

Governing in a Disruptive Environment

Charting a Course in a Stormy Sea

John Nalbandian

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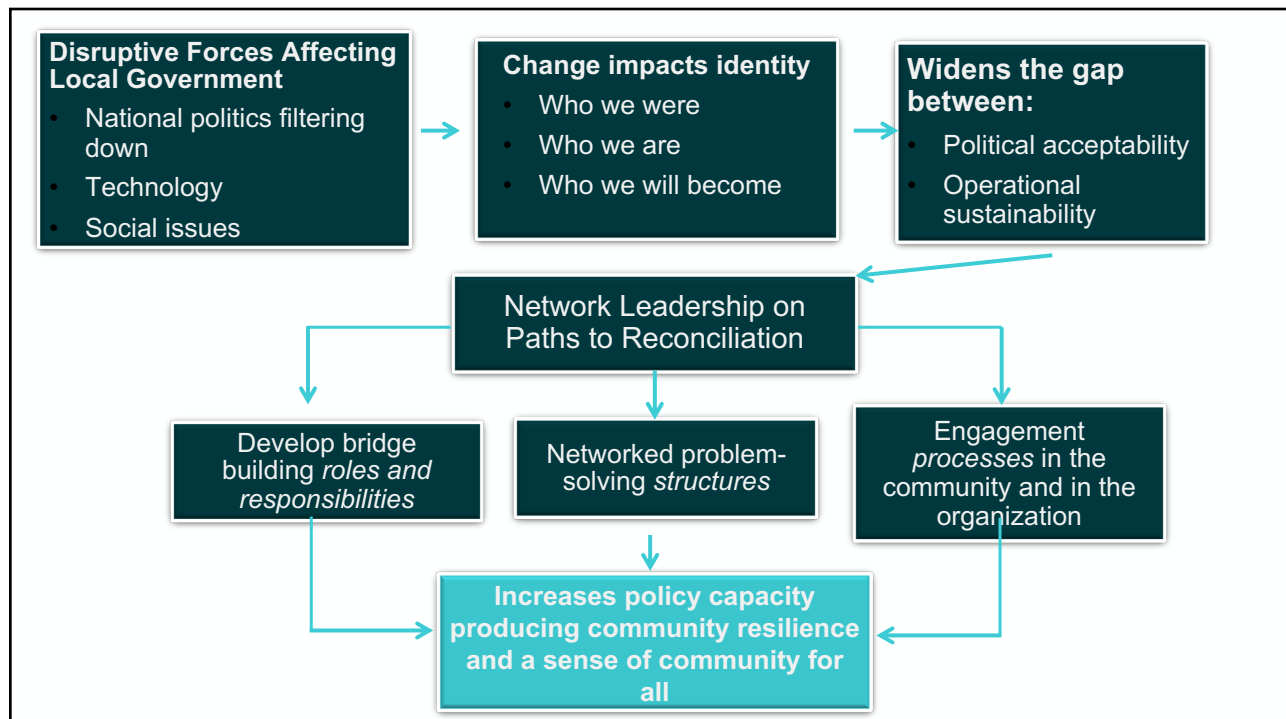
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Driver 1

National Politics Filtering into Local Governance

“All politics is local” has become “all politics is national.”

“The **deep division** in national politics has crept its way into local governing bodies. We have seen local elections influenced by outside funding and individuals running for City Council who **want to be legislators, not members of a governing body**. The **art of politics**—cultivating consensus and legitimately debating an issue and being willing to be influenced by others—is **quickly disappearing**.”

- › Julia Novak, Former City Manager in the Northeast and current local government consultant



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State-Local Relationships

“I believe we will see a continuation of state governments attempting to pre-empt more elements of local government services and policymaking. Politically, state government leaders (elected and appointed) can score points and gain power by exerting control over what local governments do and how they do it. I believe that **state pre-emption will enter into more aspects of what we want to do and how do it at the local level.**”

- › Eric Stuckey, CM, Franklin, TN



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Driver 2 Technology and Social Media



“There are challenges for local government that are driven by economic variables and performance for service delivery but also by resident **preferences for how they want to interact with their government for information, goods and services**. Residents are consumers and governments are expected to provide more virtual services akin to the private sector. Government officials must understand key technology components in order to manage risk, budgets, and expectations for service delivery.”

› Mark Israelson, CM, Plano, TX

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Driver 3 Social Issues



“We are having a **racial reckoning** in our society right now and it is driving a relook at our institutions; communities are coming to terms with the fact that our **institutions are perpetrators of racist policies, practices, and behaviors, and because of that, there is a deepening distrust of our institutions and the people in them**. Policing “best practices” are being questioned far and wide, and for good reason. Our black, indigenous and people of color communities don’t trust the Police; not just individual, racist police officers, but the actual institution of the Police. City departments perpetuate (knowingly and unknowingly) racist policies from purchasing and contracting to zoning and housing. Because technical experts (professional staff) are part of those institutions, they are viewed with skepticism.”

› Sherilyn Lombos, CM, Tualatin, Oregon

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Equity Resolution

Questions asked in budget and CIP processes:

Who benefits?

Who is burdened?

Who is missing?

How do we know?

What do we do?

› Shannon Flanagan-Watson, Deputy County Manager, Arlington, Virginia

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Change and Community Identity

Three classes of change and resistance

1

Change that may be self-initiated and/or is substitutional in nature. Some reorganization/adjustment may be required.

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Change that is significant but builds on one's past—requires adjustments but can be seen as growth. Bumps in the road, but in the long run, past is unchallenged.

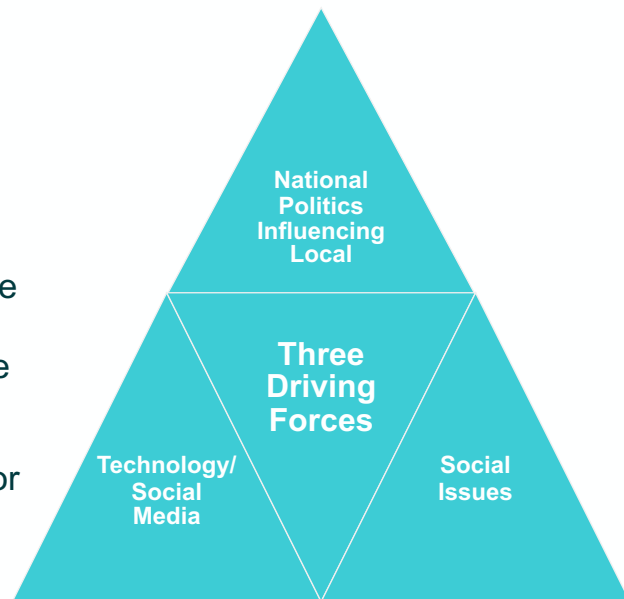
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Change that challenges identity anchored in the past. Change is experienced as loss and will be resisted. E.g.; MAGA

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Questions about the Driving Forces and Change

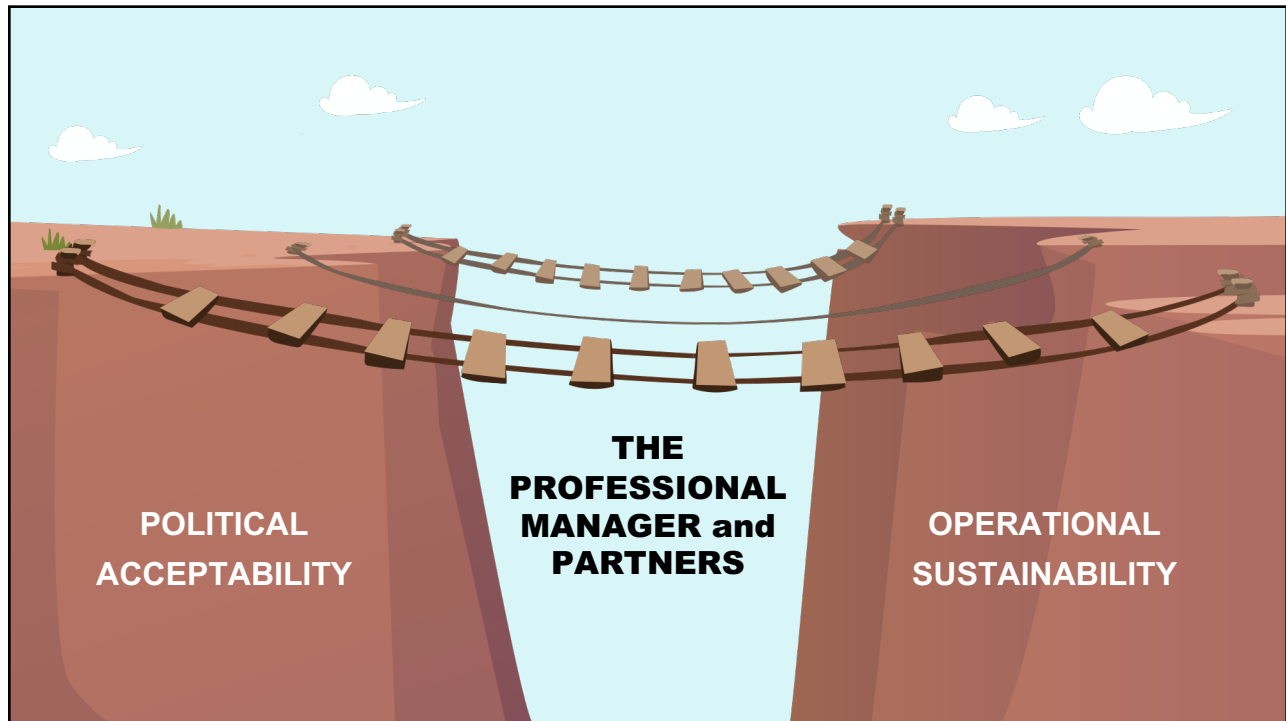
- Apply the forces to COVID response in a jurisdiction you are familiar with.
- Is there evidence of one or more of the driving forces influencing your work?
- Is there an issue you face now or anticipate that would fit into the third category of change? Challenge community identity?



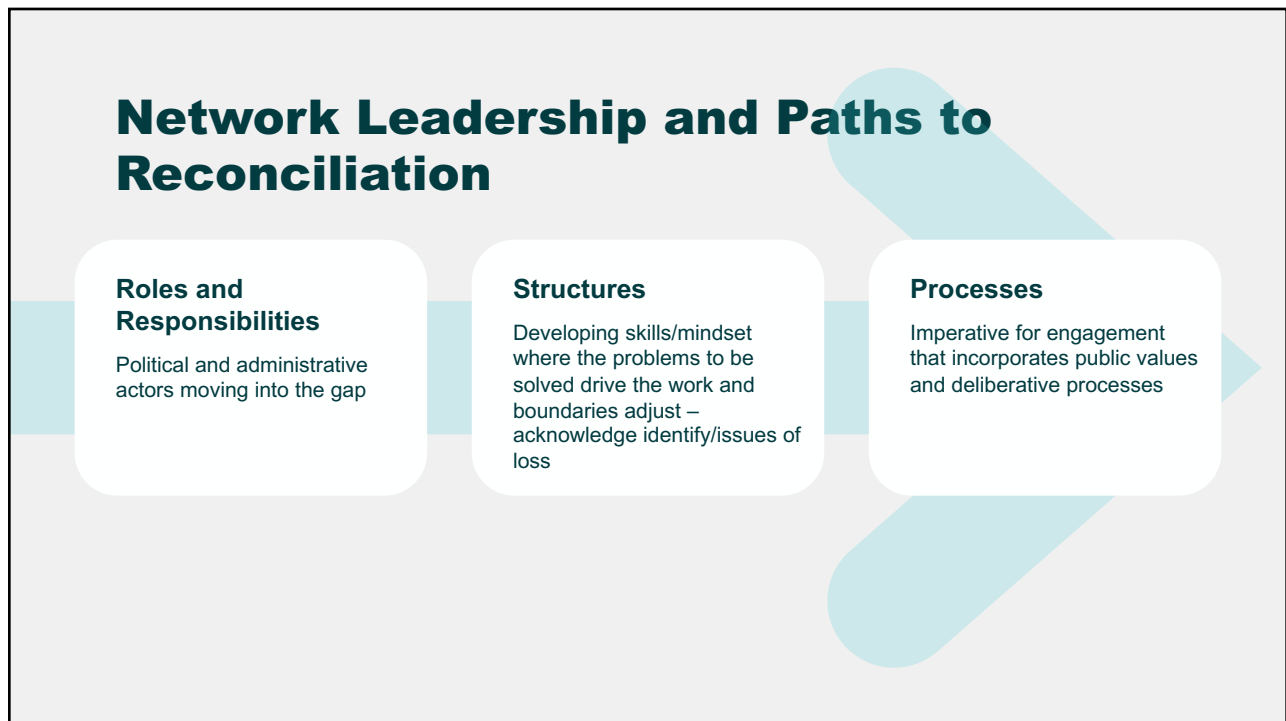
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Roles and Responsibilities

“...if the manager is expected to be more outward facing and more attuned to the elected body and the community, assistants and department heads need to understand this expectation. They are now expected to take on **more of the interpretation and bridging role** that the city/county manager has in order to assist the manager to effectively execute council and community goals. This is a new twist on the concept of delegation—**what’s being delegated is ways of ‘being’ more than tasks of ‘doing.’**”

- › Debra Figone, Former City Manager, San Jose, CA



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Structures



“I think there’s a recognition that **solving the ‘wicked problems’ of government**—from homelessness to economic equity to sustainability—**demand leadership across functions and teams** both inside and outside of government. This requires far more than the technocratic expertise of ‘managing’ a function”

- › Doug Matthews, CM, Grand Rapids, MI

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Structures



“There is a need to cultivate meaningful relationships with the **durable partners** in the community across government, schools, the private sector, and non-profits.

› Darrin Attebery, CM, Fort Collins, CO

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Processes/Engagement



“Traditional engagement with residents is complicated by public access to information and data bases that can truly create resident experts. In the 20th century staff were experts and had sole possession of most of the information required to address community issues. Today, one could argue that **the role of staff is more about validating good information and working with ‘community experts’ to reach decisions.**”

“With such accessible information, **engagement has gone beyond the standard function of providing information to residents.** It has now moved into the “consultative” and “empowering range of government/citizen relationships.”

› Bob O'Neill, Local Government Guru

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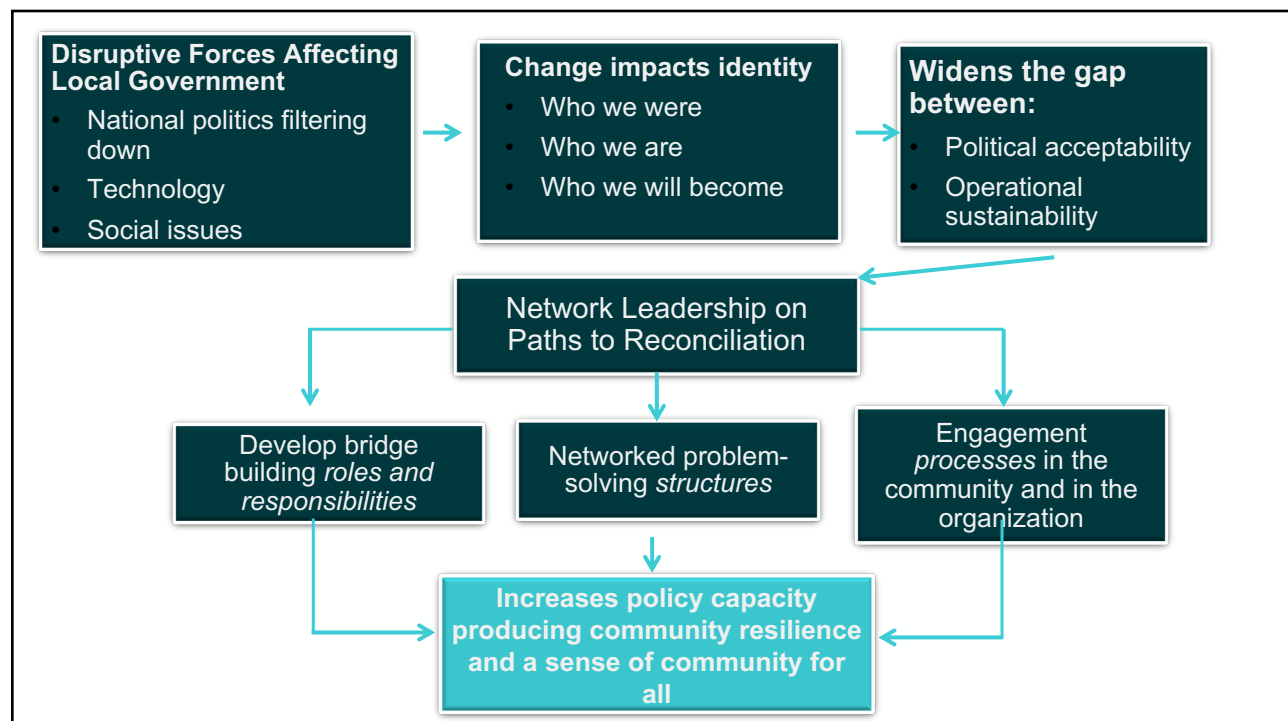
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Spectrum of Engagement

- www.iap2.org
- What are the obligations of those who are being engaged?

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Policy Capacity

Levels of Resources and Capabilities	Skills, Competencies and Capabilities			
	Analytical	Operational		Political
Individual			G	
Organization			A	
System (network)			P	



Adapted from Wu, X., M. Ramesh, and M. Howlett. "Policy Capacity: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Policy Competencies and Capabilities." *Policy and Society*. 34 (2015), 165-171.

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Questions/Comments

Which part of the presentation will you continue to think about?

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