

Collaborative governance brings public and private stakeholders together in collective forums with public agencies to engage in decision making. It is important that different stakeholders consider their common goals and objectives, including their motivation for collaboration, and define a framework through which they can achieve, monitor, and assess these goals and objectives. This can involve clarifying the formal/informal rules and norms of working together, developing decision-making procedures, defining leadership models to help facilitate the collaborative process, and setting a framework for managing ethical, legal and social issues and other lessons learned as they arise. This also includes thinking about the next generation of actors, developing clear mechanisms for transparency and accountability for all organisations involved, and establishing repercussions for breaches of the governance structure.

Guiding Questions

How is leadership determined?

How does the collaborative information management system facilitate social and material practices of decision making?

How can the system support decision-making that considers diverging interests, (unknown) lessons learnt and future needs?

Is the system biased towards consensus or other forms of decision making?

What mechanisms or strategies are in place to support contestation?

Further Information

As the uncertainties and frequency of disasters grow, disaster risk management relies on a wider set of public and private partners, encompassing federal, state, and local levels of government, as well as businesses, voluntary organizations and citizens. A range of questions about coordination strategies, systems, practices and attitudes arise at this juncture: 'Are emergency managers trained to work with these new actors? How committed are they to seeking new partners to assist in disaster planning and response? What policy guidance do they need? How prepared are they to work within broader partnerships? How familiar and comfortable are they with the different norms, cultures, and interests involved? Do their agencies have the budget, background, and training to involve these groups on an

ongoing basis? How will decisions be made, and by whom? (see McGuire et al 2010)

Collaborative governance is often oriented towards consensus (Ansell and Gash 2007). However, consensus can be difficult in such a setting, and, in fact, it can often be undesirable. Decision making for disaster risk management needs to accommodate the possibility to negotiate different interests and forms of knowledge. Governance processes need to 'create a space in which different interests and knowledges can be negotiated, contestation is possible, power relations are being put into question and no victory can be final' (Mouffe in DiSalvo 2010). This requires accepting that conflicting views may be inherent to the process of good disaster risk management, conflicts that can be exacerbated by cross-border collaboration (see Storni 2013).

In her review of democratic risk governance, Jasanoff argues that command and control attempts at 'disciplining the incalculable through sophisticated forms of calculation' enact ill-advised hubris (2010), and she argues for a shift from disaster risk management to democratic risk governance. This does *not* mean abandoning command and control. Instead, Jasanoff envisages engagement of different actors as complementary to formal efforts and shows that risk governance requires not only expert professionalism and broad-based engagement with local knowledge, but also an understanding of how vulnerability and resilience reflect and enact political choices that affect individuals and communities unequally (for further discussion, see Büscher et al 2017, in press).

Examples

Decisions between Public-Private Partnerships: Chen et al (2013) show that in public-private contractual partnerships for critical infrastructure, challenges to decision making often arise because of high degrees of uncertainty and the different types of discretion provided to different organisations. This means that contracts, that explain specific roles within collaborations, are often incomplete and potentially involve frequent renegotiations, posing challenges for maintaining an authoritative decision-making structure as well as for the necessary disclosure of information within collaborative information management systems. These interactions create high risks of opportunism and transaction costs (e.g., monitoring, enforcement and conflict resolution) which could also affect the aims and decisions made. Joint ventures with diverse stakeholders require high levels of trust and awareness of each other's goals, where information sharing may sometimes need to be very carefully calibrated and contested and may require long-term relationship building and incentive structures that align the interests of public and private collaborators.

Long-term effects: Fortun's study of the mismanagement of risk in the city of Bhopal (2011) illustrates the value of more flexible epistemological and moral technologies. In the aftermath of the disaster at the Union Carbide India Limited company, it was not enough to consider the risk of harmful chemicals on the basis of individual substances affecting individual human bodies at a particular point in time. Interactions between multiple substances and long-term interdependencies had to be taken into account, and the evaluation of risk and damage changed over time. The deliberative learning, potentially enabled by a *collaborative information management system*, allows a focus on the unequal distribution of risk and enables collective reflection and evaluation of explanations and approaches, a different form of decision making than is possible in a top-down authoritative system (Jasanoff 2003). Deliberative learning brings to the table a form of 'social learning where the knowledge of the expert and that of concerned laypeople do not mutually exclude one another', a framework for interaction that resonates with the debates about the need to support contestation (Storni 2013).

Resources

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