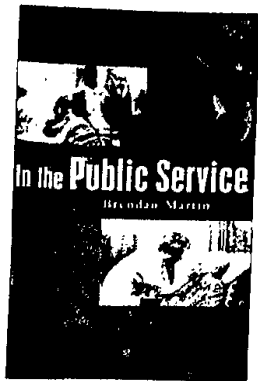


IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Brendan Martin, Public Services International



Ideological and technocratic approaches to public service reform are not delivering the sustainable improvements demanded by society. Yet transforming public service quality and efficiency has never been more important to both economic stability and social justice. Brendan Martin argues for a more participative approach, involving both service users and public service employees to produce changes that keep on working.

The book draws on experiences worldwide, telling the stories through the testimony of the participants themselves. Examples include: slum dwellers from Brazil's Porto Alegre explaining how a 'participative budget' to provide infrastructure has encouraged local democracy; Swedish social service carers directing cuts public budgets without cutting jobs or services; doctors' leaders in the Czech Republic saving their country's health care services via a new approach to public-private partnership.

Contrasted with the failures of top-down reforms and business school fads, the cases described in this book are shown to be shaping a 'new partnership model' rooted in true empowerment. The results show that efficient public spending, quality public service and secure and satisfying public employment can be reconciled to everyone's benefit.

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Metric Demy

IN THE NAME OF THE POOR

Contesting Political Space for Poverty Reduction

Edited by Neil Webster, Centre for Development Research

and Lars Engberg-Pedersen, Danish Association of International Cooperation

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Metric Demy

Current development discourse on poverty reduction mainly emphasises the respective roles of the state and the market. This book argues, via a series of original fieldwork investigations, for the importance of exploring and understanding the poor's own actions. These actions may seek to change their poverty directly. Or the poor may seek to effect change with respect to the formulation and implementation of public policy. The notion of political space is critical to understanding the possibility and potential for such actions for poverty reduction.

The authors develop a concept of political space comprising institutional channels for accessing policy formulation, the content of political discourse, the degree to which it emphasises poverty as an issue, and the skill and strategies of the poor themselves. They demonstrate that the relationships between the actions of the poor and the organisations and institutions of the political arena are neither simple nor predictable. Instead the studies in this volume detail the complex realities of political agency of the poor, the strategic use of discourse, the limits of institutional reform, the contested nature of poverty reduction, and the significance of political space for challenging conditions of marginalisation.

'At last poverty reduction is recognised as dependent on the poor's own political initiatives and agency... This welcome book enables us to see the politics of poverty reduction from the perspective of the poor themselves, rather than through the sometimes distorted lenses of development agencies, political elites and national governments, thus enabling benevolent external support to be more effectively focused' - Brian Smith, Visiting Professor of Politics, University of Exeter

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