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Conditions and Challenges of Territorial Cooperation

Abstract: *Civilization processes, interpreted according to the flow economy model, incline one to conceptualize territorial management in terms of Multilevel Governance. This approach explains the context in which territorial cooperation becomes a primary factor and one of the key dimensions of regional development. In many fields, territorial multi-sector partnerships focused on planning, organizing or just running everyday activities within territorial units are playing an increasingly important role in governance systems. This enhances the significance of public participation in territorial management. This paper presents researches showing the way cultural dimensions constitute the most complex and sophisticated challenges when the setting the rules and practices of interoperability within the network of public, private and social organizations. The quoted findings explain how many difficulties must be overcome in order to establish cooperative inter-organizational management systems stimulating territorial development.*

Key words: *territorial cooperation, multi-level governance, deliberative procedures, public participation, cultural dimensions*

Introduction

Territorial cooperation is emerging as one of the key dimensions of regional development. Such an understanding is deeply rooted in the so-called New Regional Policy, which is the current paradigm of stimulation of territorial development. The aim of this paper is to interpret various types of conditions determining territorial cooperation and to disclose the role of cultural

challenges that face the public administration in the future, as it tries to implement cooperative procedures. A review of the scientific literature as well as the authors' own researches constitute the basis for relevant observations and conclusions. The paper outlines a set of determinants of the considered issues and discloses the main features of the future challenges.

Multilevel Governance in the context of the flow economy

At the root of Multilevel Governance is the conviction that "Governance includes the state but transcends it by taking in the private sector and civil society. All three are critical for sustaining human development. The state creates a conducive political and legal environment. The private sector generates jobs and income. And civil society facilitates political and social interaction – mobilizing groups to participate in economic, social and political activities" [UNDP, 1997]. So, the concept of Multilevel Governance implies changing relationships between many actors, operating at different levels of political systems and in different sectors [Szczerski K., 2005, p. 11]. The multilevel effect concerns the empowerment not only of public authorities at different government levels, but also other private and non-governmental entities affiliated through interweaving networks. Based on the analyses and interpretations of many authors [Agh A., 2010; Noworól, A. 2011a, 2011b; O'Brien R., 2002; Sorensen E. and Torfing J., 2007; Sroka J., 2009; Szczerski K., 2005, 2012], Multilevel Governance should be treated as one of the concepts of territorial management, and at the same time, as a phenomenon revealing the civilization changes reflected in the new public governance theory [Pollitt C. and Bouchaert G, 2011]. Multilevel Governance emerges from a model of policy understood as a system of continuous negotiation between public, private and social bodies in the networked environment.

J. Sroka, based on other authors [e.g. Sorensen E. and Torfing J., 2007], presents in brief a classification of Multilevel Governance theories. He indicates two groups of these theories. The first group presents tensions (conflicts) and calculation as being main factors in the way the network is interrelated. Relevant examples are: theories of "Interdependency" and theories of "Governability". The second group of theories takes advantage of anthropological discourses. Culture plays the primary role in their formulation. We can identify theories of "Governmentality" and "Integration" in the latter group [Sroka J., 2009, p. 47-48].

Looking more closely at the first group: the causative mechanisms for Interdependency Theories are calculation and conflict. The constitutive rule of the network is then an exchange of resources. The government is in power but also in coalitions with the strongest actors of the network. Governability Theories, reflecting calculation and coordination, treat the network as a political

strategy of the government trying to coordinate autonomous activities of actors. The state uses networks in order to regain the ability to govern. According to Governmentality Theories, based on culture and conflict, governing is practiced through alliances between public and private, governmental and civic entities. Civic bodies adopt a culture code of the state. Control is executed through culture. Integration Theories disclose the role of intelligent, negotiable adaptation of many actors' activities within their "organizational fields". Specific modes of activity of organizations are based and accepted within these fields. The logic of the network emerges, strengthened by knowledge, symbols and good practices.

The multilevel approach to governance (and consequently to public management) is rooted in contemporary civilization phenomena. Scientific understanding gives a deep insight into those issues that are related to the flow economy [Dawson R., 2008] and the relationship economy [Allen S. et al., 2008]. In particular, the flow economy is a concept "in which almost all value is based on the flow of information and ideas". Companies must therefore continuously examine their position in the context of these flows. It is worth noting that this is not just about an economic infrastructure. The flow economy forces the emergence of new business strategies related to the necessity of finding a position in "the landscape of economic convergence". "As the economy becomes increasingly dominated by the flow of information and ideas, all boundaries between sectors are dissolving. Business now exists within a single convergent space, and the very concept of an 'industry' is losing meaning" [Dawson R., 2008, p. 123-128]. According to R. Dawson, every company must think of itself as no longer belonging to any particular industry, but simply a participant in the flow economy.

After deepened research into the evolution of the Japanese economy, R. Dawson identified six elements of the flow economy: standards, interfaces, connectivity, relationships, content and services. They are all interrelated one with another, but the primary axis in the flow economy is that of standards and relationships. Technological standards are situated at the heart of the connected economy. As standards become more open – and thus it becomes easier for customers to change affiliations – relationships become the main source of value. In the flow economy – whoever controls the relationships, controls the value. It is now important to consider a firm as a participant in the multi-dimensional space of the flow economy, rather than belonging to a particular industry. Companies must therefore constantly change their strategic business positions. The process of strategic repositioning is founded on opening businesses' thinking to new possibilities. Within them, the primary role is played by participative communication processes. This participative

approach to the company's strategy has become imperative in the flow economy. Strategy development must happen in real-time. In the same way as for any form of innovation, it must draw on the broadest possible spectrum of experience and perspective available in the organization. It must consider the participation of people throughout and even beyond the firm. The strategy should be participative, inclusive of members of the organization and external partners [Dawson R., 2008, pp. 128-147].

There are two main reasons why it is worth recalling issues related to the flow economy. Firstly, it is a real economic process, taking place in an internationally networked economic environment, less regulated than the public administration sphere. It thus refers directly to the importance of Multilevel Governance in which mutual dependencies in networks are often more important than legal regulations. Currently, the processes taking place in the real world are happening regardless of intentions and actions controlled by the political authorities and public administration. In the networked environment – as in the flow economy – relationships that are built on trust are therefore of fundamental importance. Political factors become increasingly weaker. Secondly, the reason for referring to the flow economy in this paper is the importance of public participation, as a key element of building a competitive advantage based on innovation activities. Public participation is usually associated with the processes of democratization of public life and with the longing for a direct democracy. In the flow economy, a new pragmatic dimension of public participation is disclosed. This participation helps varied types of entities to identify hidden phenomena and to build coalitions for improving their own position in the world of ever-changing circumstances. Consequently, a large part of decisive processes related to the stimulation of development happen beyond institutions which traditionally and in accordance with the law are responsible for territorial units' activities.

Considerations associated with Multilevel Governance open up a wide field of reflection concerning the management of conflict and negotiation. A rich body of literature devoted to this aspect is mainly focused on negotiations in business and organizational behavior [Alfredson T. and Cungu' A., 2008; Putman L., 2006; Robbins S. and Judge T. 2012]. Such understandings go beyond the scope of this paper. In order to deepen the issue of creating a relationship territorial network, it seems to be more purposeful to adopt a different research orientation, presented below.

Inter-organizational relationships

Earlier considerations have indicated how cross-sectoral collaboration is important for understanding contemporary territorial management. The main condition of interoperability is the organizational culture. It is usually

underpinned by national characteristics, studied by G. Hofstede. He revealed cultural diversification in 5 dimensions: power distance, collectivism/individualism, femininity/masculinity, avoidance of uncertainty and long-term versus short-term orientation. In addition, cultural differences deepen depending on the region, religion, gender, generation and social class [Hofstede G., 2000, pp. 49-56; 2010]. Listed dimensions of organizational culture provide a basis for the analysis of the functioning of the public administration, and at the same time – its capacity to enter into relationships with others (Noworól A., 2011b). Interesting conclusions can be drawn from studies of Ch. Felzensztein, E. Gimmon and S. Carter, who carried out researches on relationships between the organizational culture, the geographical proximity and the functioning of social networks [Felzensztein Ch. et al., 2010]. The study concerned business organizations, but the conclusions can be considered as universal and disclosing the mechanisms of functioning of the actors in spatial network systems. Key considerations concerning the implementation of the cross-organizational cooperation instruments depending on geographical and organizational culture are presented below.

Figure 1. Implementation of cross-organizational cooperation depending on geographical location and organizational culture.

		Organizational culture	
		Collectivistic	Individualistic
Geographical co-location	Closely Located	Direct stimulation of cooperation between actors	The need to stimulate social networks using existing institutions and organizations
	Distantly Located	The need to stimulate social networks by means of electronic communication	Significant difficulty in implementing cooperation between actors

Source: own study inspired by Felzensztein Ch. et al., 2010, p. 14.

In order to deepen understanding of the meaning of territorial cooperation, it is worth recalling selected research problems and theoretical concepts.

R.A.W. Rhodes maintains that „governance refers to self-organizing, inter-organizational networks” with the following four characteristics:

- Interdependence between organizations, as governance is broader than government, covering non-state actors; the boundaries between public, private, and voluntary sectors become opaque;
- Continuing interactions between network members, caused by the need to exchange resources and negotiate common purposes;

- Game-like interactions, rooted in trust and regulated by rules of the game negotiated and agreed by network participants;
- Significant degrees of autonomy from the state; networks are self-organizing; although the state does not occupy a sovereign position, it can indirectly and imperfectly steer networks” [Rhodes R.A.W., 1997, p. 53].

The essence of territorial cooperation was described by S. Heeg, B. Klagge and J. Ossenbrügge. They defined possible forms of cooperation according to selected criteria. An interpretation of these dependencies is given in the following table.

Table 1. Theoretical forms of territorial cooperation

Criterion	Forms of territorial cooperation
Territorialization of regional policy	integrated territorially (by places)
	thematically oriented (by sectors)
Intensity	exchange of information
	distribution of tasks
Formalization	informal
	formal
Number of territories	bilateral
	multilateral
Size of the territories	local centers
	metropolitan centers
Administrative rank of territories	local units
	regions
Internationality	national
	international

Source: own study based on Heeg S. et al., 2003, pp. 143-144.

Interoperability in the field of the spatial economy may take the form of partnerships. Based on analyses of public administration strategies involving the transfer of some public responsibilities to the private and social sectors, I. Elander indicates cross-sectoral partnerships as a spreading form of organization of the execution of tasks, particularly in the sphere of revitalization and mobilization of development capabilities. [Elander I., 2002, pp. 192-193] A partnership is defined as a “a coalition of interests drawn from more than one sector in order to prepare and oversee an agreed strategy for the regeneration of a defined area” [Bailey N. et al., 1995, p. 27; Elander I., 2002, p. 191]. I. Elander stresses the importance of cross-sectoral partnerships in creating public policy. He puts forward 6 arguments:

- (1) partnership may create synergetic effects of partners;
- (2) partnership may spread the risks of a project among several actors;

- (3) partnership may help one partner influence the world view and way of action of other partners;
- (4) partnership may be an instrument for gaining additional financial resources for the participating partners;
- (5) partnership may be a way of reducing open conflict and creating a consensual policy climate;
- (6) partnership may reduce demand overload upon a government and create a broader, more diffuse situation of accountability. [Elander I., 2002, p. 198]

In-depth studies of the functioning of cities' partnerships were carried out in China by X. Luo and J. Shen, and in Turkey by M.I. Haseki. On the basis of an interpretation of the quoted studies and also Polish experiences¹, a typology of territorial partnerships can be constructed.

Table 2. Typology of territorial partnerships

Type	Causative mechanism	Objectives	The territorial level / Partners	Actions	Examples
Developmental	Spontaneous	Joint development for mutual benefit	Local level / Local authorities, private sector, academic elites	Joint agreement	Cooperation in tourism
Promotional	Spontaneous and controlled by AP	Common territorial marketing	Regional and local levels / Regional and local authorities	Common strategies and programs Common promotional brochures and meetings	Promotion of investment Promotion of tourism
Coordination	Hybrid or hierarchical	Improving service provision and accessibilities	Regional and local levels / Regional and local authorities, NGOs sponsored by public sector	Partnership agreement, coordination of construction and operation of infrastructure, improvement of public policies	Transportation cooperation Coordination of the development and functioning of the technical and social infrastructure
Based on resources	Hybrid or hierarchical	Resource sharing (human and natural resources)	Public authorities	Joint agreement	Education cooperation, human resources, maritime

¹ The author is a member of the scientific board of the common strategy of Malopolska and Silesia Regions.

Type	Causative mechanism	Objectives	The territorial level / Partners	Actions	Examples
Strategic	Operations controlled by public authorities (rarely spontaneous)	Strengthening competitiveness and alleviating inter-city or inter-regional competition	Public authorities	Common strategies and programs	Common market, standardization of investment policies

Source: own study inspired by Luo X. and Shen J., 2009, p. 60; Haseki M.I., 2011, pp. 103, 106)

Among important theoretical concepts, it is also appropriate to recall Model 4C created by A. Najam, characterizing the relationship between public and non-governmental organizations [Najam A., 2000]. Analyzing the relationships between NGOs and (self-)governments, he proposed a scheme of interdependence of their strategies and goals.

Figure 2. Model 4C of NGO–Government Relations

		Goals (Ends)	
		Similar	Dissimilar
Preferred strategies (means)	Similar	Cooperation	Co-option
	Dissimilar	Complementarity	Confrontation

Source: Najam A., 2000, p. 383

Model 4C is structured based on the juxtaposition of features of similarity or dissimilarity of strategies (means) and goals (decisions) of public organizations and NGOs. A. Najam claims that it leads to one of the four combinations:

- cooperation when aspiring to similar goals and using similar measures,
- complementarity, when looking for common solutions, but using dissimilar strategies,
- co-option, when applying similar strategies, aspiring to dissimilar goals,
- confrontation, when both goals and strategies are dissimilar.

In the context of the theme of this paper, when studying the impact of public intervention on the stimulation of development processes, Model 4C seems to be a valuable analytical tool. It is worth supplementing it with an analysis of relations with the business sector [Noworól A., 2011c].

The listed concepts of interoperability and creation of partnerships must take into account three ways of social communication: information,

consultation and public participation [Noworól K., 2009]. Public participation is a particularly important and difficult form of communication. It is defined as “the involvement of individuals and groups that are positively or negatively affected by or are interested in a proposed intervention, e.g., a project, program, plan, or policy that is subject to a decision-making process” [Enserink, B. at al., 2007]. The essence of public participation is dialogue and deliberation. J. Cohen uses the notion “deliberation” to describe a “public process of communication oriented towards searching for appropriate arguments advocating specific evaluations and solutions in the issues under discussion” [Sroka J., 2009, p.28]. The public character of the discourse is of fundamental importance. J. Sroka, taking into consideration the theoretical approaches of J. Cohen, J. Habermas and J. Dryzek presents seven postulates of deliberation procedures:

- (1) argumentative character of deliberation, which requires participants in the communication process to exchange only logically justified proposals;
- (2) not allowing the “gagging” of certain views, which means that debates are of a fully inclusive and public nature, and each position, even the most atrocious one, should have a possibility to access the debate;
- (3) liberating debates from external pressures, which consists in participants being sovereign towards the environment; they are bound only by communicative assumptions and argumentation principles;
- (4) liberating debates from internal pressures; everyone has the same opportunities of being heard, raising topics, criticizing, etc.;
- (5) debates aiming at rationally motivated consent, which means that the rule of majority (voting) is acceptable to apply only because debates have to finish with conclusions;
- (6) the fact that the deliberation includes problems that can be regulated in the equal interest of everyone; everyone must then be guaranteed equal access to the mechanisms of social and political communication;
- (7) debates embracing (re-)interpretation of needs and changes of pre-political attitudes and preferences, but the principle issue is the strength and credibility of arguments, according to the chosen criteria [Sroka, 2009, p. 32-39].

Due to potential conflicts of interest, the application of these rules in the conduct of public debates is extremely difficult. However, it is important to note that a constructive debate creates an arena of adaptation of views of those who are striving for constructive inter-organizational relationships.

Finally, it is worth recalling two models of arrangement in the public sphere. K. Szczerski distinguishes a model of participative deliberation, in which the public sphere has open channels of participation by various social actors (stakeholders) in the decision-making process and open communication

channels through the media. The media become neutral relayers of the deliberation, allowing the existence of diverse opinions and mutual persuasion. Another model of arrangements is a liberal tender of interests, which is the concept of the public deciding, which implies the self-organization of interest groups (especially economic) and their balancing in the process of public negotiations. The conditions of such a process of constant bidding (bargaining) are voluntary participation, equality, transparency, mutual trust and low costs of entry into the system [Szczerki K., 2012, p. 169]. It is worth noting that the conditions mentioned by K. Szczerki coincide with the – above mentioned – postulates of deliberation procedures.

Cultural dimensions of Public Participation

Cultural aspects of public participation can be analyzed in a broad and in a narrow sense. The broad one refers to the level of social capital. Without going into the classics, like J.S. Coleman, R.D. Putnam or P. Bourdieu, four main characteristics of social capital can be identified:

- Trust, understood as a sense that members of the community are conducting their relations in good faith,
- Rules and norms governing social action, which are standards of behavior set from within the community itself (the community also imposes sanctions on those who do not behave according to the prescribed norms),
- Reciprocity, assumed as a type of social interaction – each member of the community has duties to every other member,
- Network resources and characteristics, forming a system of social linkages with other members of the community on whom one can rely (family, neighbors, members of same organizations, etc.) [Claridge T., 2011; Noworól A, 2011a].

All these features of social capital are strongly influenced by culture. In reference to the concept of G. Hofstede, such cultural dimensions as: power distance, collectivism/individualism, femininity/masculinity and avoidance of uncertainty have an important influence on people's ability to maintain a high level of public debate, to spread social cooperation protocols, to sustain trust in institutions and, finally, to respect public space, allowing reciprocal communication and coordination of activities.

Research on the influence of cultural factors on the participatory approach could refer to, apart from G. Hofstede's theory mentioned above, other scientific approaches like: the World Value Survey (WVS) by R. Inglehart, S. H. Schwartz's cultural values orientations, the cultural study of the GLOBE project and M. Minkov's cultural study [Maleki A., 2010, pp. 25-51]. However, as G. Hofstede's concept is best known and most quoted, it may be the best source to refer to. Important empirical research, applying the G. Hofstede concept on a micro

scale, was carried out by B. Enserink, M. Patel, N. Kranz, and J. Maestu. They studied cultural factors as co-determinants of public participation in the river basin management of many countries. It allowed them to formulate a series of hypotheses and consequently come up with final, general findings. The most important judgments concern the irrelevance of using an idealistic, static perspective of culture. Their empirical evidence suggests that culture is a vigorous concept and in a highly dynamic political environment, new practices and institutions and accompanying new (sub)cultures are formed continuously and existing ones grow and change constantly. In the context of the cultural dimensions, as defined by G. Hofstede, the quoted research finds some elements that could explain the differences and commonalities in public participation practices in various European countries. So the influence of a large power distance on inhibiting participation, and the reinforcement of this tendency by large power distance in combination with either high uncertainty avoidance and/or masculinity scores should be noted. However, culture cannot explain differences in absolute terms. Such factors as national history, practical experience, and existing political and institutional settings also play important roles and may lead to different and sometimes seemingly contradictory behavior. A general finding is that cultures that are characterized by high power distance and high masculinity are unlikely to embrace public participation. Cultures that have a tendency to avoid uncertainty and countries that are characterized by collectivist cultures can build upon their existing experiences to implement EU requirements, but will have to make considerable efforts to link informal and formal decision-making processes [Enserink B. et al., 2007]. It is important to note that high indexes of power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity are typical for Poland [Hofsted G., 2010; Noworól A., 2011b].

Final remarks – the Role of Cultural Challenges

The cited findings explain how many difficulties must be overcome in order to set up cooperative inter-organization management systems stimulating territorial development. The cultural dimensions, rooted in human behavior, constitute the most complex and sophisticated challenges when setting rules and practices of interoperability within the network of public, private and social organizations. Territorial cooperation has become a necessity in the networked environment. In many fields and sectors, territorial partnerships focused on planning, organizing or just running everyday activities are playing an increasingly important role in the governance systems. It is precisely the Multilevel Governance concept that explains the broad context in which cooperation has to be a primary management factor. Civilization processes, interpreted according to the flow economy model, incline, perhaps even force one to advise that public affairs should be organized in a way that is appropriate

to an open, dramatically changing and difficult environment. Efforts to find collaborative relationships among people and their organizations are the most difficult challenge for all who feel responsible for the future of cities and regions.

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