Challenges of Multi-Level Governance

Presentation by

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A Dialogue on Democracy: Challenges of Renewing Governance

- Agreeing on the right mix of stake-holder, citizen, market, expert advice and government involvement in agenda-setting process
- Crisis in governance the result of operating in separate silos, working at cross-purposes, not being able to make sense of reality, construct common perceptions and agendas
- Producing shared frameworks central to good governance
Competing Perspectives and Models of Democracy

- Local empowerment (allows diversity)
- Universal (expert-driven) prescriptions
- Direct democracy
- Special Majorities (federalism, consociationalism - these models deal with territorial/ethnic problems)
- Economic Democracy (collective bargaining, corporatism - deals with functional problems)
- Such diversity adds to the challenge of governance, developing common perspectives, building coalition, and institutional support
Collaborative/Multi-level Governance

- A complex adaptive system made up of formal and informal relationships
- Cross-scale and multi-level: integrates and seeks balance among issues, values and objectives through an ongoing process of dialogue, debate/struggle and learning
- Recognizes the importance of the “local” (subsidiarity, citizen participation)
Citizen participation can be problematic

- Requires specialized knowledge that most citizens do not possess
- Can be used and exploited by powerful interests (state-centred perspective on province-building)
- May work at cross-purposes (regions/institutions/interests may compete for attention and resources)
Citizen participation can be problematic

- May be ploy for creating further divisions and avoiding blame for cutting public services
- Globalization and other universal trends/theories places limits on local resources and forms of innovation that are national in scope (or deal with equity issues).
- Not everyone is equal and lack of capacity may strengthen the position of powerful interests/institutions over knowledge creation and agenda-setting (whether within or around institutions)
- For example, waiting lists deal more with cardiac care, knee replacements than mental health (based on politics not need)
Building new ways for defining reality is never a smooth process

- Getting agreement on challenges, and solutions big challenge across silos
- Inherent old path dependencies, ideas, institutions, and interests (markets, bio-medical system, federalism)
- Unless a crisis, getting support may be difficult
- Incremental versus “Big Bang” approaches bring different advantages and disadvantages
- Formal, universal processes may threaten diverse, informal approaches
Challenges

- In reality there is no one policy system for defining reality in Canada.
- Rather, we have competing systems and this makes it difficult to form a consensus on problems and solutions (whether within or across institutions, departments, academic disciplines, or professional groups that act as agents of the state).
- Even within communities, there are different silos (local, provincial, national agencies, functional, class and other political divisions, etc.) and these produce different ideas, interests, and identities at the local level.
- Put simply, the institutions we rely upon to make sense of reality are structured along different functional-jurisdictional lines.
- The same is true for academic institutions and systems of knowledge construction and dissemination/brokering.
Challenges

- Various initiatives aimed at constructing bridging mechanisms (interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge construction, primary health care, team work, regional forms of governance, intergovernmental accords, CUS)
- These are important initiatives but challenges remain as a result of power differentials, capacity and autonomy of old regime (doctors and drug companies not effected by regionalization, health not considered part of economic development, departments operate in silos, as do most academic disciplines)
Creating Approaches that are legitimate and fair

- Need to continue to find ways to work across silos, provide support and knowledge to engage citizens, communities, diverse cultures and less powerful stakeholders (decentralization, for example)
- Make sure we understand and debate efforts to deal with issues outside the public view (contracting out, reducing collective bargaining rights, de-listing, or relying on approaches not falling under the CHA and other radar screens).
Turn About?

- Much experimentation in policy community development, research construction
- Also new efforts to working across jurisdictions through intergovernmental mechanisms and accords
- More Resources for Cities and community organizations
Challenges and Need for Evaluation

- Many of these initiatives are top-down and consolidate power (experiments in regionalization, accords)
- New emphasis on partnering and rewarding excellence has created clear winners and losers (big urban centres get more research chairs and capacity to define reality)
Challenges

- New approaches to problem definition and agenda-setting not balanced
- Powerful Interests and Institutions well positioned to promote and defend themselves
- Idea that health is about equity and not economic development has created opportunities to operate under radar screen (building of capacity in this policy field creates opportunities to push bio-medical ideas rather than focus on other issues)
Challenges

- For example, while Ralph Klein is keen about subsidizing health care, he has been reluctant to support other kinds of subsidies that may matter more to individual and community health.
- Health restructuring has work to strengthen power of experts, universal approaches, and urban areas that have reaped the benefits of specialization.
- We need to pay attention to both the winners and losers of these shifts in priority.
Lessons from RED
Have experiments in collaborative, multi-level governance advanced sustainable development in Canada’s coastal regions?

If so, how?

If not, why?

Lessons?
"It is now clear that success in global markets requires an integration of regional private, public and community-based organizations, working in tandem with provincial, national and international agencies and firms."

The integration of these levels was to be accomplished through strategic planning at the regional level facilitated by REDBs (Baird 2001).
Commitments to Integrated/Sustainable Development

- Jobs and Growth (2001)
- Rural Secretariat (2005)
Economic Zones
Newfoundland and Labrador

Mandate:

1. Strategic economic planning
2. Coordinating business support
3. Supporting communities and organizations
4. Coordinating social and economic initiatives
5. Public education and participation

+ 59 RDAs, 15 BDCs and various other agencies
Layers of Regionalization – Multi-level Governance

- Municipalities
- Economic Sub-Zones (RDAs, municipal collaboration)
- Economic Zones
- Rural Secretariat Regions
- SSP Regions
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Atlantic Canada
- Cross-border/North Atlantic
RED Mechanisms

1. Strategic planning
2. Training/education/capacity building
3. Multi-stakeholder structures (e.g. REDB Boards)
4. Evaluation and reporting
5. Business assistance
6. Industry development
7. Relationship building: formal vs. informal
8. Funding: REDBs as funding/financing agencies
Principles in Practice

• Rural community sustainability
  • Who will remain? Drive and draw

• Sustainable development
  • Rhetoric vs. reality, cultures of exploitation, economic viability, growing inequity, difficulties of integration, pace of change

• Good governance
  • Participation/inclusion, multi-level accountability, collaborative learning and adaptation, legitimacy, coordination, transparency, efficiency
REDB/KEDC Outcomes

- Social
- Economic
- Organizational
- Political
- Ecological
Barriers to RED

1. Tightening rules/reduced flexibility, “red tape”
2. Lack of financial resources
3. Lack of capacity: community and government
4. Community competition
5. Lack of government support – other than financial
6. Politics vs. planning
7. Short-term thinking
8. Lack of implementation ability
9. Lack of diversification/traditional fisheries focus
10. Lack of intergovernmental cooperation/coordination
11. Macro-economic factors

Other: low public awareness and support, government control, government dependency, negative attitudes,
Issues of Region and Scale

- Zone 14 large, diverse, fragmented
- Mixed response re. effectiveness of zonal boundaries (perspective-dependent)
- Increasing recognition of need for multi-community cooperation
- Gander vs. outlying areas - limited change in attitude, alternative conceptualizations of development regions
- Importance of sub-zonal scale – multi-scale governance
- Uncertainty, change, push for larger regions from above
- Regionalization as a cost-cutting – danger of reduced effectiveness, insufficient resources for implementation, community outreach and support
Ecosystems as Regions

- Ecological boundaries and nested ecosystem scales relevant – natural resources, quality of life
- Watershed bioregion also multi-community, multi-issue, multi-jurisdiction
- Ecosystem as sense of place
- Watersheds a suitable scale for resource management, stewardship and development initiatives incorporating ecosystem considerations as an integral component
- Sustainable development experiments with poor linkages to RED (particularly since 1990s)
- Promise in IM under Oceans Act but coastal watersheds must be incorporated
Principles of the New RED 1995

- Renewed commitment to the role of volunteers
- Sustainability and environmental stewardship
- Strategic economic planning
- Unsubsidized economic development
- Entrepreneurial cultures
- The rapidly changing knowledge-based economy
- Human resource development
- Modern telecommunications
- Global outlook
- Partnerships
- A new commitment from governments
Key Challenges

- Accepting nested, multi-scale governance
- Notion of multi-level accountability
- Establishing collaborative processes of learning and adaptation
- Balancing cost, effectiveness, and equity
- Revisiting roles and relationships periodically
- Discussing foundational principles
- Linking, integrating, communicating within and across scales
Conclusion: Questions to Ponder

- Idea of establishing structures across departments, jurisdictions, and policy communities in a way that would facilitate shared images and agendas (voluntary or formal, interstate versus intrastate)

- Discussion of responsibilities and roles of experts, communities, government, market based on principle of “subsidiarity”
Conclusion

- Identification of limitations/constraints – subsidiarity committed to democratic values and devolution but principle also recognizes it may not always be practical to deliver services on local level due to lack of capacity or other challenges.
- Need to debate idea of “asymmetrical provincialism” since all regions may not be the same.
- **Dialogue** on regions and multi-level governance.