

USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development

An Agenda for the Study of Collaborative Governance

Collaborative Governance: Definition

- *A concept that describes the process of establishing, steering, facilitating, operating, and monitoring cross-sectoral organizational arrangements to address public policy problems that cannot be easily addressed by a single organization or the public sector alone. These arrangements are characterized by joint efforts, reciprocal expectations, and voluntary participation among formally autonomous entities, from two or more sectors — public, for profit, and nonprofit — in order to leverage (build on) the strengths and resources of each.*

Four Institutional Forms

	Institutional Forms			
Policy Arena	#1 Authority-based Arrangements: Government hierarchies	# 2 Authority-based Arrangements: Outsourcing	#3 Collaborative Governance Arrangements	#4 Market-based Arrangements
Natural Resources				
Infrastructure				
Social Services				
Health Services				
Transportation				
Housing				
Mass Emergencies				

Question #1

- *Is there empirical evidence to support the claim that through leveraging the resources across sectors that collaborative arrangements are superior to hierarchical authority, outsourcing, and markets?*
 - *From uncritical endorsement to skepticism, to balanced assessments*

- *In what types of problems and service arenas is collaborative governance superior?*
 - *Comparisons across the boxes both horizontally and vertically (refer to earlier table)*

Question #2

- *How can the institutional design, management, and individual levels of analysis be linked in designing and evaluating specific collaborative governing arrangements?*
 - *Institutional design*
 - *Management techniques*
 - *Individual level motivations*

 - *Linkages across multiple levels*

Question #3

- What roles can collaborative governance play in various stages of the policy process?
 - E.g., land conservation:
 - Planning
 - Negotiation
 - Purchase
 - Management

- To what extent may collaborative arrangements exhibit life cycle patterns?
 - E.g. mandated vs. spontaneous – different life cycle patterns

Question #4

- What political and ideological factors drive the creation and evolution of collaborative governance? How do these factors affect the structures, processes, design, and outcomes of collaborative governance?
 - Go beyond functional explanations
 - Ideological changes
 - Politics of structural choice; distributional issues
 - E.g., the rise of mandated collaboration; consequences

Conclusion

- In the process of searching for answers to these questions, scholars will need to draw on conceptual and theoretical inspirations from multiple disciplinary and theoretical perspectives:
 - transaction costs economics,
 - collective action theory,
 - institutional analysis,
 - politics of structural choice,
 - network analysis, and more.
- Research on collaborative governance can also enrich these disciplinary and theoretical perspectives.