COVER SHEET

CITIZEN-GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT: COMMUNITY CONNECTION THROUGH NETWORKED ARRANGEMENTS

All correspondence should be directed to:
Dr Kerry Brown
School of Management
Faculty of Business
Queensland University of Technology
Email: ka.brown@qut.edu.au

or

Ms Robyn Keast
School of Management
Faculty of Business
Queensland University of Technology
Email: tui@bigpond.net.au

Abstract

Changes in the social, political and economic make-up of contemporary society have resulted in greater emphasis on competition, entrepreneurship, individualisation and fragmentation but, at the same time, there has been growing calls by the community for improved connection between government and citizens, and greater integration and cooperation. Since governments cannot afford to tolerate excessive levels of tension between constituents and other stakeholders, and the previous systems of integration on their own are no longer sufficient, there is a need for new processes and mechanisms of connection. Universally, networked forms based on horizontal integration principles have been presented as the new mode for social connection. Despite their apparent simplicity, networked arrangements offer a wide array of options, structures and potential outcomes. This paper explores and analyses the emerging need to customise these linkages between governments and community to optimise inherent benefits of these modes of working. It is proposed that in this context, new ways of working together require specialised mixing, matching and managing of networked arrangements between government and citizens.

Introduction: Recasting the Community into the Institutional Mix

Historically the provision of public services has been achieved through the institutions of the state, principally in the form of a bureaucracy, represented by large and divisionally disaggregated entities, driven by rules and procedures, and hierarchical (top-down) authority (decision-making) and communication channels. This model was successful in producing standardised, universal services that helped to improve the life situation experiences of many citizens (Aucoin 1993; Considine 2001; Crawford 1966; Quiggin 1999). However, in the current climate in which citizens are demanding more integrated, flexible and personalised or community specific services as well as greater efficiencies with public funds and more voice (Commonwealth Foundation 1999), the top down characteristics of the state institutional model has been found to be an increasingly inadequate and inappropriate mode of governance.

In response to these limitations a number of broad ranging reforms were commenced to enhance, reduce and, in some instances, replace bureaucracy as the primary instrument of social integration and service provision (Barry 1987; Hood 1991). Located under the broad title of New Public Management (NPM) in which the emphasis was on the attainment of efficiency, effectiveness and economy, initial reforms centred on the application of business-like principles and practices such as improved budget mechanisms, quality management, performance measures and greater emphasis on outputs as opposed to inputs and process (Corbett 1992). These largely internal-focused and hierarchically driven reforms (Sibeon 2000) were subsequently combined with the application of more entrepreneurial methods to free up management process (Osborne and Gaebler 1992), as well as the introduction of market-based solutions that relied on competition and contestability to drive optimal service provision and maximise utility.

Arising from the rapidly changing environment, the economic rationalist prescriptions for government service delivery, the social fabric of many countries began to fray at the edges. Citizens are looking to be reconnected but are turning to new, more inclusive institutional forms (Bogason 2000; 6, Leat, Seltzer and Stoker 2002). To accommodate this perceived need, new modes of connection based on more inclusive community governance ideals have emerged to reconnect communities with their governments.

Bringing in the Community

The community is about groups of citizens who, through their ongoing interactions, form relationships based on trust, mutuality and reciprocity (Fox 1974). Out of the networks of interaction it is argued 'social capital' is generated and forms the basis for collective action and enhanced community well being (Putnam 1993; Flora 1997). These networks assist local people to take social and economic action in their communities. Drawing on this communitarian spirit, communities have provided many of the local social support services that governments and markets are either unwilling or ill-equipped to supply (Bowles and Gintis 2000). Chanan (1997: 14) observed:

> …Local community action played a fundamental role in the way people
> looked after themselves and each other, the way they tried to improve
> and manage their surroundings and the way the responded to and tried to
> influence the public services …

Increasingly, however, governments are looking to move beyond the utilisation of the community as a 'gap filler' to capitalise on the networks of social capital located in communities as a way of both enhancing policy development and implementation

and connection. The community model of social organisation and its corresponding network governance approach was widely portrayed as the 'new answer' (Borzel 1998; Adams and Hess 2001; Gibson and Cameron 2001). Gibson and Cameron (2001: 7) commented:

> Community has become a cult, an object of warm-and-fuzzy ritual worship for politicians of all stripes, academics and the rapidly expanding new class of social commentators. Nobody can get enough of the C-word.

Indeed, governments are now relying on the networks of social relationships established within and across the community to facilitate the collective and coordinated action to take place around mutually agreed goals and draw together previously disparate associations (Borzel 1998). In this way these new 'community networked' ways of organising society-state relations represent a distinctive shift from a reliance on the traditional integration mechanisms of the hierarchy and market. Thus, whereas the hierarchical mode relies on legal authority to regulate relations, and the market on voluntary monetary contracts, for networks it is the shared values and trust established between members that provides the integrative or connecting element (Adams and Hess 2001; Davis and Rhodes 2000; Thompson, Frances, Levacic, and Mitchell 1991).

In introducing the community to the institutional mix of hierarchy and markets, new types of linkages and mediating institutions have been developed. These actions are based on an assumption that by developing processes and mechanisms to better engage and link community organisations and citizens in the processes of government there will be greater participation and thus decreased dissatisfaction and enhanced outcomes for the community. It is argued (Chisholm 1996; Bogason 2000) that through these connections traditional bureaucratic structures will be transformed to account for more fluid and responsive organisational forms. The end result has been the introduction of various initiatives that seek to combine government and community actors in new and innovative ways. This paper argues that new ways of working together require specialised mixing, matching and managing of networked arrangements between government and citizens.

Reconnecting Citizens – Engaging Government

As societies and their governments enter into new arrangements and relationships to bridge the growing sense of disconnection between citizens and governments as well as to design and deliver enhanced public services, the issue of community – government sector relationships has become a primary consideration. This process of linking government and community is at the broadest level referred to as community engagement and involves arrangements for citizens and communities to participate in the processes used in order to make good policy and to deliver on programs and services (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention 1997). The following section examines some of the mechanisms employed to facilitate enhanced relations between governments, community organisations and citizens.

A range of initiatives around the world was introduced to address the problems of citizen-government disconnect and consequent demands for greater community involvement in government policy development and service delivery. For example, the United Kingdom's People's Panel brought together some 5,000 citizens to inform government service delivery initiatives, as part of a broader Modernising Government agenda in that country (Cabinet Office 1999; www.cabinet-office.gov. uk/servicefirst/indexpphome.htm). At the same time, information and communication

technologies are increasingly being used to replicate traditional participation activities. *UK online*, *e-Scotland* and *Winona Democracy Online* (Minnesota, USA) are just some examples of recent attempts to engage the community in new ways.

Drawing on the experiences of other jurisdictions, the Queensland public sector in Australia has instituted a number of initiatives to facilitate a higher level of citizen participation and thus establish better connections with its citizenry and the community. This process of reconnection has occurred at several levels of government and with a range of community and private organisations and utilises different strategies such as community consultation, community engagement, and participative decision-making. To this end an array of program initiatives was commenced that introduced more community responsive approaches and networked governance aspects to policy development and service delivery. These 'whole-of-government' processes were aimed at better connecting government and communities and drawing from the experiences of citizens to solve intractable social problems that have beset communities. Some of these programs included the Crime Prevention Strategy (Premiers' Department), the Community Renewal Program (Housing Department), and the Families First Project (Department of Families). Discussing the Community Renewal Project initiatives, but equally relevant to this array of community-centric projects, Walsh and Butler (2001) noted that these arrangement are underpinned by a complex set of inter-oganisational and multi-level network relationships.

The effect of these programs was to establish the groundwork for developing more responsive government services through increased citizen participation. However, government was also aware that citizens did not just want better cooperation between agencies or more coordinated and efficient services, they wanted to be more involved in the decision-making processes and deliberations of government (Queensland Government 2001a). That is, citizens wanted to move beyond the limited, and often tokenistic, consultation processes previously offered by government to be more engaged in policy development and service delivery considerations, particularly those that impacted on their community.

In responding to the demands for a more participatory style of government, in 1999 the government commenced a regular schedule of Community Cabinet meetings (Davis 2001). The Community Cabinet scheme builds on an earlier initiative of former National and Coalition governments (Scott, Laurie, Stevens and Weller 2001) that involves the Queensland Cabinet accompanied by their respective Chief Executive Officers visiting regional cities and towns throughout the state to engage directly with citizens and participate in joint decision-making (Bishop and Davis 2002; Queensland Government 2001a; Keast and Callaghan 2002).

Building on the positive results engendered through the Community Cabinet meetings, a Regional Communities Program was instituted aimed at "giving people who live in regional Queensland … input into State Government policy development and decision-making" (http://www.regionalcommunities.qld.gov). These forums enable communities to identify and discuss priority local issues and raise these issues directly with governmental representatives. The process involves two Cabinet Ministers meeting with regional representatives, who represent a cross-section of that community, to discuss ideas and issues of regional significance (Queensland Government 2002a). Furthermore, through the ongoing interactions between communities, the staff of the Regional Communities Program work with local groups to coordinate action around issues of both a social and economic nature and broker partnerships between the forums and state departments to develop more responsive and integrated policy development and service delivery. An independent evaluation

of the Regional Forums undertaken in 2001 indicated that the process has resulted in improved regional integration and a more community responsive approach to government decision-making (Queensland Government 2002a). These initiatives signalled the success of the shift to more community centric approaches to governance and provided a springboard for further experiments.

Soon after the 2001 State Election, the re-elected Beattie Labor Government approved the creation of a Community Engagement Division (CED) within the Department of Premier and Cabinet. In announcing this new division the Premier stated, "During this term the Queensland public sector will focus far more on building productive and trusting relationships with business, communities and industry." (Queensland Government 2001a).

In establishing the Community Engagement Division, the government amalgamated some of the previously largely isolated integrative processes including the Regional Communities as well as others with a specific community-government interface such as the Office of Women, Multicultural Affairs Queensland, and Crime Prevention Queensland (Queensland Government 2001a). The purpose of this division is to "foster effective community contribution to the development of policies and programs and will offer opportunities to strengthen partnerships with a diverse range of community stakeholders" (Queensland Government 2001b). The Division's rationale and process for integration is summarised in its submission to the 2002 Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management CAPAM award (for which it was awarded a bronze placing) as outlined below:

> These initiatives form "an integrated, multi-layered approach to
> listening to and involving citizens and communities in the
> deliberations of the Government" (Queensland Government 2002b).

In addition to the traditional modes of citizen-government interaction, the Community Engagement Division, through its E-Democracy Unit, also utilises a range of inter-net based technologies and activities to link citizens directly to policy makers and decision-making processes (Queensland Government 2001c). These e-technologies are also being employed to link to regional forums and other citizen networks.

The Community Engagement Division presents as the government 'flagship' for enhanced citizen-government engagement, however the achievements of the Community Engagement Division were hampered by an initial lack of dedicated funding and an inability to develop a framework to collective action other than the initial Directions Statement (2001). Nevertheless, the policy concepts around community engagement indicate a moving away from 'one way directive' community consultation and have provided the policy and practice space within which more participatory community centred models of policy development and service delivery may transpire.

A specific example of one such collaborative crosscutting intervention is the Cape York Partnership Program in which Indigenous Communities on the Cape York Peninsula work directly with government Departments to plan better community-specific outcomes for Indigenous people. This initiative represents the first time that government departments have moved beyond direct service delivery and out-sourcing to a culturally appropriate approach to partnership through round-table dialogue and joint decision-making processes (Queensland Government, 2002a).

The end result is that Queensland has in place a wide array of arrangements to

link citizens and government. Clearly, the inclusion of communities and community governance ideals to the institutional mix offers a widening of intervention and institutional options. However, as a number of theorists (Jessop 1999; Bowles and Gintis 2000) have warned, like its state and market counterparts, community and community governance is not a panacea for all social ailments and is subject to failure on a number of counts. First, there is the fallacy of assuming homogeneity of communities and the uncertainty about the capacity of communities to formulate, articulate and represent their needs (Davis 1999; Bishop 1999). Bishop (1999: 13) in fact suggests that arguments about increased participation by communities "rely on a belief that the people, given the public space to participate, will make the best decision". Bishop argues that self-interest may influence the community agenda and mitigate against achieving broader social benefits. Aligned with this, Davis (1999: 1) warns against the reliance of tapping into "something which can be called 'the community' with expectations that any government, however well organised, can hope to fulfil". Clearly there are significant problems associated with community participation in decision making, particularly in terms of identification of definable communities with respect to specific issues and in the capacity of those communities to formulate and articulate their views.

However, in addition to these considerations, this paper argues that the ability to utilise these community governance ideals and related networked arrangements to their optimal benefit has been problematised by the government's undifferentiated use of networked arrangements as simply 'ways of working together'. That is, these community-government networks have been established without fully understanding the subtleties of forms and relationships that these arrangements can take. Further, it is contended that this undifferentiated use of the horizontal integration mechanisms is compounded by a lack of clarity in the terminology. That is, it is argued that the terms have specific meanings and characteristics that produce different outcomes. The following section will unpack the key horizontal terminology of cooperation, coordination, collaboration and networks. The relational terms will be the first to be examined.

Differentiating the '3Cs'

Different authors have used different terms or categories to denote the types of relationships that can occur between organisations. For example, Hogue (1994), Cigler (2001), Leutz (1999) and Szirom et al (2002) have set out five categories or levels of integration – informal, cooperative, coordinative, collaborative and integrative, while Lawson (2002) identified five companion 'c words' for integration – co-location, communication, coordination, collaboration, and convergence. Following a number of other theorists (Winer and Ray 1994; Konrad 1996; Fine 2001), the present work has distilled the three most common horizontal relationship categories from this broad array of literature – cooperation, coordination and collaboration, for further examination.

This section presents a conceptual framework developed from an examination of the previous usage of integration mechanisms and defining and describing the key linkage relationships, the '3Cs' – cooperation, coordination and collaboration – and locating them on the integration continuum. Understanding the characteristic operating modes of each of the '3cs' affords greater insights into their optimal application.

Cooperation

The key element of the term cooperation is the establishment of short term, often informal and largely voluntary relations between organisational entities (Hogue 1994; Cigler 2001; Lawson 2002). In cooperative relationships participants may agree to share information, space or referrals, however no effort is made to establish common goals and each agency remains separate, retaining their own autonomy and resources (Winer and Ray 1994; Cigler 2001; Mulford and Rogers 1982; Melaville and Blank 1991). Thus, as a process it is essentially about taking others into consideration, compromising and being accommodating without necessarily adjusting individual goals. Given that cooperation entails the use of very few resources, mainly information sharing, cooperation is further characterised by low levels of intensity and risk and tends to be a less strategic operation likely to be undertaken by personnel at lower levels in the organisational structure (Winer and Ray 1994; Cigler 2001).

Coordination

The term coordination implies the use of mechanisms that more tightly and formally link together different components of a system (Mulford and Rogers 1982; Alter and Hage 1993; Alexander 1995; Peters 1998). Coordination is argued to involve strategies that require information sharing as well as joint planning, decision-making and action between organisations (Mulford and Rogers 1982; Daka-Mulwanda 1995; Lawson 2002). Therefore, coordination essentially occurs when there is a need to align or 'orchestrate' people, tasks and specialised interventions in order to achieve a predetermined goal or mission (Litterer 1973; Lawson 2002). In this way, as Ovretveit (1993: 40) and others (Litterer 1973; Dunshire 1978; Lawson 2002) suggest, the exercise of coordination places emphasis on bringing together interdependent parts into an ordered relationship to produce a whole. In this context, organisations remain separate from each other, but jointly contribute to a specific program.

According to this view, coordination is not dependent on the good will of the different actors or the willing endorsement of the arrangements, but has some of the force of an objective, a mandate, leading to a more enduring system of relationships between different components of a larger system. This may involve adherence to a prearranged plan or formal rules, direction by an independent manager 'coordinator', or some other element of external control. Coordination means getting what you do not have through influencing or compelling participants to act in the way desired (Dunshire 1978: 16-17). This potential for an external mandate to drive network operation locates it at the fulcrum between horizontal and vertical integration.

Since coordination moves beyond information sharing to the pooled use of resources and joint planning and operation, it requires a higher level of commitment as well as the agreed loss of some autonomy. Because there is an increase in shared risks as well as shared benefits, coordination will often involve higher-level personnel. In view of this, coordination membership is generally more stable and there is more formality involved in the structure and operations (Cigler 2001). This formality and tangibility of processes and structures generally makes coordination a much more visible and enduring relationship than the cooperative mode.

Collaboration

Collaboration is usually the most stable and long-term type of integration arrangement and it requires the strongest linkages and tightest relationships among members (Gray 1989; Mandell 1999; Cigler 2001). Such relationships require comprehensive planning and well-defined communication channels operating at

many levels. The requirement for high levels of trust among members means that collaboration can be a very time consuming process. Because collaboration is often used to deal with complex social problems, especially when other integration modes have failed, it can be a highly risky endeavour and its success will depend on members being committed to a common mission and to seeing themselves as part of a total picture and not as autonomous agencies (Gray 1989; Mandell 1999; 2000; 2001; Cigler 2001; Agranoff and McGuire 2001). More intense relationships and different processes for working together are required because traditional methods including cooperation and coordination have not been successful or even sufficient (Keast et al forthcoming 2004). According to Daka-Mulwanda (1995: 219), "…Interorganizational relationships become more sophisticated, complex, and effective for problem solving through progression from cooperation to coordination to collaboration". Through the constructive harnessing of their collective synergies of these various elements "collaborative advantage" (Huxham 1996) is engendered that enables members to achieve solutions to formerly intractable problems. Gray (1989) defines collaboration as a "process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible."

The literature review demonstrates that these integration relationships, while related, are analytically distinct in terms of the nature of their relationships, degree of formalisation involved the degree of risk and commitment, and the type of outcomes sought and the level of organisational autonomy retained differ (Konrad 1996; Hogue 1994; Mandell and Steelman 2001). Based on these findings outlined in the previous section it is contended that each of the '3Cs' can be specifically located along an integration continuum such that cooperation falls at the more fragmented end, collaboration at the more integrated end and coordination occupies a position in between.

However, the ability to select optional integration relationships to achieve optimal outcomes is often confounded by the existence of a separate, related and often overlapping set of constructs focused on networks and their structural arrangements. The similarity of the terms has meant that researchers and practitioners have frequently used network terms interchangeably with integration terms. However, this thesis argues that integration is focused on the relationships between people and organisations, and networked arrangements are concerned with the structural elements and process of linkage. Similar to integration most theorists have tended to treat networks as undifferentiated. However Considine (2002: 4) states, "The network concept conceals an enormously diffuse set of relationships, meanings and engagements". Some of the literature is moving toward differentiating between network terms but this has not happened in a consolidated way. Noted exceptions include Marsh and Rhodes (1992) who identified five types of policy networks and Van Waaren (1992) who classified policy networks along seven dimensions. With respect to service delivery networks Alexander (1995) and Mandell (2000; 2001), Mandell and Steelman (2001) and Keast et al (forthcoming 2004) have identified and even provided typologies of the various forms that networks might take. While there has been some crossover application of the terms these works have stopped short of identifying a parallel literature. There is therefore a need to integrate existing knowledge about the phenomena of 'working together'.

Based on Mandell's (1994; 1999; 2000; 2001) influential work on differentiating networked arrangements, the following three network arrangements of networking, networks and network structures have been identified for examination. These network typologies will be extended through the introduction of additional literature identifying structural aspects, processes and expectations. The next section sets out

these three networked forms and explains and analyses their operation, structural characteristics and integration location.

Networking, Networks and Network Structures

Networking arrangements refer to loose connections between players and organisations. They are essentially cooperative relations that often only rely on information exchange (Alter and Hage 1993; Cigler 2001). The key elements of cooperation include short-term informal relations where each organisation remains separate, thus retaining individual authority and resources (Melaville and Blank 1991; Winer and Ray 1994; Cigler 2001; Lawson 2002). Members may join or leave the networking relationship without threatening the continuity or pattern of the linkages between other members.

Networks represent more formal and closer connections between people or organisations. In networks it is the agreed, often centrally imposed goals facilitated by joint planning and often joint programming that provide the coordination mechanism (Winer and Ray 1994; Daka-Mulwanda 1995; Lawson 2002). Network membership is generally more stable and more formality surrounds the processes and structural arrangements. Significantly, each member unit agrees to some loss of autonomy, but largely remains independent (Cigler 2001; Lawson 2002). There is thus an increase in shared benefits, as well as shared risks.

Network structures are tightly interconnected and highly interdependent constructs that rely on members moving outside of traditional functional specialities to create new ways of working (Cigler 2001; Mandell 2001). In network structures members of often previously competing organisations come together or collaborate on solving joint problems and issues. It also has the highest degree of risk. It depends on establishing a high degree of trust among the members and thus is a very time consuming process. It depends on the members being committed to common missions and to seeing themselves as part of a total picture and not autonomous agencies (Mandell 1994; 1999; 2001; Gray 1989; Agranoff and McGuire 2001).

Members of network structures see themselves as being interdependent. They are not only sharing resources or aligning activities; they are working towards systems change (Mandell 1999). There is a recognition that they need to form into network structures because traditional methods (including networking/cooperation and networks/coordination) have not been sufficient (Keast et al forthcoming 2004).

Similarities and Overlaps

This review of the terminology has demonstrated that there are considerable similarities and even a degree of conceptual overlap between the two sets of integration literature. However, even though there are a number of commonalities including intensity of linkages and relations, purpose, time and resource commitments and risk levels, there are also some key differences in that whereas the '3Cs' are focused on relationships, networks are concerned with the structural arrangements between entities, that is, the density of interconnection and the patterns of relationships. While there have been no shortages of attempts to develop broad typologies around these integration constructs, these have invariably focused on one or the other set of constructs and have not sought to bring together the two literatures into any coherent frame. It is argued that since these modes inform each other it is timely and pertinent that they be synthesised.

Synthesising '3Cs' and the '3Ns'

Within the context of the integration and network literature there has been an attempt to define some of the characteristics that distinguish among the continuum of approaches to cross-sector work. However, with the exception of Hogue (1994) and Mandell and Steelman (2001), there have been few attempts to systematically consolidate this information and harness its collective contribution to understanding the different horizontal arrangements, the functions they serve and their possible outcomes. It is argued that the '3Cs' and the '3Ns' are located along the continuum from a fully fragmented to a fully integrated system. However, while some theorists locate them all on the same continuum (Hogue 1994; Cigler 2001; Szirom et al 2002), this thesis proposes that they are two distinct, but interrelated concepts and therefore should occupy different sides of the integration continuum. Accordingly, networking, networks and network structures represent structural aspects and cooperation, coordination and collaboration are the relationships between members of these arrangements. In this way networking corresponds with cooperative endeavours, networks reflect coordinated action and network structures are aligned with collaboration. Figure 1 locates these two aspects on either side of an Integration Continuum and shows the different tiers of integration relationships and structures.
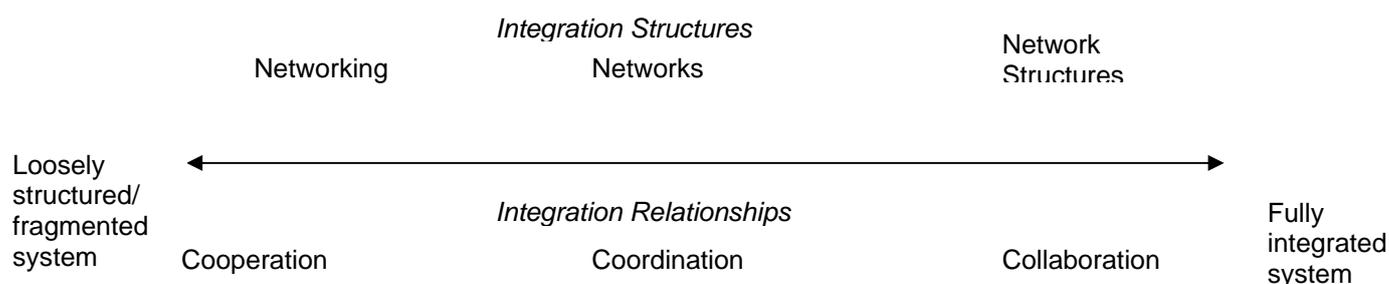
Figure 1: A Continuum of Connectedness

Table 1 extends the explanatory power of the integration continuum to indicate the differences in outcomes, goals and objectives, and ways of working together that align with the parallel networked arrangements. In doing so, it establishes the terrain onto which the various networked arrangements can be mapped.

Table 1 - Networked Forms Unpacked

Structure	Relationship	Duration	Goals/ Perspective	Structural Linkages	Formality	Risks/ Rewards
Networking	Cooperation	Short term	Independent Outcomes – Autonomous	Loose, flexible links	Informal	Low
Network	Coordination	Medium term	Joint planning and programming - but members remain autonomous	Some level of stability of membership, medium links and often central hub	Formal	Increase in benefits and risks to a point
Network Structure	Collaboration	Longer term	Systems change; Highly interdependent	Members move outside traditional	Formal	High risk/high reward

			with sharing of power	functional areas', tight links		

To expand, networking is concerned with cooperative relationships, often of a short-term duration, where the emphasis is on mutual adjustment to achieve individual goals. Because of the loose linkages between participants and the informality of the arrangements it is further characterised by low rewards and low risks. For networks and their corresponding coordination relationships, there is an expectation of medium to longer-term time requirements, integration is achieved through more formal arrangements based on joint planning and commitment, but participating organisations nevertheless retain their individual autonomy. Networks are further characterised by medium density links, a greater stability of membership and an increase in risks and rewards. Finally, for network structures and their requirement for highly collaborative relationships, the expectation is for the creation of new arrangements based on tight interdependent linkages, sharing of power and common missions. In 'moving outside of the box' of traditional ways of working, network structures offer higher rewards but also higher risk levels.

Thus within 'networked' forms there are elements of differing intensity of connection and relationships available for public policy makers to utilise. All of the networked forms have merit and utility. It is argued that the key to implementing successful community engagement mechanisms is to decide up front what results are to be achieved.   Each brings certain benefits and limitations and "Present administrators with important choices among trade-offs" (Rainey and Busson 2001: 67).

Mixing, Matching 'Networked' Forms

The introduction of this array of 'networked' forms has afforded public administrators and service designers a broader array of structures, governance arrangements and underpinning strategies from which to mix and match in order to achieve optimal social outcomes. Within such a plethora of options it can be expected that there will be difficulties in terms of choosing the right mix of modes.

To expand, networking, based on cooperative relationships, is used when information sharing, informal processes and mutual adjustment are the goals. If the goal is an alignment of activities across agencies or programs such that joint efforts can occur whilst still retaining a degree of autonomy, then coordination through a network and formalised processes will be the appropriate intervention.

When the goal is to resolve the more intractable social problems and working as usual is not effective, or when systems change needs to occur, then collaboration may be needed. However, collaboration should only occur when tangible outcomes (new programs and activities) will have to take a back seat to intangible outcomes (relationship building and establishing trust). Rather than focus on short-term outcomes, which can be expected from cooperation and coordination, the focus needs to be more long-term. After all, complex types of problems for which collaborative efforts and networked structures are needed have not developed overnight.

To perform this task well requires a clarification and confirmation of the goals to be achieved, both long and short term, as well as the type of relationship between

participants that is sought. Since the nature of the public sector environment and the issues it is confronted with are complex, it is likely that this will not be a linear process: there will be occasions when goals will change or become clearer and therefore governance arrangements and strategies will also have to be adjusted, changed and recombined.

The task for government now is to be able to mix and match the array of solutions, relationships and networked arrangements and strategies to meet the particular requirements of communities and citizens. For, as Rhodes aptly noted, "It's the mix that matters" (1997: V11).

Conclusion

The re-casting of community as a key or 'new' institutional site and governance mechanism follows a number of paths but can be linked predominantly to the perceived limitations of the state and the market forms of governance and therefore the need for networks to become mediating integration arrangements between increasingly disconnected citizen-state relations.

Although presenting as quite similar, networked arrangements in fact represent distinctive methods of operating, have varying levels of intensity in their types of connection and therefore can be expected to produce different outcomes. In order to use networked arrangements and horizontal integration relationships to their maximum utility, the first task is to understand their different meanings, characteristics and outcome foci. Following that it is important to be able to mix and match the various arrangements to best suit the environmental context, the level of connection required and the goals that are sought. For as Keast et al (forthcoming, 2004) have noted, "There is room in the public sector toolbox for all networked forms. These should not be viewed as competitive methods, but rather as complementary methods". However, there will need to be recognition from policy makers that adjustments will need to be made for networked arrangements to be utilised to their maximum potential.

The new role for governments in this context is to not only create the conditions for network arrangements and structures, but to manage their ongoing development to focus on achieving outcomes for both individual communities and the broader public. However, a shift in focus to more community centred approaches means that the role of government in the future may be, at least in part, to facilitate and provide for the appropriate selection of linkage mechanisms and governance arrangements that present opportunities for community participation on a larger scale than has previously been the case. For, if the engagement between government and communities becomes fragmented, useful outcomes are unlikely to be realised and the sense of disconnection between citizens and government is likely to increase.

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