental catastrophes. These communities are more likely to survive and adapt if they are able to build a strong sense of social solidarity and cohesion. (P20)

Given the difficulty of change, particular when it comes to power relations, we have suggested that what is needed is catalytic innovation through the scaling up, scaling out and repetition of initiatives to change the value network to create public value based on cooperation. For this to occur, it would require governments to be focused on public value management, everyday people to have a more balanced view of their responsibilities as well as their rights as citizens, and the private sector's "social license" to operate to be clearly focused on creating public value. While there may be ad hoc initiatives at a national and global level that achieve such synergies, cooperation between all the sectors is more likely to happen and happen more consistently at the local level.

Towns in need of regeneration are an ideal place to start. All involved understand there is a problem, and hence are more likely to be open to new ways to think together, resolve issues together, and act together to create the future they want. Momentum in this journey can be accelerated if there is cooperation between and across sectors and geographies. As this paper has proposed, a useful to achieve this is by integrating empowered participatory methodologies, including deliberative democracy, participatory budgeting and empowered community development, each supporting the other to create city/regional thrival.

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