

John Dewey's Theory of Citizenship and Community in the Developing American Democracy as seen through the Philosophy of Pragmatism as a Public Administration Model for the Citizen's Role in Public Governance.

By

Elaine Andrews Lailas

Committee Chairman: Dr. Orion F. White, Center for Public Administration and Policy

(ABSTRACT)

At the time of the founding of the field of public administration, government was in a condition of some degree of failure. Since elitist and corrupt politics were the predominant mode of government at the time, the cause of this failure was seen as insufficient rationality, and coinciding with this, a lack of scientific information and technical expertise. Also, a popular involvement in government was perceived to be a need. This created a demand for a scientific rational government, run by technocratic experts that was, at the same time, open to popular access. In principle, this idea is consistent with Dewey's thought, but what developed is a form of government that saw science, or the process of bringing knowledge to bear on problems that made interest groups the key mode of access to policy making. This solution appeared to meet the needs of the time, while in fact it was far off the mark. In all of this, Dewey's true and more appropriate alternative was lost. These conditions still exist. The American government is a seemingly, ailing government; but the only thing that is suggested is to have more science and give groups more "participative" access. In essence, virtual gridlock has resulted. One solution is to rediscover and accurately understand Dewey, who can help us rethink science and the knowledge process in government and the possibilities for citizen involvement in government.

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Dedications are extremely personal and filled with deep emotion. Remembering my parents at this time brings to my mind their absolute confidence in me in any endeavors whether they were educational, familial, spiritual, political, and/or social.

To my parents, I express my deep gratitude for instilling in me a confidence in myself with their love and teaching me that America is truly the land of opportunity and freedom just for the determination, will, and pursuit of a dream.

To my husband, I express my deep appreciation for his love, support, and encouragement all along the way. To my children, I thank them for their stalwart support, confidence, and love. To my sisters and brother together with their families, I appreciate their encouragement.

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Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Andrews Lailas, Ph.D.

Preface

The motivation behind writing this dissertation stems from my experience as a community and/or citizen activist. This means that I experienced different processes and ways of being involved in government that effected government policy. Whether it was lobbying on Capitol Hill, serving as an advocate for women that were victims of abuse, testifying in a Public Hearing before the House of Representatives sub-committee, monitoring public hearings of the different sub-committees on the House and Senate side, serving as an advocate in Richmond at the State Capitol to the State Senate and House of Delegates, serving on committees at the local level in reviewing budgets, preparing testimony or white papers, reporting on legislation before Congress to membership of an association in different parts of the country be it in Florida, Hawaii, California, State of Washington, Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, Ohio, Minnesota, Texas, or Virginia, testifying before an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, running as a candidate for the Virginia House of Delegates, political party membership and activism, elected to the local board that has taxation responsibilities, organizing a fact-finding study/action group, marching for women's rights in Washington, D. C., down Pennsylvania Avenue towards the Capitol, standing vigil in Richmond, Virginia and in Fairfax, Virginia, and the list goes on, these experiences provided me with the necessary motivation to research further and learn how the system really works from the inside.

I have witnessed the energy, enthusiasm, and wonder of our American democracy, but also, felt the frustration, disappointment, and feelings of helplessness from fellow citizens. Is there a better way for citizens to communicate their feelings and their beliefs? What exists for citizens to express themselves, practice their ideas aloud, and not experience that feeling of not

knowing or not being on the inside with adequate information? Citizens who attempt to express themselves are sometimes turned off by an unwilling audience of public officials and impatient citizens or a barrage of bureaucratic hurdles. Does a process, forum, or platform exist that allows citizens to practice democracy? Where do we learn how to practice democracy? And, when can we practice democracy? These are the questions that peaked my interest and propelled me to conduct an intellectual study of citizenship as it relates to citizen involvement and participation in the governance of our American democracy.

Virginia Tech's Center for Public Administration and Policy, popularly known as CPAP, welcomed me in their academic program in pursuit of a doctor of philosophy degree. I would be the student who would be different from the other students in that I was studying from the perspective of a citizen rather than a public administrator or public official.