

# Political Astuteness: Bridging the Gap Between Politics and Professionalism

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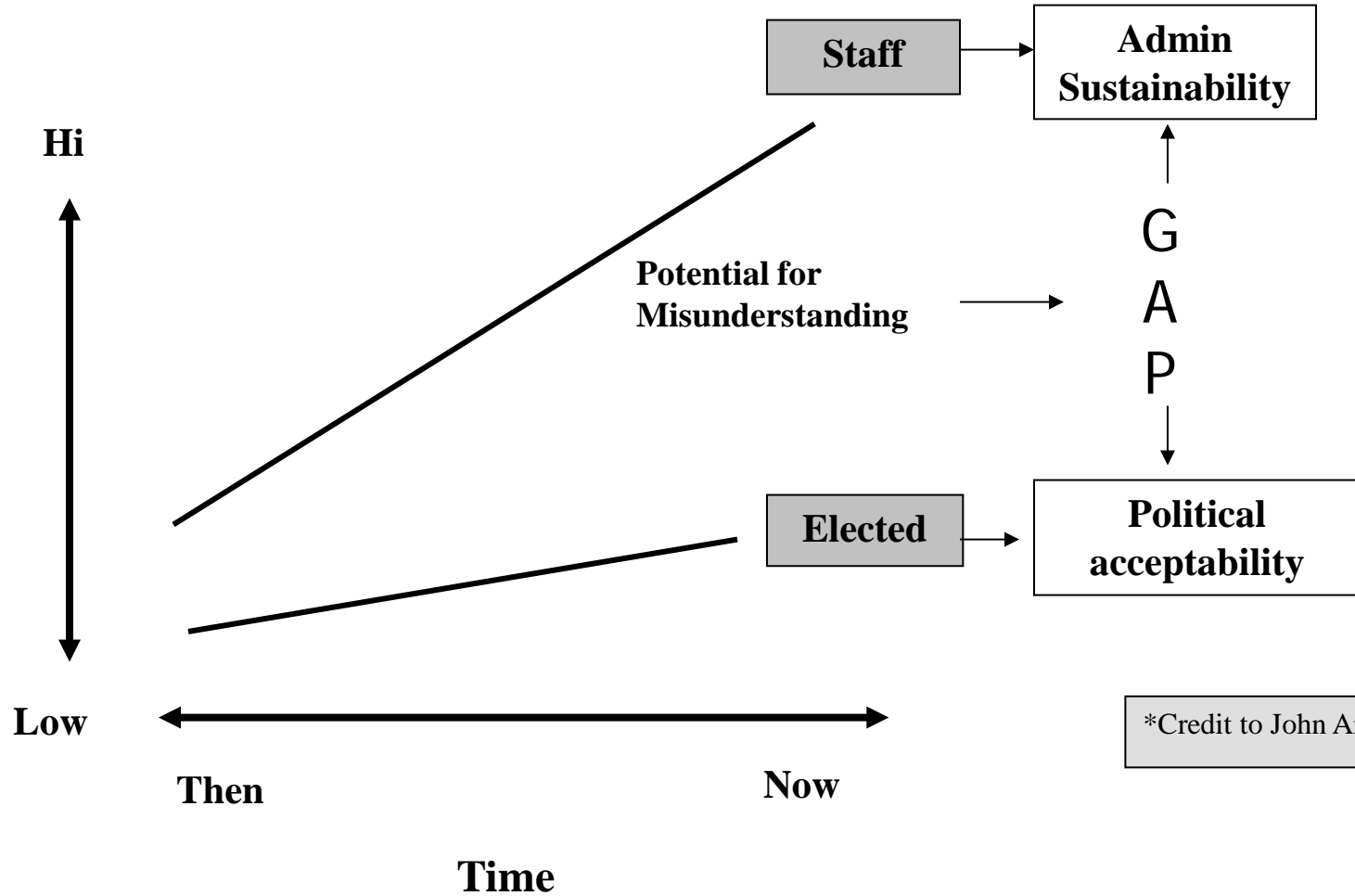
ICMA Conference Presenter



# Objectives

- Describe gap between political acceptability and administrative sustainability
- Discuss politics as choices among conflicting values
- Compare political and administrative values and perspectives
- Identify translating and aligning roles for chief administrative officers and upper level staff

# Gap between Professional and Political Learning\*



\*Credit to John Arnold

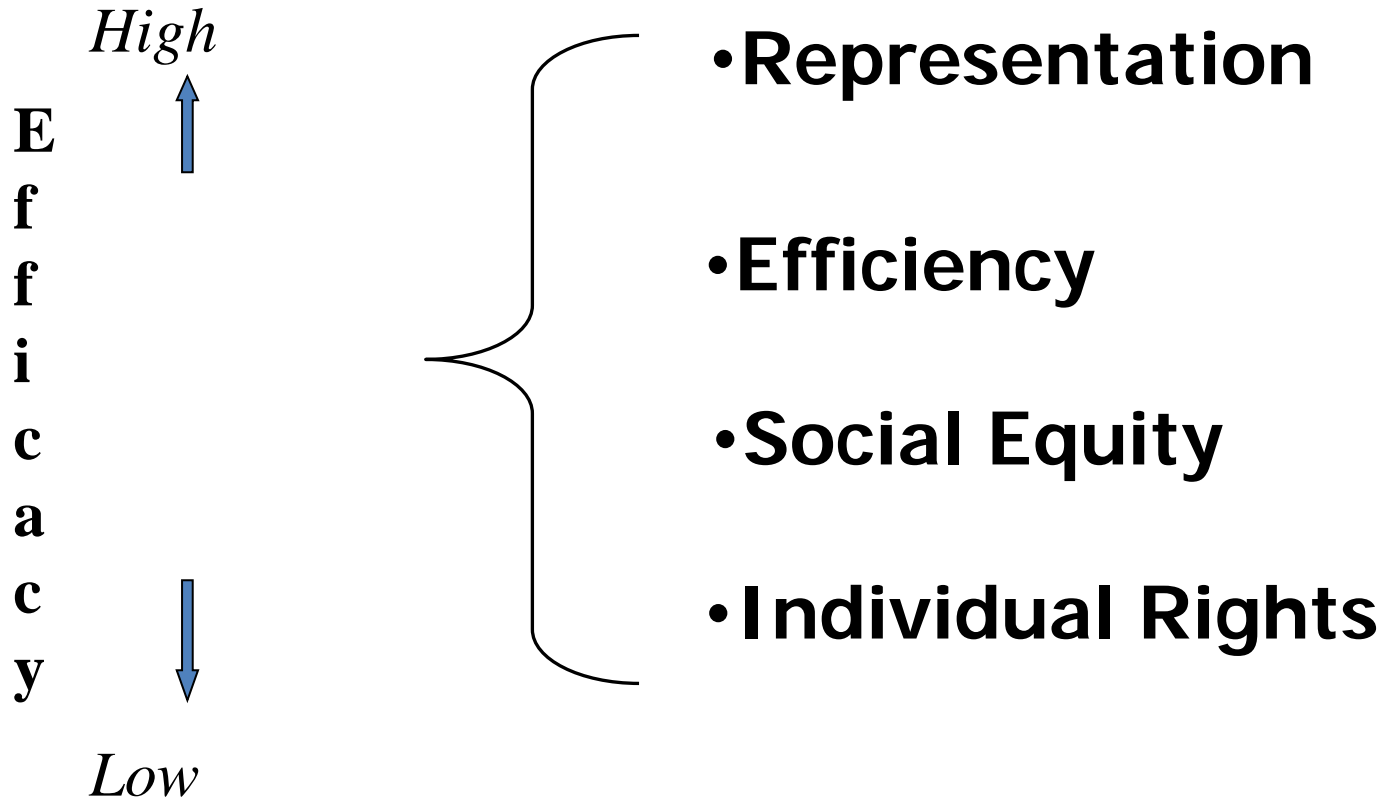
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# Values

- **RESPONSIVENESS =**
  - Representation/Participation +
  - Efficiency/Professionalism +
  - Social Equity +
  - Individual Rights

# Efficacy and Politics

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# Characteristics of Politics and Administration

Political acceptability ↔ Administrative sustainability

Characteristics	Politics		Administration
Activity	Game/allocation of values		Problem Solving
Players	Representatives		Experts
Conversation	"What do you hear?" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Passion</li> <li>■ Dreams</li> <li>■ Stories</li> </ul>	CAO and Senior Staff in the GAP	"What do you know?" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Data</li> <li>■ Plans</li> <li>■ Reports</li> </ul>
Pieces	Intangible: Interests and symbols	←	Tangible: Information; money, people, equipment
Currency	Power (stories)		Knowledge (deeds)
Dynamics	Conflict, compromise, change		Predictability, cooperation, continuity

# Facilitating Roles

- Translate the logic of politics and administration
- Bridge the gap between what is politically acceptable and administratively sustainable
- Align
  - Staff priorities with governing body goals
  - Governing body and staff expectations

# Summary

- Bridging the gap is essential
- Role of governing body is community building—“Honor the past, capture the present, shape the future”
- Good politics is about values not right answers—stories matter
- Value conflicts require compromise and negotiation if “cups” matter
- Do not ignore any value over a period of time
- Democratic process is “messy”
- Politics/administration=ways of thinking
- Role of translator/bridge builder is critical
- Aligning governing body/staff expectations is crucial



# Questions/Comments?

Additional Information...





ICMA  
**100**<sup>th</sup>

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