

The Institute of Public Administration of Canada
Nova Scotia Regional Group
April 15, 2008

Citizen Engagement and Consultation



Space Syntax, UK

Overview of Presentation

- The growing interest in the theory and practice of citizen involvement
 - Deliberative democracy
- Some key concepts and practices
 - Public meetings
- On-line engagement
- Some ideas for improving citizen dialogue

Question

Introduce yourselves at your tables:

- Name
- Interest in session topic
- Couple of facts about your family's origins (places, economic and social history)

(Two minutes for each person)

Democracy

**Representative
Democracy
&
Deliberative
Democracy**



Deliberative Democracy

Deliberative democracy is an approach to public decision-making where citizens affected consider the relevant facts from multiple points of view, converse with one another to understand and think critically about all the options, and reach an consensus on action to be taken



Adapted from Deliberative-Democracy Consortium 2003

www.deliberative-democracy.net

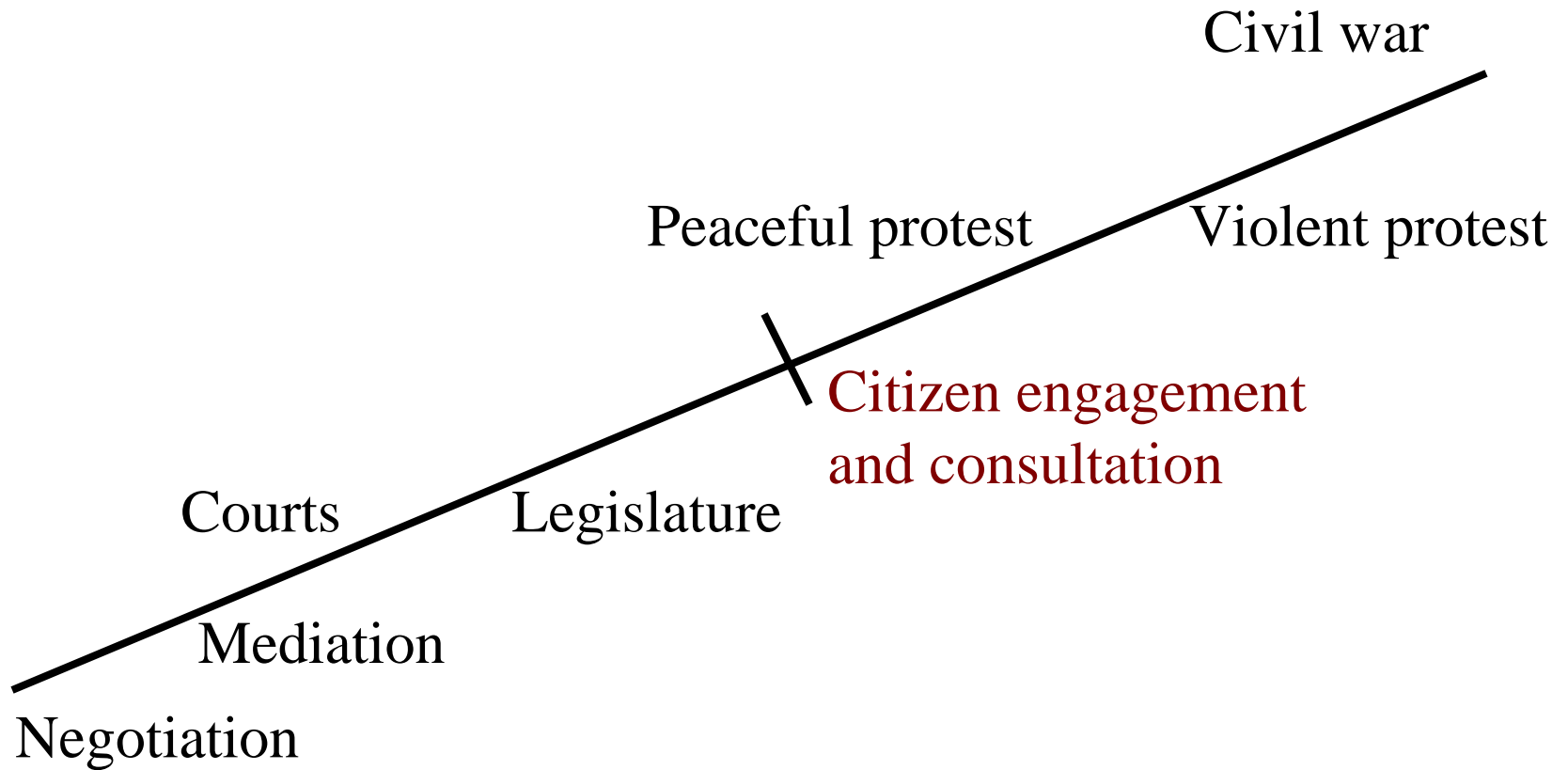
Interest in Citizen Engagement

- Nova Scotia
- Canada
- USA
- UK
- Europe
- Australia





Citizen Involvement



Three Approaches

1. Public communication

To educate or inform citizens

2. Public consultation

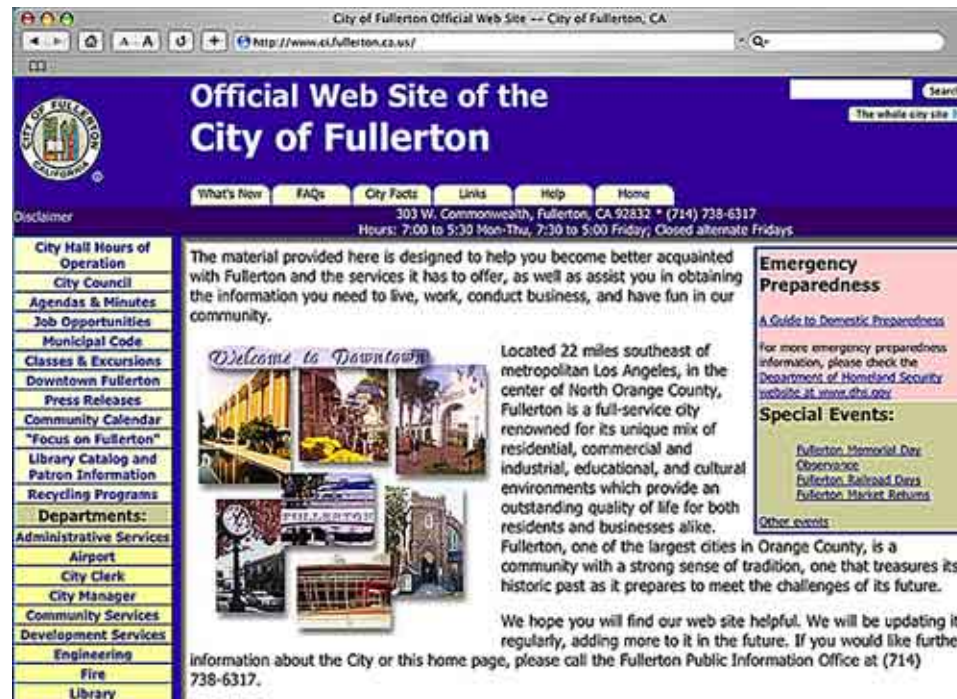
To learn from citizens

3. Citizen engagement

To empower citizens and strengthen community bonds

1. Public communication

- Objective is to explain or inform citizens or stakeholders about an action or policy change by government



The screenshot shows the official website of the City of Fullerton, CA. The browser address bar displays "http://www.ci.fullerton.ca.us/". The website header features the City of Fullerton logo and the text "Official Web Site of the City of Fullerton". A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the header, there are navigation tabs for "What's New", "FAQs", "City Facts", "Links", "Help", and "Home". A disclaimer section provides the city's address (303 W. Commonwealth, Fullerton, CA 92832) and phone number (714) 738-6317, along with operating hours: 7:00 to 5:30 Mon-Thu, 7:30 to 5:00 Friday, and closed alternate Fridays.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Left Sidebar:** A vertical list of links including "City Hall Hours of Operation", "City Council", "Agendas & Minutes", "Job Opportunities", "Municipal Code", "Classes & Excursions", "Downtown Fullerton", "Press Releases", "Community Calendar", "Focus on Fullerton", "Library Catalog and Patron Information", "Recycling Programs", "Departments:", "Administrative Services", "Airport", "City Clerk", "City Manager", "Community Services", "Development Services", "Engineering", "Fire", and "Library".
- Main Content:** A paragraph states: "The material provided here is designed to help you become better acquainted with Fullerton and the services it has to offer, as well as assist you in obtaining the information you need to live, work, conduct business, and have fun in our community." Below this is a "Welcome to Downtown" section with a collage of photos and a text block: "Located 22 miles southeast of metropolitan Los Angeles, in the center of North Orange County, Fullerton is a full-service city renowned for its unique mix of residential, commercial and industrial, educational, and cultural environments which provide an outstanding quality of life for both residents and businesses alike. Fullerton, one of the largest cities in Orange County, is a community with a strong sense of tradition, one that treasures its historic past as it prepares to meet the challenges of its future. We hope you will find our web site helpful. We will be updating it regularly, adding more to it in the future. If you would like further information about the City or this home page, please call the Fullerton Public Information Office at (714) 738-6317."
- Right Sidebar:** An "Emergency Preparedness" section with a sub-section "A Guide to Domestic Preparedness" and a link to the Department of Homeland Security website. Below it is a "Special Events" section listing "Fullerton Memorial Day Observance", "Fullerton Railroad Days", and "Fullerton Market Returns".

2. Public consultation

- Objective is to find out what citizens think; what they value and what are their opinions and ideas on a particular issue



3. Citizen engagement

Objective is to:

- improve public decision-making
- strengthen community life
- enhance mutual support and reciprocity
- increase tolerance and understanding
- improve relationships between citizens and government

vibrant streetscapes... beautiful architecture... beloved heritage... splendid public spaces...

HRMbyDESIGN Public Open House
Final Draft - Downtown Halifax Urban Design Plan*



April 16
World Trade & Convention Centre
Room 200B

First Session

6:00 pm - Presentation of plan
6:30 pm - Open House

Second Session (repeat)

7:30 pm - Presentation of plan
8:00 pm - Open House

*Plan documents are available for public review and comments until April 23, 2008. For more information, visit www.hrmbymdesign.ca.

HRMbyDESIGN
Regional Centre Urban Design Study
www.hrmbymdesign.ca

HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

An Public Involvement Model



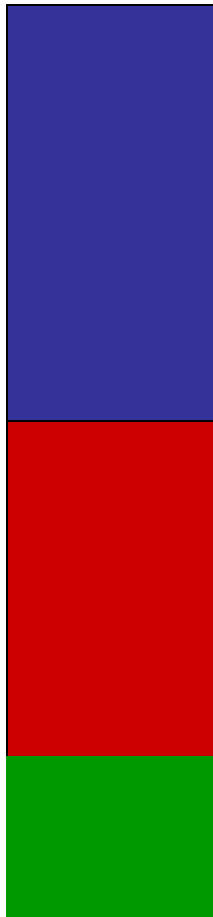
One-way relationship in which government shares information with citizens about policies and programs

Two-way relationship in which government seeks and receives information from citizens about policies, services and programs that affect them

A relationship that recognizes the active role of citizens in shaping policy, programs and service options and partnering in action and implementation

Increasing level of citizen influence and power

Public Involvement Steps



Planning

- Clarifying purpose
- Engaging stakeholders
- Determining processes
- Allocating resources

Public Involvement

- Enable understanding
- Identify options
- Decision-making

Evaluation

Methods of Citizen Involvement

- Notices
- Newsletters
- Websites
- Public /town hall meetings
- Open houses
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Task forces
- Advisory/liaison committees
- Design charettes
- Stakeholder conferences



Public Meetings



25 Oct 2007 - West London Citizens Assembly
photo © ChrisJepson.com

Questions

- How many of you have participated in a public meeting in the past year?
 - in an official/ expert role?
 - as an interested citizen
- Group discussion
 - Two experiences with public meetings - one positive and one negative
 - Share your assumptions and beliefs about citizen engagement

(10 minutes in your groups)

Public Meetings: Common Practices

- Classroom style set up
- Long presentation of information
- Experts or officials answer questions
- A few people dominate
- Frequently become confrontational
- Tend to be isolated events

Alternative Public Meeting Models

- Gatherings where people talk in small groups
- Gatherings where government staff are present primarily to listen
- Meetings organized by stakeholders /citizen groups



January 16, 2008

HRM will accept online petitions

by **Amy Pugsley Fraser**

City Hall Reporter

Halifax city hall will be at the top of the list in being the first municipality in Canada to accept online petitions. After a quick debate, council voted 14-8 on Tuesday night to approve the electronic version of the paper form as long as there's contact information along with each name.

"It just makes sense," Coun. Andrew Younger (East Dartmouth-The Lakes) said of the online lists.

"We accept electronic submissions to public hearings, so why wouldn't we accept petitions?" However, I think it does make sense to verify the people who have signed it."

The
ChronicleHerald.

On-line Citizen Engagement

- E-mail
- On-line surveys
- Newsgroups
- Forums
- Chat rooms
- Bulletin boards
- Blogs



Two Challenges to Deliberative Democracy



- Complexity of issues
- Quality of civic dialogue

Simple, Complicated & Complex

- **Simple** (following a recipe)
 - Easily replicated
 - Little special expertise needed
- **Complicated** (designing an aircraft)
 - High degree of coordination
 - High levels of expertise needed
 - Ultimately knowable
- **Complex** (raising a child)
 - never fully knowable
 - outcomes cannot be controlled



Source: Frances Westley, Brenda Zimmerman and Michael Quinn Patton
(2006) Getting to Maybe: How the World is Changed, Random House Canada

Engagement on Complex Issues

- Dynamic complexity
 - Cause and effect are far apart in time and space
- Generative complexity
 - unfolding in unfamiliar and unpredictable ways
- Social complexity
 - People see things differently

Source: Adam Kahane (2007) Solving Tough Problems: An Open Way of Talking, Listening and Creating New Realities, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler

Quality of Citizen Dialogue

“Authentic dialogue involves communication that is deeper than ordinary conversation tends to be. It penetrates behind the polite superficialities and defenses in which we habitually armor ourselves. We listen and respond to one another with an authenticity that forges a bond between us. The outcome is not necessarily a harmony of views.”

Daniel Yankelovich (1999), The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation, Simon & Schuster

Dialogue

Debate

Many people have piece of the answer

There are common, complementary and competing interests

There are many sides

Look for merit in the ideas that are different than ours

Inquire and advocate

Listen to understand

There are many options

Question our own assumptions

There is a right answer

There are competing interests

There are two sides to every issue

Listen to find flaws

Advocate

Prove the other side is wrong

Defend your own assumptions as truth

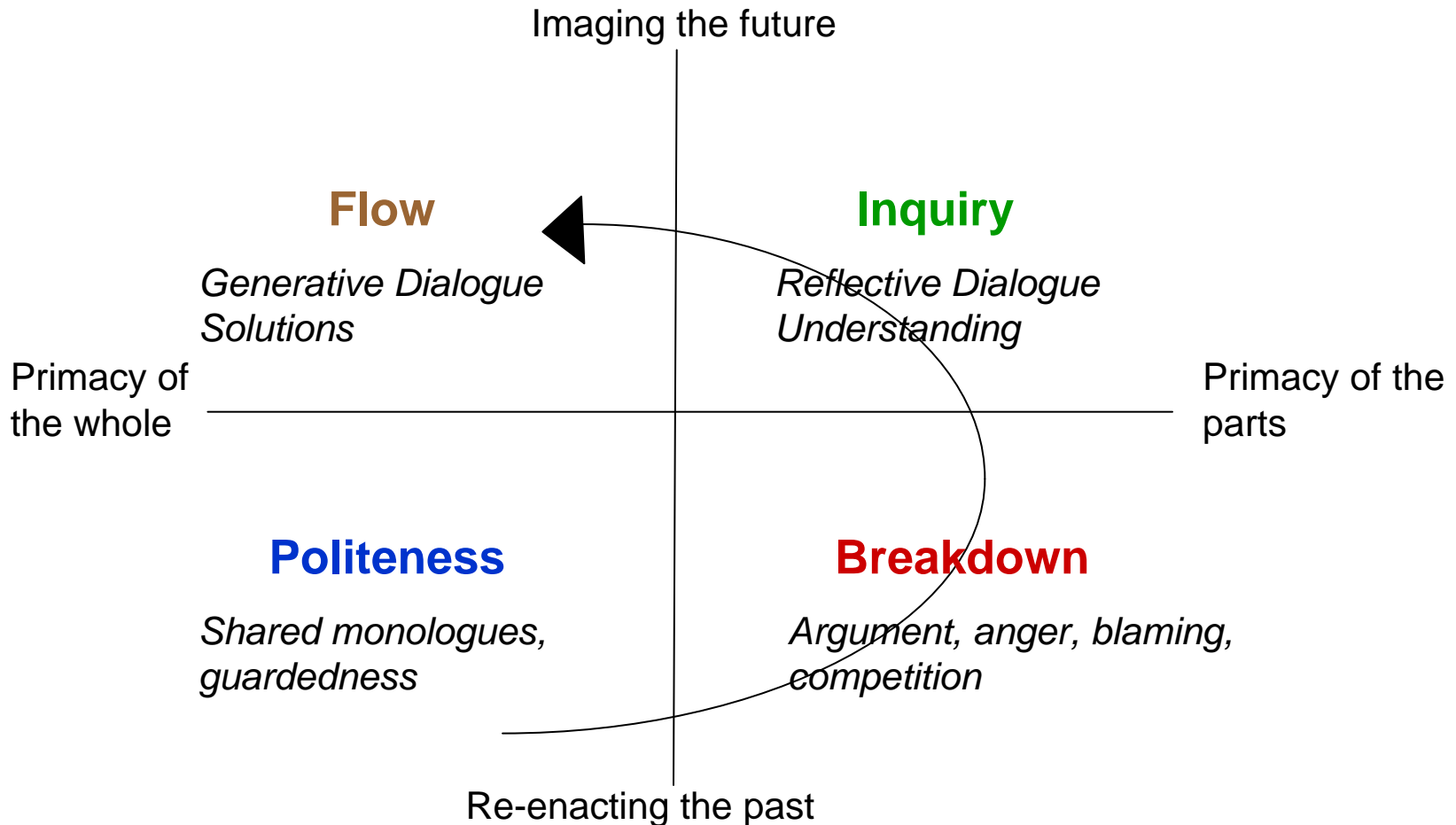
Ask questions that challenge

Examine the other person's views

There are few options

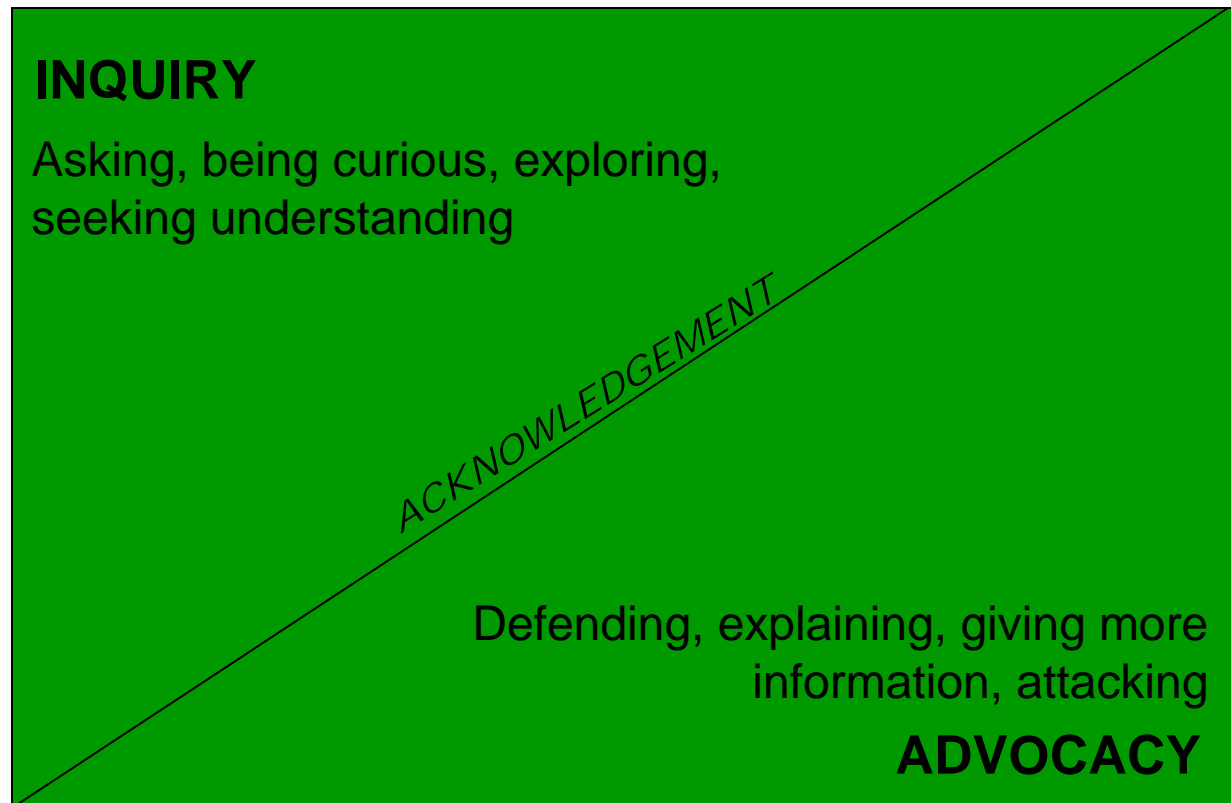
Dialogue  Debate  Decision

Fields of conversation



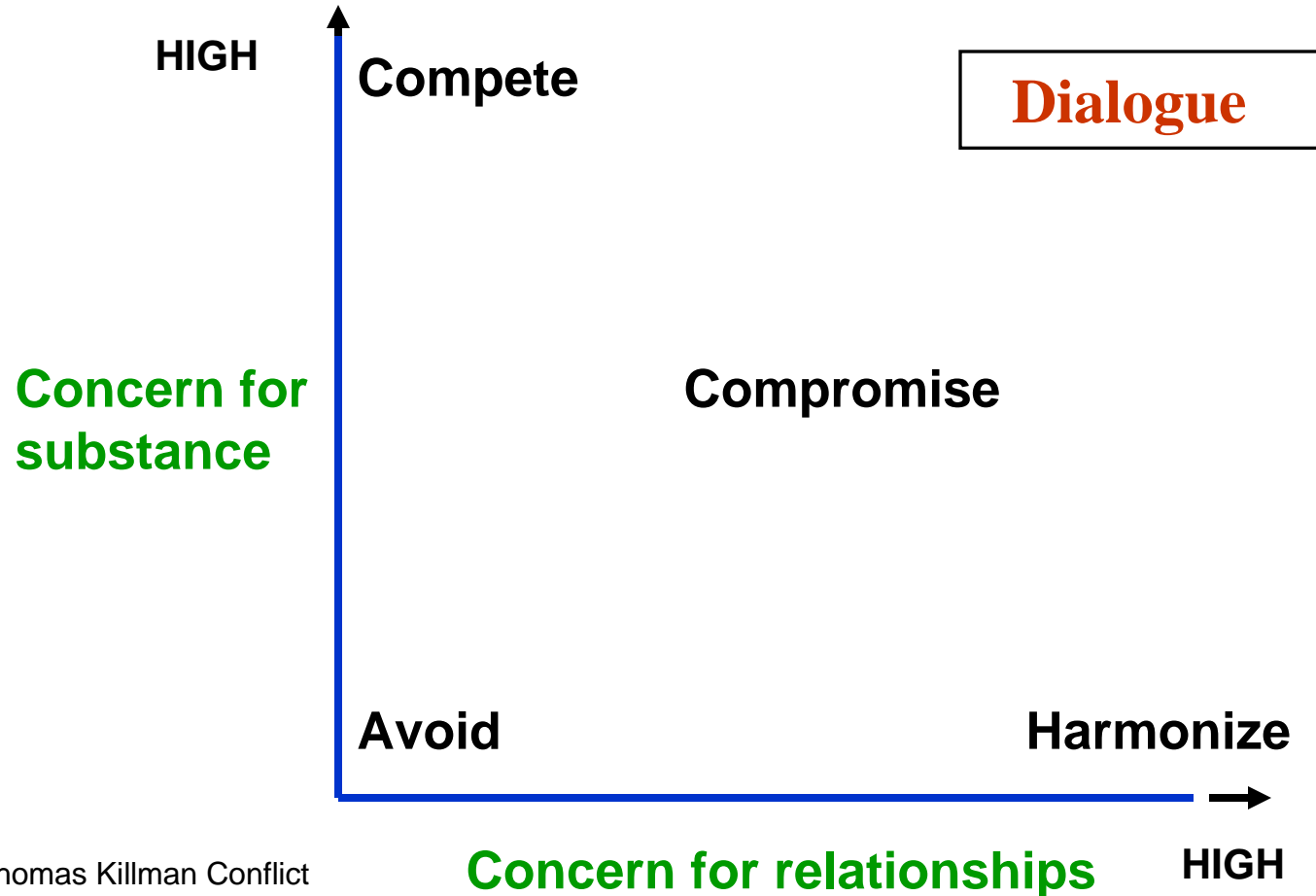
Source: Otto Scharmer in William Isaacs, *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*, 1998

Citizen engagement: balancing inquiry and advocacy



**AS CONFLICT INCREASES IT IS MORE USEFUL TO MOVE TOWARDS
INQUIRY, BUT THE TENDENCY IS TO INCREASE *ADVOCACY***

Substantive Issues & Relationships



Source: Thomas Killman Conflict Mode Instrument, 2001

Some Citizen Engagement Ideas

- Dialogue and decision-making needs to be compartmentalized
- Attention to common interests and complementary interests before competing ones
- Erring on the side of including people who disagree
- Bringing mistrust to the surface if it is a source of misunderstandings
- Encouraging people to speak from their heart
- Making time for personal connections to help humanize the deliberations

Questions

- What is the relationship between citizen engagement and public leadership?
- What is the public servant's role in citizen engagement?

(Ten minutes in your groups)

Recommended Sources

- Stephen Coleman and John Gøtze (2001) Bowling Together: Online Public Engagement in Policy Deliberation, www.bowlingtogether.net
- William Isaacs (1999), Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together, New York, Currency
- Carol Lukensmeyer and Lars Hasselblab Torres (2006) Public Deliberation: A Manager's Guide to Citizen Engagement, IBM Center for the Business of Government
- James Bohman (1996) Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity and Democracy, Boston: MIT Press
- National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation www.thataway.org/
- Canadian Policy Research Networks, Citizen Engagement Research area www.cprn.org

Public Involvement and Citizen Engagement

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Nova Scotia Regional Group
April 15, 2008

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