FACILITATING COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE: THE ROLE OF INSTITUTES OF PUBLIC DELIBERATION AND COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

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ABSTRACT
Democratic collaborative governance is a primary motif in recent public policy or public administration research and practice. There is widespread recognition of the importance needs to develop leadership for collaborative governance, yet there is not clear guidelines and standardized operating procedures. However, while the literature is varied, a broad model of collaboration is distinguishable, and some scholars are trying to figure out the core of collaborative competencies. This paper outlines a model of collaborative governance and corresponding competencies to help both researchers and practitioners to organize ground practice and training for collaborative governance, utilizing the recent development and early studies of the university-based centers and institutes for public deliberation and collaborative problem solving. I focus on a practice especially in the United States as the case illustration. Due to their ability to not only enhance deliberative capacity to the local community, but also to attract students and stakeholders to equip with them with essential skills, to strengthen the connection of the institutes and university to their local communities, and contribute further development of theory and practice of collaborative governance, these local catalysts specially focused on collaboration can represent a self-organizing win-win solution that can warrant to develop “the culture of collaboration” for effective public decision making.

Field of Research: Collaborative Governance, Public Deliberation, Collaborative Problem Solving

1. Introduction
Past a few decades, interest in collaborative governance from both theoretical and practical side has grown. Collaborative governance is considered to be more effective way of solving “wicked problem” among diverse stakeholders, of formulating creative solutions through self-organization among stakeholders in creative, deliberative and mutually beneficial way (Thomson & Perry, 2006). In collaborative governance, participants such as public, private and non-profit actors are treated as equal and autonomous, and collective decision making are not by voting through consensus-oriented way. Recently growing interest of collaborative governance particular in the United States and Western countries closely related to the question which is characterized by limited capacity of solving complex policy problems or weakened government power in public decision making, or steering. Collaborative governance also relates to enhanced citizen or stakeholder participation. This paper provides an introduction to the centers and institutes dedicated to promote collaborative problem solving, and their functions.

The term “collaborative governance” has become quite a buzzword in the 21st century. It is used both intentionally and casually to refer all kinds of endeavors working on public policy issues beyond government realm. In this paper, I’d like to define the meaning of “collaborative governance”.

“Governance” can be applied to the public, private, or non-profit sector. Generally speaking, the term “governance” refers to the act of governing, or how actors use processes and make decisions to exercise authority and control, grant power, take action, and ensure performance. It is guided by some principles, norms, and procedures around which actors converge (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). As many literatures suggested, however, the nature of governance and its notion are changing.

Governance encompasses more than just government. It also describes processes and institutions for public decision making and actions that involve actors from different sectors. As the meaning of governance has expanded, both scholarly and practical use also has expanded. In the field of public administration, George Frederickson (1999) discussed that the study and practice of governance has become the new cross-boundary forms beyond conventional approach to government services. Similarly, some scholars discussed that traditional hierarchical government cannot meet the demands and needs in this complex, rapidly changing age, while others discussed that traditional bureaucratic system with command-control approach cannot work well, particularly to address “wicked problems” that often transcend organizational or jurisdictional boundaries (Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). So scholars assert that new form of governance is needed and should be made up of horizontal networks involving public, private, and non-profit actors than hierarchical organizations in more cross-boundary and collaborative setting (Bingham, Nabatchi, and O’Leary 2005).

Collaborative nature of modern governance has inspired numerous explorations of the term “collaboration” which means to co-labor or work together. Barbara Gray (1989) defined the act of collaborating in multiparty setting as “appreciations and/ or tangible resources such as information, money, and workforce by two or more stakeholder to solve problems which neither can be solved individually. Recently, Richard Margerum (2011) defined collaboration as “an approach to solving complex problems in which a diverse group of autonomous stakeholders deliberates to build consensus and develop networks for translating consensus to results”. As discussed above, the merging the words “collaborative” and “governance” is relatively new phenomenon, the combined term is used frequently in many different fields by different scholars and practitioners, and sometime with many different meanings (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015).

In practice, the Institute for Patient Care Services at Massachusetts General Hospital established the Collaborative Governance Program. The institute defined collaborative governance as “the decision-making process that places the authority, responsibility and accountability for patient care with practicing clinicians. Collaborative governance is based on the beliefs that a shared vision and common goals lead to a highly committed and productive workforce, that participation is empowering, and that people will make appropriate decisions when sufficient knowledge and communicated” (See Institute for Patient Care Services at Massachusetts General Hospital http://www.mghpcs.org/ipc/programs/committees/index.asp.)

In academia, the Weil Program on Collaborative Governance established in 2002 at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University is the first institution to incorporate the concept of collaborative governance. The Program emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships and governing arrangements that draw on corporate and community stakeholders. In 2005, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation published “the Guide for Grantmakers on Collaborative Governance” (Amsler et al., 2005), and the Policy Consensus Initiative (PCI) at Portland State University initiated the University Network for Collaborative Governance (UNCG) in 2008. As I will explain the detail later, UNCG is dedicated to promote the theory and practice of public deliberation. In these instances, their definition of collaborative governance encompassed
developing forum for public deliberation, community problem solving, multi-stakeholder negotiation and dispute resolution (PCI, 2005). In next chapter, I will discuss the meaning of public deliberation, and then move to overview on the centers and institutes specially focus on public deliberation.

2. Public Deliberation
2.1. What is Public Deliberation?
Public deliberation is one of the approaches for engaging public in conversations about social issues and working with others to solve community problems. In recent literatures, it is a particularly valuable framework to facilitate productive conversation around public issues and bring citizens and stakeholders with different perspectives at the same table together. The goal of public deliberation is not to come to consensus, but rather to understand each perspective and its underlying values, as well as the benefits and drawback of each. If the process is well-structured it can ensure that people listen and understand multiple perspectives and that people recognize the need to balance their interests with those of the community. Also, public deliberation is a process reinforced with the recognition that there are often competitive positive values that require us to make tough choices between multiple legitimate options, and that even preferred options come with tradeoffs and consequences that need to be considered. In such deliberative process, often trained facilitators encourage participants to engage through a structured discussion over differing policy options. Regardless their personal opinion, participants spend time understanding each other, discussing values inherent in that perspective, as well as its potential benefits and tradeoffs.

For example, in the case of National Issues Forum (NIF), a U.S.-based nationwide network of civic and educational organizations to promote public deliberation, participants deliberate on immigration issue through three options: 1) welcoming new arrivals, 2) securing the border, and 3) promoting economic prosperity (admitting immigrants based on economic needs and factors). Not only a vast majority of participants leave thinking differently about the issue, they also are able to begin identifying potential common ground. Participants recognize the need to balance competing positive values and to look for potential ways to move forward together, balancing economic interests with humanitarian responsibility and national security in recognizing the value of different perspectives (Smithberger, 2016).

Participants may or may not change their preference on options but afterward often convey a new understanding and appreciation to other’s viewpoints through deliberative process. This indicates that participants could consider new aspects of the issue or new possibilities previously considered and identify new areas of common ground with others. Martin Carcasson (2009) identified the civic goals and outcomes for public deliberation as follows.

- Awareness and understanding of issues
- Improved democratic attitude
- Improved democratic skill
- Improved community action
- Improved institutional decision-making
- Improved community problem solving

Public deliberation theorists also discussed that as people continue to practice public deliberation, people can continue to build the civic capacity of their community, provide space for a different kind of conversation and see the value of framework that guides the way (Carcasson & Sprain, 2010). For applications of public deliberation, NIF also provides a lot of resources, guidelines, and materials to guide for planning, convening, and facilitating deliberative practices (See NIF’s website https://www.nifi.org/).
2.2 Trends of Public Deliberation

“Deliberation” is defined as the critical examination of issues involving the weighing of reasons for and against a course of action. Public deliberation is a process of thoughtfully thinking or weighing options. Deliberation emphasizes the use of logic and reason as opposed to power-struggle, creativity or dialogue.

In the theory of deliberative democracy, the aim is for both elected officials and general public to use deliberation rather than power-struggle as the basis for their vote. Deliberation can involve single individual, but most deliberative process recently practiced in many countries involve group deliberation. Recent trends are often relevant to public policy making (Figure 1). The first trend, deliberative processes are viewed as tools for democratic governance. The focus is placed on participation of civil society for solving public issues or public decision making by defining problems, identifying priorities, allocating resources or evaluating the implications of various options.

Thus, deliberation is expected to promote not only conciliation between various actors or interest groups affected by a policy, the emergence of informed and engaged public and taking into account their perspectives, but also enhancing the transparency, legitimacy and accountability in public decision making (Fearon, 1998). The second, deliberative process is viewed as tools for promoting the use of research-based knowledge to guide decision making. These trends have grown alongside the movement to promote evidence-based policy making. Such deliberative process focuses on the participation of technical experts, scientists and decision makers and is aimed at building bridges between research and policy making. Thus, public deliberation can allow for co-production and co-interpretation of research and knowledge (Stoker & Evans, 2016). Despite noteworthy differences between these trends, it is interesting to note their points of convergence. Actually, these trends affirm the ability and skills of deliberation to promote consensus building among various actors, to build shared-understanding based on cross-fertilization of knowledge and to inform decision making.
3. University-Based Centers and Institutes

Along with growing interest of collaborative governance and public deliberation practices, particular in the United States, there are unique university/campus-based centers and institutions as “critical hubs” and/or “resource center” for fostering collaborative governance and public deliberation to facilitate collaborative problem solving. This part introduces these centers and institutes, their activities and the overview of the network. They are interdisciplinary, and most of centers are connected to academic disciplines. Currently the centers involve departments or schools of education, communication, public administration, law, business, management, political science, urban planning, public health and community development etc.. One example, the Center for Public Deliberation (CPD) at Colorado State University is a unique organization to promote public deliberation for collaborative community problem solving across sectors. CPD provides students, stakeholders and community members the training opportunities of deliberative practice. CPD was established in 2006, and was initially developed to provide opportunities for students to apply deliberative practices to community issues (Carcasson, 2013). CPD is setting up the basic structure of the platform as a critical impartial resource for Northern Colorado community and providing various supports for deliberative discussions and collaborative problem solving. CPD operates a number of projects for the city government, citizen boards and commissions, school districts and a wide variety of community organizations such as community foundations, and the public library (Carcasson, 2013). In addition, CPD is dedicated to involve students for collaborative problem solving through the student associate program. The program was developed that brings about ten to fifteen students each semester through an application process to participate in a year-long program. During the program, students take the training course for obtaining facilitation skills, and then take practicum credits while working on particular projects. Student associate also help CPD projects including project selection, process design, convening, facilitation and reporting (Carcasson, 2010). Other centers provide internship opportunities for students, or have specific programs such as training workshop and field visit. Although each center differs significantly in size and budgets, as well as what activities they focus upon most of university-based centers have programs related to education and training for students.

Some centers are also involved in academic research particularly on public policy issues. For example, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) at Sacramento State University published the analytic reports with qualitative and quantitative research based on projects the centers supported (See http://www.csus.edu/ccp/publications.html). Often these research focus on the theory and practice of deliberative conditions, or on the specific issues.

4. Network of Centers and Institutes

Recently in the United States, there are not only individual center and program, but also growing network and continued development of university-based centers and institutes linked to public deliberation practices. For example, the University Network for Collaborative Governance (UNCG) represents growing interest of collaborative governance. UNCG consists of centers, institutes, programs, and individuals in college and universities that engage service and scholarship in order to enable citizens and stakeholders to engage in dialogue, deliberation, discussion, and conflict resolution around public issues (See http://www.kitchentable.org/uncg). UNCG is a network about 30 centers and institutes that provide teaching, service and research on collaborative governance. The key focus in these centers rather than on individuals within universities --- which are building capacity for public deliberation in their communities as tools of collaborative governance. Member centers and institutes may take different approaches along the spectrum of collaborative governance from civic engagement to community problem solving, policy development/dispute resolution, intergovernmental collaboration, collaborative implementation and systems, or a combination of these approaches (Figure 2).
In the spectrum, the term “collaborative governance” means a variety of processes in which all sectors—public, private, civic—are convened to combine their knowledge and resources in reaching integrative solutions to public issues. There’s whole spectrum of collaborative governance processes that involve bringing people together to discuss, deliberate or resolve public issues through from informing public to directly take part in decision making. UNCG member centers fall along different points of the spectrum in terms of the work they do.

UNCG also supports the centers and institutes of member universities, helping them to archive their mission, connecting each university, sharing ideas, knowledge and programs that work, offering consultation and assistance and holding conferences. In addition to that, each center has an organizational charter or set of policies that articulates the principles and mission statement to guide own practices, UNCG’s member universities have adopted a common set of principles that members agree to adhere to in their organizational operations, functions and practices.

In 2004, the Policy Consensus Initiative (PCI) conducted a survey of about 50 centers’ program that were providing consultation, convening, facilitation, training/education, research, process-design services for collaborative policymaking efforts, and then published the report entitled “Finding Better Ways to Solve Public Problems: The Emerging Role of Universities as Neutral Forums for Collaborative Problem-Solving” (PCI, 2005). The report showed a detailed description about the development of centers and institutes, lessons learned, and overviews of the activities. Although there are differences between centers and institutes in terms of the approach and services they provide for public deliberation or community problem solving, two common characteristics bring these centers together (PCI, 2005; Carcasson, 2013).

The first is an overall concept that centers and institutes focus on playing as key resources or neutral platform for improving the quality of public deliberation that is supporting deliberative processes designated to improve our democracy. The second is that these centers and institutes support emerging notions of collaborative governance. Often such perspectives require reconsideration of the roles of the public, experts, and government in public problem solving. These centers basically assume that citizen and communities can have a potential to solve problems autonomously. Also, it requires productive collaboration between public, private, and non-profit sectors. For archiving the purpose, centers and institutes are trying to play as critical roles of designers, conveners, facilitators to foster productive public deliberation through deliberative forums, multi-stakeholder negotiation, and other public participation process. Such process often require safe places for citizen and stakeholders to come together, good and fair information to help structure deliberation, and skilled facilitators or coordinators to guide the process. Recently these
centers and institutes are dedicated to providing their services and supports to their respective communities (Carcasson, 2013).

5. Focus of Centers and Institutes
Currently, about thirty university-based programs are officially part of the network. Most UNCG centers and institutes are focusing on facilitation, mediation, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and collaborative policy making, often at times directly providing services to government agencies, NPOs/NGOs, or civic leaders. In addition to that, the centers focus on particular policy issues such as natural resource management and intergovernmental or public-private collaboration. Projects that they get involved may be a function of their university services, often linked to classroom lecture or student engagement, serve as a collaboration between the center and other campus or community organizations or government agencies, or be completed as part of a grant or fee-for-services contracts (Carcasson, 2010). In the United States, some centers are connected federal and state governments and work on major collaborative projects. They are also providing specific services, as process design, consultants, trained facilitators and mediators for particular projects run by other organizations.

In terms of enhancing the capacity of collaborative problem solving, most of centers and institutes also provide a range of training and education opportunities for stakeholders, government officials, community members, or students to obtain various skills related to public deliberation such as facilitation, negotiation, stakeholder analysis, issue framing, conflict management and process design (Carcasson, 2010; PCI, 2005). Most centers encompass that training will play a vital role in their missions to build capacity for collaborative problem solving across sectors. In each center, the training program is structured to be useful to individuals from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds. In addition to that, recently the UNCG has tried to identify “collaborative competencies”.

From 2009 to 2011, UNCG tried to identify the model of competencies for collaborative governance drawing from diverse sources, and feedbacks from cooperative extension to federal agencies, and civic leaders based on shared knowledge, resources and lesson learned from center’s practices. A group of practitioners and scholars have developed a general framework of “collaborative competencies” with the aim to enhance centers’ practice and training. According the PCI’s report entitled “UNCG Guide to Collaborative Competencies”, UNCG referred to “competencies” as “the border term for mastery over associated knowledge, behavior, and skills” (PCI and UNCG 2011). The recent work of UNCG may be a useful starting point to figure out common features and a set of competencies model necessary for public deliberation efforts.

Recently UNCG has identified primary competencies and categorized them into different types, including 1) process competency, 2) leadership & management competency, 3) analytic competency, 4) knowledge management competency, and 5) professional accountability competency. Also the competency list include specific focuses including analytic and strategic thinking in collaborations, negotiating agreements and managing conflict, working in teams and group facilitation, evaluating the processes, and personal integrity and professional ethics. UNCG centers and institutes used the competencies’ model to help guide diverse efforts for collaborative problem solving. Also, the model may be used to develop learning modules for training and education programs around key principles of collaborative leadership. Table.1 overviews the list of competencies need to lead the processes in terms of phases on collaborative governance (Morse & Stephens, 2015).
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Deliberation</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Issue Analysis</td>
<td>- Stakeholder</td>
<td>- Group facilitation-Team building/Group dynamics</td>
<td>- Developing action plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>- Engagement-Community organizing</td>
<td>- Listening</td>
<td>- Designing governance structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Stakeholder Analysis</td>
<td>- Building social capital</td>
<td>- Consensus building</td>
<td>- Network management</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Strategic Thinking</td>
<td>- Process design</td>
<td>- Interest-based negotiation</td>
<td>- Conflict resolution</td>
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*Table 1: The list of collaborative competencies (PCI and UNCG, 2011).*

Some characteristics seem to be like more personal qualities, but it is important for practitioners to reflect on underlying attitudes or dispositions that contribute to whether one recognizes an opportunity for collaboration, as well as what kinds of tools to be applied in collaborative governance. The competency model is a practice-oriented and suggests the skillsets necessary to facilitate public deliberation and other collaborative efforts. Competencies the network of centers identified include necessary conditions from the phase of assessment to implementation in developing collaborative process.

6. Conclusion and Future Challenge

In this paper I introduced the role of centers and institutes which are experimenting with deliberative practices. Centers and institutes dedicated to promote public deliberation can serve as critical catalysts, conveners, designers and facilitators of efforts to enhance the capacity of collaborative problem solving in their communities and try to improve quality of democratic governance in terms of both theory and practice. Effective public deliberation may provide a way to rethink traditional roles and develop new capacities. When we try to put public deliberation in practice, participants can certainly tap into these centers and institutes to support this work. However, as some argued challenges of financial sustainability and how to connect their functions of research and education for these centers and institutes the future development of this field will be contingent on various factors (Carcasson, 2010). The capacity of their works to acquire more resources and networks is important to have impacts to serve as “critical hubs” and “resource center” for various issues that often require capacity of problem solving. The potential resources may be broad, spanning across public, private, non-profit, and educational institutions and community organizations can have also play an important role in cultivating such resources. Indeed, the process of identifying, designing, managing and sustaining deliberative process can be a useful collaborative process that benefits communities. So it seems clear that centers and institutes specially focused on public deliberation offer a promising way to enhance the capacity of problem solving.
References


Kitchen Table Democracy: http://www.kitchentable.org/uncg (Accessed 2017/02/20)