

ENABLING COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE THROUGH SYSTEMS MODELING METHODS

Fostering coordination in public policy design and implementation

Call for Chapters

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Topic of the Proposed Volume

Public policy implementation remains a vital topic for research and practice, particularly in the current debate surrounding the pursuit of sustainable social development and community quality of life. Lack of coordination between the political and the administrative levels in a single agency has traditionally been remarked as a major cause of inconsistency in the provision of public services.

Inconsistent policy design and unsustainable policy implementation are associated often with the use of an overly narrow, static and non-systemic view that is insufficiently robust with respect to the dynamic complexity of the current state of 'wicked' social problems, e.g.: unemployment, youth disengagement, social cohesion, domestic violence, child abuse, crime, corruption, terrorism, poverty, migration flows of refugees, homelessness, climate change, and natural disasters. Such policy areas involve a multitude of dynamic complex problems that today's societies are expected to deal with as they pursue resilience and improved quality of life. Failing to consider the dynamic complexity of such problems increases the risk of policy resistance and of counterintuitive, unpredictable behavior of the systems that a public agency may try to affect through its own individual actions. In addition to the intrinsic complexity of the problems, coordinating policy and actions to solve them usually involve a multitude of policy makers and other stakeholders from the public, but also from the non-profit and the private sectors.

As part of the Springer Series on "System Dynamics for Performance Management," we look to gather a set of approaches to public management problem-solving that apply systemic principles, conceptual and simulation models. Such a collection of tools, techniques and frameworks is needed to establish the value of these approaches, and to accelerate their dissemination through the field.

What's Behind the Problem?

Common features of problematic service provision in the public sector include 1) gaps between expected and achieved policy outcomes, 2) administration deficiencies (e.g. overlapping or unclear responsibility areas) in policy implementation, 3) discrepancies between outputs in the short run and long-term outcomes, and 4) unintended side-effects of implemented policies. Such effects may lead to new problems in adjacent policy domains- outside of a public agency's authority - that may bounce back on the original problem that an agency is attempting to solve. Particularly the last two sets of inconsistencies in the provision of public services underlie difficulties an agency may find if it tries - as a single player - to manage policy trade-offs in both time and space, to fix 'wicked' community problems.

For instance, to alleviate urban traffic congestion, a municipal department of transportation may decide to increase the capacity of roads, freeways and parking lots. Though this policy may work in the short run, traffic congestion might rise in the long run, since the improvement of urban infrastructure capacity may induce more people to use private car transportation, rather than alternative - and more ecologically sustainable - means of transportation. This might also increase pollution in the long run, and further reduce the quality of life and the attractiveness of an urban area.

Likewise, to fix the problems of fiscal and financial sustainability associated with societal aging, a department of labor might decide to increase the retirement age of employees. While this policy may alleviate financial welfare deficits in the short run, it might not be sustainable in the long run. In fact, societal aging is an outcome associated with other outcomes of different social phenomena. Such outcomes can be tackled if all the involved policy makers collaborate in the design of a single and consistent policy, based on a systems perspective, which cuts across sectors - well beyond the only financial and labor dimensions.

The challenge is exacerbated by the organizational forms common to public management. A systems perspective would, rather, require innovative management approaches and new professional skills. For instance, a systemic view might clarify the need to redesign the way information is delivered, shared and deployed by decision makers; in this regard, the role of Information Technology could be fundamental to sustain change. It should also consider that a change in the mindset of people (e.g., elected officials, managers, and citizens) is often needed to pursue sustainable community outcomes. Furthermore, it implies that legislative and administrative reforms are to be designed and implemented to sustain fundamental change in management. On the contrary, an institutional/legislative system that discourages collaboration among stakeholders, may provide a major barrier for adopting an outcome-based view in policy making, focused on an inter-institutional collaborative approach.

Using Systems Modeling in Support of Collaborative Governance

Through collaborative governance, a public-sector institution may involve other stakeholders in carrying out a strategic learning process aimed at framing public value,

at identifying its drivers and the strategic resources a local area might build up and deploy to affect community outcomes. This learning process should support the design of robust policies, implying an outcome-based view. This entails a co-design, co-production, and co-assessment of policies by different agents, aiming at pursuing community resilience and sustainable socio-economic development.

Collaborative governance should reshape the role of performance management by reinforcing its function as a coordination support mechanism – not only seen on an administrative, but also on a political level. This suggests the need to extend the focus of performance management from the perspective of agency efficiency and effectiveness, to an assessment of the quality and sustainability of the designed policies – shared by different stakeholders – and of their aptitude to have an impact on a community quality of life. It should also lead government to use performance management systems to model the drivers impacting on the quality and sustainability of adopted policies. Among such drivers, an important role can be played by modeling how culture, trust, legislation and rules, stakeholders' identification and selection, financial and non-financial incentives towards collaboration may affect the aptitude of designed policies to pursue the sustainability and resilience of a community. Another important implication of collaborative governance for reshaping the role of performance management concerns the method through which a single agency may identify its own specific final and intermediate outcomes, and output measures, based on the community policy outcomes co-designed with other stakeholders in a local area.

To implement collaborative governance, to enhance coordination in public policy design and implementation, and to support stakeholders to find possible answers to the previous questions, system modeling methods may play a crucial role. It may boost the capability of a leading public sector organization to map 'wicked' social problems' stakeholders and to involve them – through forums supported by a learning facilitator – to pursue a common shared view of the hidden feedback structure underlying the behavior of desired policy outcomes over time. It may support policy makers to outline the boundaries of the relevant system to investigate, and to adopt a common 'language' to analyze dynamic and complex social problems, so to sketch a bridge between different disciplines focusing such problems on only sectoral perspectives. It may also help each involved agency to outline a set of intermediate and organizational outcomes which are consistent with the inter-institutional, community outcomes.

Possible Topics for the Volume

This call for chapters seeks both theoretical and empirical research on how public sector organizations have been adopting (or might adopt) system modeling methods framing the dynamic complexity hidden in 'wicked' social policy issues, to foster collaborative governance and the design of consistent and 'robust' policies to deal with such problems at both inter-institutional (i.e. community) and agency level.

Possible topics and debates include but are not limited to:

- Modeling the development of networks
 - How to foster the development of networks of public sector organizations that may lead to sustainable community outcomes?
 - How to model such sustainability?
 - What are its key components and drivers?
 - How to model community outcomes?

- Modeling network performance
 - How to measure network performance?
 - What are its main outcomes and drivers?
 - How to model the drivers of information sharing among stakeholders and its effects on network performance?

- Modeling Intangibles
 - How to model relational and social capital?
 - What are their drivers?
 - How to model the processes through which trust is built or eroded in a community area?
 - How to embody public values into performance evaluation, so to consider not only efficiency and effectiveness in policy implementation, but also equity, social justice and quality of life?
 - What is the role of education in developing such a shift of mind in performance evaluation?
 - What kind of skills, attitudes and values should be fostered?
 - How to foster outcome-based accountability (at both a political and a managerial level) if a single agency can directly affect only a fraction of community outcomes?
 - What kind of changes should be fostered to enable this shift in performance management? More specifically, what are the implications of such shift for cultural, institutional/legislative, and organizational systems? How to pursue such changes?
 - How to foster an interdisciplinary approach in designing and implementing sustainable governmental reforms aimed at generating community outcomes and public value?

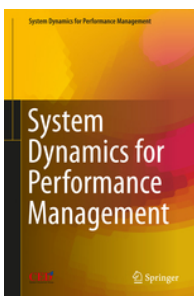
- Linking agency with community outcomes
 - How to set agency outcomes which are consistent with community outcomes?
 - What are the drivers and the behavioral implications associated with this process?
 - How to model, benchmark and assess the effects on social and financial outcomes of alternative organizational designs of networks and of other

hybrid formulas for providing community support and generating public value?

Chapter format and Key-dates

- Submitted manuscripts will be written according to the following characteristics:
 - ✓ Character: Times-New-Roman, 12
 - ✓ Abstract length: Max 120 words
 - ✓ Key-words: Max 5 items
 - ✓ Maximum paper length: 7000 words
 - ✓ Footnotes at the bottom of each page (please limit the use of footnotes)
 - ✓ Citations: preferably in the body of the paper. Please use the following standard (*Ammons, 2001, p. 7*)
 - ✓ References: at the end of the paper, according to the following standard: *Ammons D. (2001). Municipal Benchmarks, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications*
- Completed manuscripts are due by 30th November 2018, and must be submitted to bianchi.carmine@gmail.com.
- By 1st March 2019 authors will be given notice on the outcome of their submitted chapter, reviewed by double-blind referees.
- By 8th April 2019 full chapters will have to be resubmitted by the authors, based on the suggestions from the anonymous referees.
- By 31st May 2019 formal notification of chapter acceptance for publication will be sent to the authors and the volume will be sent to Springer for publication.

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