POLICY CAPACITY
MECHANISMS TO
SUPPORT INNOVATION
IN THE CANADIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

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NEW DIRECTIONS

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Abstract

This study seeks to identify a shortlist of key mechanisms of policy capacity that can support Canadian public sector organizations to deliver policy and program innovation and excellence in an increasingly complex context. A mixed-methods approach is used in this applied research study to analyze three Canadian public sector case studies' adoption of innovative initiatives and understand the key aspects of each jurisdiction's policy capacity that has supported each innovation. An analysis then examines these aspects of the initiatives using a motivation-resources-obstacles lens, with particular focus on the mechanisms of policy capacity that facilitated the initiative in each case study. The study then identifies and examines specific policy capacity mechanisms that could be leveraged to support delivery of policy and program excellence in this increasingly challenging era.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

This research undertaking seeks to identify a shortlist of key mechanisms of policy capacity that can support innovation within Canadian public sector organizations. This paper will identify the four key choices that organizations can be intentional in pursuing in order to support innovation within their ranks. These include a shift to a whole-of-government perspective; transformation of business management practices; strategic communications to build awareness and support; and, activist leadership to champion innovation. These mechanisms aim to deliver policy and program innovation and excellence in the face of an increasingly complex policy context characterized by the "new norm" of fiscal constraint, rising stakeholder expectations and a trend of economic volatility (El-Erian 2015; IPAC 2015; Peters 2015; Wu, Ramesh and Howlett 2015).

Case studies will be used to examine policy innovation and policy capacity[1] evident in three Canadian jurisdictions—two municipal examples and one provincial example—including the Winnipeg Police Board's Indigenous Council on Policing and Crime Prevention in the City of Winnipeg; the Open Guelph approach to open government in the City of Guelph; and, the Plan to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness in the Province of Alberta. Each case study has been selected based on its adoption as an innovation in its jurisdiction. The framework of Mohr's (1969) motivation-resources-obstacles hypothesis is used in order to examine these case studies. Mohr found that innovation is "directly related to the motivation to innovate, inversely related to the strength of obstacles to innovation, and directly related to the resources available for overcoming such obstacles" (114). In other words, if policymakers have the *motivation* to innovate in response to the *obstacles* of mounting fiscal constraints and increasingly demanding stakeholder expectations, then the remaining factor is whether or not policymakers have access to sufficient *resources* to develop innovative solutions and overcome another obstacle of

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[1] For the purposes of this study, *policy innovation* is defined as the adoption of a policy or program by a government that has never previously used it (Berry and Berry 1999; Krause 2010; Mohr 1969). *Policy capacity* is defined as the "the set of skills and resources—or competences and capabilities—necessary to perform policy functions" (Wu et al. 2015: 166).

internal resistance to change. This would ultimately allow policymakers to continue delivering excellent policy and programs, regardless of current circumstances.

If policy-makers and leaders in governments across Canada are provided with insight into specific policy capacity mechanisms they could leverage, they may be encouraged to undertake new innovative initiatives based on current and emerging evidence. It is this potential positive implication that this author hopes to contribute to public policy practice.

Literature Review

Governments currently find themselves in both a complex and dynamic era for policy-making. Yet in a period defined by the new norm of fiscal constraint and rising stakeholder expectations (IPAC 2015) and given the context of a changing global economic landscape in which market volatility is an ongoing trend (El-Erian 2015), the ability to create and implement effective policy in every sector is increasingly challenging (Peters 2015; Wu et al. 2015).

On the one hand, the consequences of fiscal constraint could be seen as daunting, such as impacts to staff morale, work environment culture and policy development, and reduced "big thinking" (IPAC 2015). Necessity may be viewed as the mother of invention (Plato 1968: 221), and to some degree, constraints can motivate exploration of increased efficiencies (IPAC 2015). However, decision makers are also aware that at some point, decreased administrative capacity and internal resistance to change can negatively affect the ability to implement policy (Baskoy et al. 2011; Gilardi 2010; Mesegeur 2005). On the other hand, these same constraints could also be viewed by decision makers as opportunities to think and experiment beyond the borders of the *status quo* to create effective solutions (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 2015). As well established in the literature, intentional investment into innovation can set an organization on a trajectory to overcome the obstacles to deviceful new solutions (Carley 2011; Krause 2010; Mohr 1969; OECD 2015).

As policy capacity is an integral factor to public sector innovation, it is instructive to explore the mechanisms of policy capacity that have supported successful instances of policy innovation. Policy *mechanisms* in this paper will refer to the specific elements of policy capacity that enable policy innovations to take place, and that can be intentionally selected as tools to support adoption of policy innovations.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION

This analysis explores several mechanisms of policy capacity that can support innovation in Canadian public sector organizations. The experiences of three Canadian jurisdictions are analyzed through Mohr's (1969) motivation-obstacles-resources lens which considers the motivations of organizations to innovate, the obstacles faced by governments contemplating innovation, and the resources drawn on to adopt these innovations. Several policy capacity mechanisms comprising the resources used to adopt innovative initiatives are revealed and examined.

CASES

1. City of Winnipeg: Winnipeg Police Board's Indigenous Council on Policing and Crime Prevention
2. City of Guelph: Open Guelph – Open Government Action Plan
3. Province of Alberta: Alberta's Plan to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness

1 City of Winnipeg
Winnipeg Police Board's Indigenous Council on Policing and Crime Prevention

Initiative Description

The Indigenous Council on Policing and Crime Prevention provides advice and recommendations for how the Winnipeg Police Board could better engage with Indigenous people in Winnipeg. The Winnipeg Police Board exists at arms-length and works closely with the City of Winnipeg; the Board's authority, purpose and duties are derived from the *Police Services Act* and enabled by City of Winnipeg by-law 148/2012 (City of Winnipeg 2012; Winnipeg Police Board 2016). The Board uses its relationship with the council to improve its public engagement plan and to inform its strategic priorities, policies, administrative direction and performance management for the Winnipeg Police Service (Winnipeg Police Board 2015 "September 11, 2015 Press Release"). The Council is unprecedented in police governance because of the formal

relationship it establishes with the Board and the commitment the Board makes to giving weight and consideration to the input and advice received through the Council.

Impetus for the Initiative

Manitoba, unlike many jurisdictions across Canada, did not have previous experience with civilian governance in policing prior to the establishment of the Winnipeg Police Board. Prior to this, civilian governance took place via municipal councils, sometimes with the assistance of citizen advisory boards. The Winnipeg Police Board became active in 2013 and struck an Executive Director Search Committee of the Board. The Committee asked candidates to identify and present on a range of issues as part of the recruitment process. The candidate who was ultimately selected as the Executive Director of the Winnipeg Police Board proposed the creation of an Indigenous Council as part of a broader Aboriginal Strategy (I1 2016).

The first opportunity to follow up on the idea of this Council arose in December 2014 when the Winnipeg Police Board passed a resolution to include in its strategic planning process the increased protection of Indigenous women and girls from violence and exploitation. This resolution also included a commitment to establish an Indigenous Advisory Council on Policing and Crime Prevention. The Board commenced a consultation process to inform the establishment of its strategic plan. This consultation found support within the Indigenous community for establishing the Council, and this commitment was made an action item in the strategic plan (I1 2016).

Consensus has been achieved on the establishment of an interim Terms of Reference. The Council has met several times and established a subcommittee to make recommendations on a Terms of Reference. The Executive Director was asked to support the subcommittee by drafting a proposed final Terms of Reference, which was approved by the Council in March 2016, and approved by the Board in April 2016 (I1 2016; July 8, 2016).

Initiative purpose

The mandate of the Council as set out in the interim Terms of Reference is "to provide information, knowledge, and advice to the Board respecting any matter affecting or pertaining to Indigenous people, relevant to the purpose and duties of the Board under The Police Services Act" (Winnipeg Police Board 2015 "Indigenous Council"). In other words, the Council will provide

this information, knowledge and advice to the Winnipeg Police Board so the Board can take these important factors into account when it delivers on its responsibilities. The Council has engaged in a priority-setting and work-planning exercise to determine how it will deliver on its mandate (I1 2016).

Process and Outcomes to Date

In the initial consultation process to explore the potential of the Council, Board staff worked with the members of what would become the Board's Indigenous Liaison Committee (though the Indigenous Liaison Committee was not formally established until afterward) and other contacts to identify leaders in the Indigenous community in Winnipeg. These leaders are actively engaged in a range of organizations such as the Manitoba Metis Federation, Southern Chiefs Organization, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Native Clan Organization, Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, as well as community organizations involved in crime prevention and provision of support to victims of crime (I1 2016).

In the spring of 2015, the Board invited 30 of these contacts to discuss establishment of the council. This engagement was productive and resulted not only in support for the Council, but also recommendations on the composition of the Council and an interim Terms of Reference. Feedback from these contacts also helped the Board to refine its vision for the Council to ensure it empowered Indigenous people and improved their confidence in the Council's capacity to address the priorities of Winnipeg's Indigenous communities. After the Board heard that Indigenous residents had negative prior experiences with advisory councils where they felt their feedback was not taken seriously, the Board made a commitment in the interim Terms of Reference to consider and publicly acknowledge all formal recommendations made by the Council (I1 2016).

Following this engagement, the interim Terms of Reference was established and a nomination process initiated. Advertisements were posted and communications sent to community organizations to invite the community to nominate potential candidates. The Board established a nomination subcommittee, composed of the same members as the Indigenous Liaison Committee. The nomination subcommittee reviewed the numerous nominations against a set of criteria and made recommendations for the Council to the Board.

Once the Council was established, the initial meetings of the Council were designed to build capacity of the Council, to allow members to become acquainted and discuss how they would work as a Council, and to establish the subcommittee to develop a final Terms of Reference. The Board Chair also attended one of these meetings to present on the Board's engagement process and the role of the Council within the Board.

Key Factors of Success

The group of community leaders the Board gathered originally as part of the initial consultation process in the spring of 2015 was important to the successful establishment of this Council. As described by the Executive Director, "These were people who are really engaged in the community, who are working on the ground with the Indigenous community, who are dealing with areas of crime, and otherwise highly engaged with community-based organizations" (I1 2016). Typically, in engagement and nomination processes, there can be uncertainty concerning the calibre of relevant experience and insights, but this group was composed of very high quality people with a willingness to work together and compromise (I1 2016).

The committed engagement and willingness of the Board to compromise was an additional significant factor to the establishment of this Council. For example, the Council wants to be an empowered body that enacts tangible results. The Board has been responsive to this Council objective by allowing as much empowerment as is legally possible within the framework of the Board's governance. In terms of resources, the Board has agreed on the process that the Council will make a recommendation to the Board; if the Board accepts that recommendation it will then seek the resources to support the recommendation's implementation. The Board has also agreed to be accountable as to what it does with the Council's advice by publishing it, along with follow-up decisions in public meeting agendas and minutes. Additionally, the Board's responsive approach to allow the Council to establish its own Terms of Reference, subject to legal constraints, has been an effective mechanism to obtain general buy-in to the establishment of the Council.

In terms of measuring performance, the Council is responsible to set its own priorities. The Executive Director has been working with the Council to build in deliverables within each priority initiative, including timelines and milestones that will allow the success of each initiative

to be measured. A more comprehensive performance measurement approach may be developed at some point; however, the requirement to annually review the Terms of Reference will provide an initial mechanism to review performance of the Council's initiatives.

Barriers or Limitations Encountered

The key practical limitation to this Council is the legislation preventing the Council from being truly empowered, in that the Council's decisions cannot be substituted for the Board's. The *Police Services Act* does not specifically prohibit this, but the Act gives a police board the responsibility to establish policies, among other responsibilities (Government of Manitoba 2009: s. 28.1). By delegating that authority to another body, a police board would be failing to fulfill its mandate (I1 2016). Another limitation associated with empowerment is the limitation to resources, as the Council does not have discretionary money. The availability of fiscal resources is the primary limitation to true empowerment of this Council, and may be an ongoing challenge (I1 2016).

Lessons Learned

A key challenge in the adoption of this innovative initiative was to overcome understandable distrust from the Indigenous community in another government consultation mechanism. There was initial concern in the community regarding whether this endeavour would be any different from any other consultation. However, the Board's approach overcame these concerns; specifically, the Board's approach to engage community leaders from the germ of the idea at the start through to the establishment of the Council helped to ensure that this was not simply another consultation process to which governments were subjecting Indigenous people (I1 2016).

Political and Public Acceptance

The establishment of the Council has not been high profile, so at this juncture there has not been broad public reaction. Additionally, there has not been a significant political reaction either. In late 2015, the Mayor of Winnipeg established an Indigenous Advisory Circle (the "Mayor's Indigenous Advisory Circle", one of three committees of the Mayor) (City of Winnipeg 2015), and although there have been concerns about duplication of effort, there are plans underway for members to attend each other's meetings in order to avoid potential overlap.

The Council itself has been very positive, likely because the Council members are all highly engaged and motivated people, who are totally unpaid volunteers with access to Board staff to act as a secretariat for the Council (I1 2016).

Motivation-Obstacles-Resources Context

Keeping in mind Mohr's framework outlined in the introduction of this paper, elements of the Winnipeg Police Board's motivation to deliver public service excellence by establishing the Council are related to some of the obstacles that created escalating pressures for the city. First we will discuss the obstacles which helped to fuel the motivation for the innovation, and then we will look at the resources—the policy capacity—of this case.

OBSTACLES

Significant obstacles faced by the Winnipeg Police Board include the over-representation of Indigenous adults and youth in custody in Manitoba[2] (I1 2016; Statistics Canada 2015) and ongoing tenuous relationships in an era of truth and reconciliation following the legacy of colonialization in Canada (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). Additionally, at 11 percent of the Winnipeg population, Indigenous peoples make up a significant proportion of the city's population (2016; Statistics Canada 2011). As such, these realities create a challenging context within which the Board must deliver on its responsibilities, but also represented part of the rationale for creating this Council. It is important to note that, despite this challenging context, the obstacles to the creation of the Council itself were not significant barriers. While there were critics who questioned why a Council was necessary, these objections were overcome with education and discussion on the aforementioned rationale (I1 2016). The escalating pressures of these obstacles created the conditions for good timing that contributed to successful adoption of the Council.

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[2] Indigenous adults and youth in custody are over-represented at over 70 percent of the adult population in Manitoba jails (Statistics Canada 2015) and 85 percent of youth in custody in Manitoba (I1 2016).

MOTIVATION

In terms of motivation, there is a desire in Winnipeg to renew relationships with Indigenous peoples. In recent years, there has been increasing public "collective outrage at the disproportionate and unacceptable frequency with which Indigenous women and girls are murdered or go missing" (Winnipeg Police Board 2014). Additionally, a January 2015 article in Maclean's stated that "Winnipeg is arguably becoming Canada's most racist city." (Macdonald 2015; CBC News 22 June 2015). The growing spotlight on these issues helped to create an environment of motivation to seek change and receptiveness to ideas that could support such a change. The stage was thus set for adoption of an innovative idea. The timing aligned to follow up on the idea of an Indigenous Council when the Winnipeg Police Board passed a resolution to include in its 2015-2019 Strategic Plan prioritization of increased protection of Indigenous women and girls from violence and exploitation (I1 2016; Winnipeg Police Board 2014).

RESOURCES

As our framework for discussion defines Mohr's resources component as policy capacity which includes the analytical, operational and political skills and resources to develop policy solutions and perform other policy functions, we will identify the key mechanisms that supported adoption of the Council. Policy capacity elements in this case included the following:

→ The analytical and operational resources demonstrated by the Executive Director Search Committee and Winnipeg Police Board as a whole, both of which indicated openness to new ideas and change in its selection of a candidate, who included a novel idea in his self-marketing as part of the competition process.

  o This reflected operational resources, as the Winnipeg Police Board had a hiring process in which the search committee demonstrated the Board's mindset that was "conducive to change" and recognized "the importance of leadership motivation and behaviour." (Mohr 1969: 115). This also reflected analytical resources, because Canadian public sector organizations' business management and governance processes may be administrative, but the implementation of the processes themselves is informed by policy work.

→ The political will and policy advice that resulted in the Winnipeg Police Board's resolution to include in its strategic planning process the increased protection of Indigenous women and girls from violence and exploitation, and a commitment to establish the Council.

- o This indicated the analytical, operational and political elements of policy capacity. Analytical resources existed in the provision of advice that resulted in the Board's decision to pass the resolution; operational resources existed in the form of the governance process of the Board; political resources existed in the political will of the Board to unanimously support the resolution.

→ Analytical resources that provided the facts, figures and advice most relevant to Winnipeg's context related to Indigenous peoples in the development of the Council.

→ Analytical, operational and political resources to recognize the value of and enable:

- o Inclusion of this priority in the strategic planning process.

- o Funding to support the priority; this in itself is an operational resource.

- o Employment of a full consultation process to explore the potential of and produce recommendations on how to establish the Council.

- o Identification of Board staff to serve as a secretariat for the Council (I1 2016).

→ A significant analytical and political resource included the breadth of community organizations whose leaders have been committed to actively supporting the Council's establishment and work since before its inception.

- o This resource was analytical from the perspective of the input provided by these leaders during the consultation process, and political from the perspective of the recognition of the weight that community leaders' input holds, particularly given a context of historically patriarchal relationships between Canadian governments and Indigenous groups.

2 City of Guelph
Open Guelph – Open Government Action Plan

Initiative Description

Open Guelph is the City of Guelph's implementation of open government based on its Open Government Action Plan, the first of its kind in Canada (City of Guelph 24 July 2013).

Guelph's approach to open government is designed to be a partnership between citizens and the public service, where local government becomes "open by default" and citizens "participate by nature" (City of Guelph 2014 "Action plan").

Open Guelph's approach reflects the evolving concept of open government from the historic notion of freeing information (i.e. open data, "government 2.0") to the current emphasis on "collaboration, shared resources and increased transparency and accountability." (City of Guelph 2014 "Interim report": 17; Francoli 2011: 152). This approach to open government "represents the capacity of new technology and a fundamental shift in the culture and practice of governance…its emphasis is on sharing, the distribution of power and collaboration." (2011: 153). It is important to keep this approach to open government in mind as we discuss this case further below.

Impetus for the Initiative

In 2011, there was exploratory political interest in open government. Two key champions at the City of Guelph—CAO Ann Pappert and then-City Clerk Blair Labelle—recognized that the city needed to commit to change in a big picture way to equip Guelph for the future. These leaders looked at open government from a long-term perspective, recognizing it as a unifying concept of organizational change that could be leveraged for the transformation of Guelph as an organization (I3 2016).

There was a broad understanding that citizens' expectations of their municipal governments are changing. Specifically, expectations are changing with respect to the information available, the means to access government, and the opportunities to participate in not only consultation but also decision-making. Guelph officials grew concerned that municipalities as institutions are designed based on an archaic model, and not on the way that citizens are now interacting with the world. Thus, the impetus to explore open government in Guelph was the recognition that the municipality needed to modernize in order to remain relevant to its citizens (I3 2016). The fact that local governments are infused in the day-to-day lives of citizens through service provision is well understood. However, the city asked itself whether citizens are able to reach out and touch the institution that provides those services, and whether or not citizens can adequately assess the performance of various services. In order to

stay relevant and build trust with those who depend on the municipality as an important player in citizens' everyday lives, Guelph recognized it needed to modernize not only what it does but how it does it (I3 2016).

City officials recognized the potential to achieve the following two broad goals at once by undertaking an exercise in open government: firstly, to improve the experience of residents (open data, open access technology) by modernizing services (using the best of current technology); and, secondly, to create new internal efficiencies (working smarter, not just harder) (I3 2016). Currently, the development of Open Guelph is reaching a critical mass, particularly now that there is a dedicated management resource. Guelph is the first municipality in the country with a management resource dedicated to this particular form of organization change. There is still much more work to be done and access points to be created through Open Guelph. The municipality is identifying new opportunities to expand, thinking about open government comprehensively, and investing in early and frequent engagement with citizens to feed into the design (I3 2016).

Initiative purpose

Operationalizing accountability, transparency and innovation into the design of city services is what open government means at the City of Guelph. There are three purposes Open Guelph seeks to achieve: the first is that public servants need to ensure that the problems they are working to resolve are done so with the citizen at the top of the chain. The ultimate purpose of Open Guelph is to entrench this notion of public service. The second purpose and an underlying driver is the necessity to transform the City of Guelph as an organization to meet the needs of citizens in the next five, ten and twenty years. City officials believe that a transformed organization will be better equipped to catch up with evolving needs of citizens. Finally, municipal resources in Canada are under considerable strain, particularly in the context of the infrastructure deficit. Therefore, the more creatively that Guelph can allocate resources and anticipate needs, the better positioned the city will be to respond to the new norm of public service in Canada (I3 2016).

Process and Outcomes to Date

In 2014, the City of Guelph Open Government Action Plan—a five-year planning document to evolve Guelph toward open government—was unanimously approved by the Guelph City Council (City of Guelph 2016). The development of this action plan involved extensive investment in soliciting a wide variety of input, ranging from informal to structured settings. There were informal conversations (for example, the city provided toolkits for community members to have casual meet-ups with neighbours); there were structured, facilitated meetings with community groups such as civic actions groups, business groups and the university community; and, there was a "Change Camp" exercise with over one hundred participants. The purpose of this idea-generation and priority-setting engagement was to ensure the action plan would be responsive to citizen needs. The city wanted the action plan to be informed by citizens, with the lens that this was not an exercise to be done to citizens but for them. Akin to how technological companies develop end-user applications, the idea was to ask the actual users how to best solve issues (I3 2016).

Aptly described as "the beautiful mess of open government," (I3 2016) this form of public engagement is far more intensive than typical consultation processes in government. However, the city recognized that the outcomes of an extensive engagement process will be far more durable and effective in meeting the needs of the citizens for which Guelph is providing services (I3 2016).

These are early days for Open Guelph, but the initiative is on a productive trajectory. The creation of a dedicated management position and program area for this exercise is a significant indicator that Guelph as an organization is invested in Open Guelph. Particularly as the project is in early development, and given the breadth of its scope, it is significant that the city has invested in a dedicated management resource to think about the strategic health of the whole exercise and provide Guelph with the confidence that the organization will achieve success. This is particularly important, given the other responsibilities and urgent day-to-day matters that can emerge for those in positions with portfolios of more diverse scope (I3 2016).

Key Factors of Success

In early internal discussion, the program area acknowledged that measuring citizen trust is very difficult (e.g. baseline data that does not currently exist, outdated citizen surveys), particularly in trying to determine whether the measure of change is attributable to correlation or causation. The program area also recognized that while trust is part of an outcome related to open government, it is not the ultimate outcome. In working closely with program evaluators and other experts, Guelph decided to set aside measurements on trust for the time being and instead to focus its efforts on measuring services that impact people's lives (I3 2016).

Performance is measured against the Open Government Action Plan. In 2016, which is two years into the five-year plan, the city will perform an initial performance evaluation of the Action Plan. This performance evaluation will assess firstly the city's progress on delivering Phases I and II of the Action Plan; secondly, any lessons learned thus far; and, thirdly, hard data such as accounting for the number of new digital services (I3 2016). The Guelph Map App is one example of how creative problem-solving can contribute to operational efficiency gains. Citizens can use the Map App with the same physical motions and same actions as sending in complaint tweets to solve bylaw and other problems. Bylaw enforcement officers used to respond to issues based on the order in which complaint phone calls were received, which could result in the bylaw enforcement officer driving greater distances to resolve receipt-order issues. Now that the bylaw enforcement officers can see the issues geographically on the GIS application, the officers can be allocated more efficiently based on geographic location of reported problems. In other words, innovative mechanisms like the Map App can result in the ability to allocate bylaw enforcement officers or other human resources such that the problem is resolved in a more efficient manner (I3 2016).

Additionally, the open government program area is currently working to determine how to measure impacts of Open Guelph innovations such as decreased frustration and saved time. However, there is recognition in the program area that these kinds of measures are different from measures strictly related to open data.

Barriers or Limitations Encountered

One challenge related to the implementation of Open Guelph is that there is overlap with how the public service and politicians engage with the public. It was important for the program area to frame issues in such a way that shows how changes in service delivery as part of Open Guelph are able to support public service goals while also meeting political objectives (I3 2016). Specifically, there are political figures in Guelph who believe strongly in directly providing accessible customer service to citizens. There is a spectrum of considerations with this characteristic, because on the one hand, a citizen can directly contact the institution via a political figure; the complaint or issue is then funnelled through various mechanisms before it reaches the operational area responsible to address the issue. Although such a process is less efficient, the citizen has the benefit of direct access to political representatives. On the other hand, if citizens are able to report issues directly to the operational area through an app, efficiency is substantially increased. Therefore, the city has been cognizant of the balance related to increasing efficiency without undercutting customer service (I3 2016).

One approach to better understanding this overlap has been one-on-one sessions the Open Guelph program manager has held with the majority of municipal representatives. These conversations have helped to relay how there is benefit in Open Guelph for everyone, because Open Guelph principles relate to politicians' common priorities such as core services, efficiency and transparency.

There are also internal challenges, including institutional resistance to change, and internal issues related to which areas are driving change, which areas are making changes, and which areas receive credit and recognition for undertaking the work associated with these changes.

Lessons Learned

Since the early development stages of Open Guelph, citizens have frequently been infused into its various processes; such as the Open Guelph Roundtable, which puts citizen members to work side by side (co-creating, not just consulting), making them very empowered. Guelph learned that there is a balance to be struck in providing empowerment. Specifically, empowerment gives responsibility, and responsibility can take time. If roundtable members are

unpaid volunteers, there is a limit to what can be expected of them. Now that Guelph is on its third iteration of how the roundtable is operated, it is better structured to incorporate this learning about the natural tensions that exist with truly empowering citizens. In other words, Guelph has learned that there are limits to empowerment (I3 2016).

The fact that there are limitations such as these is not negative. There is a fine line between respecting and misusing volunteer citizens' time and skillsets. There is also a risk to the success of a project if citizen members are a key component of project success, but have limited time to dedicate to projects. Initial attempts at empowerment through the roundtable were a little too idealistic, but failure and learning were important because it equipped the city to adjust its approach (I3 2016). Overall, Guelph is in the process of learning the practical realities of aligning the concept of increased citizen engagement in this real work, given other constraints (finance, council, provincial legislation) (I3 2016).

Political and Public Acceptance

So far, there has not yet been sufficient communication about the new Open Guelph initiative for there to have been much reaction from the public. Part of the context is that open government in Guelph has transitioned from being "fuzzy" as a concept to being tangible as a priority undertaking. Another factor is the intensity of the day-to-day work of operationalizing Open Guelph; the people doing that work are highly productive, but are taxed with the range of duties and long term goals associated with the file (I3 2016).

From a political perspective, Open Guelph is revolutionizing the nature of day to day service delivery duties; part of the challenge of this change is the need for upfront investment to achieve that change (I3 2016). Lack of funding to date has been good in the sense that it has helped to fuel creativity and innovation. The city has so far been able to find ways to free up existing resources and has been able to innovate in ways that are less financially taxing on the organization. However, the city may need to assess the point at which the development of Open Guelph could benefit from funding support (I3 2016).

Motivation-Obstacles-Resources Context

Similar to the first case, we will discuss the obstacles which helped to fuel the motivation for the implementation of Open Guelph, and will then examine the policy capacity mechanisms at play in this case.

OBSTACLES

The obstacles in the development of Open Guelph were related to firstly internal concerns for potential risks of misperceptions stemming from transparency and secondly impacts of transforming established organizational operations. While there is potential for internal obstacles common to any organizational transformation, existing challenges have been overcome with an educational communications approach that seeks to frame the transformation in the ways that it benefits political and internal leaders, the public, and the organization as a whole. Additionally, vulnerability is a significant aspect of this work, in that, Guelph communicates openly the full extent of what the city is trying to accomplish, not just a minimum that the city can guarantee it will do. Institutions often try to manage or lower expectations as a risk management tool, but Open Guelph is itself open about why, how and when the municipality does things. This exercise in vulnerability is based on trust that citizens will be open to having an open conversation based on shared goals (I3 2016). For example, Open Guelph hosts an online budget simulator which allows citizens to experience the types of decisions the city faces when developing and approving the annual budget. While current media culture does not always lend itself to facilitating informed conversations about public services, the city recognizes that instead of shying away, it can work to build resilience in its provision of customer service (I3 2016).

MOTIVATION

With roots planted in the history of Freedom of Information legislation, open government as a concept has evolved from access to information into a transformation of how government operates (City of Guelph 2014, "Interim report": 17; City of Guelph 2012; Francoli 2011). This new notion of open government is characterized by "collaboration, shared resources and increased transparency and accountability." (2014: 17; 2011: 152). In 2009, the United

States government issued an Open Government Directive to all of its departments and agencies "to take specific actions to implement the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration set forth in the President's Memorandum" (United States Executive Office of the President 2009; Obama 2009). In 2011, the Government of Canada launched its Open Government initiative "to enhance its transparency and accountability to Canadians" (Government of Canada 2011) and in 2012 joined the international Open Government Partnership (Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada 2014) which has grown from eight participating countries in 2011 to 69 in 2016 (Open Government Partnership 2016). Additionally, as technology has continued to evolve, so has the increasingly participative market and democratic context within which individuals interact with their product and service providers (City of Guelph 2012).

It is in this context that a new business model for government in the form of open government or "Government 2.0" has become globally recognized and increasingly adopted in recent years (OECD 2011). Within this frame of reference, Guelph's political leaders had an interest in open government as part of its long term strategic direction to support organizational excellence, innovation in local government and city building objectives (City of Guelph 2012).

RESOURCES

Based on our framework for discussion which defines Mohr's resources component as policy capacity, which includes analytical, operational and political skills and resources, below are key mechanisms that supported adoption of Open Guelph in this case study. Policy capacity elements in this case included the following:

→ The analytical, operational and political elements of policy capacity reflected in the political will and internal leadership that resulted in Guelph Council's decision to include in its corporate strategic planning process consideration of how open government in Guelph could support several strategic objectives.

  o Analytical resources existed in the provision of advice that resulted in Council's decision to approve the Open Government Action Plan and approve incorporation of open government in its Corporate Strategic Plan Framework; operational resources existed in the form of the internal decision making and relationship management processes of the

City Clerk's office to lead the development of the Open Government Action Plan; and finally, political resources existed in the political will of Council to support the action plan even though open government is still in its very early stages globally, and in particular was not yet commonplace among Canadian local governments at the time. This also reflected political resources in the leadership culture of openness to change.

→ Analytical resources that provided the research, analysis and advice to support the development of Guelph's Open Government Framework which informed the development of the Open Government Action Plan.

→ Operational resources to recognize that in order for Open Guelph to be successful, there would need to be a wide range of people across the organization who are working on it and achieving quality results. In order to achieve this organization-wide buy-in, the municipality recognized that champions must be identified; to create champions, it was a priority to frame the initiative by its benefits to the potential champion specifically. This notion of working to gain buy-in from various actors reflects the importance of knowing one's audience and framing conversations based on that knowledge.

→ Analytical, operational and political resources to recognize the value of and enable:
  o Inclusion of this priority in the strategic planning process.
  o Employment of a well-designed consultation process to inform the plan's development.
  o Internal willingness to consider how this priority will change business management operations.
  o Internal leadership to recognize the importance of assigning and funding a dedicated management resource to the initiative in order to continue to build relationships, educate, and think strategically about how to deliver on Open Guelph objectives.

3 Province of Alberta
Alberta's Plan to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness

Initiative Description

The Alberta Youth Homelessness Plan (referred to as the "Youth Plan") has developed out of Alberta's 10-Year Plan to end homelessness. As a targeted response to a specialized population—young people are among the fastest growing and most underserved of Canada's homeless population—the Youth Plan is the first of its kind in Canada (Alberta Human Services 2015).

The Youth Plan is aligned with *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years* (Alberta Human Services 2008) (referred to as the 10-Year Plan) which states that "Albertans from specialized groups, including homeless youth, are dealing with particularly challenging issues, and require targeted responses." (2015: 4; 2008: 13).

Impetus for the Initiative

In 2009, Alberta launched its 10-Year Plan on Homelessness, and tasked a gaps analysis to support the development of the province's homelessness policy portfolio. The purpose of this internal review on homelessness policy, led by a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), was to identify any policy gaps, seek to understand why any gaps existed and whether there were opportunities to fill those gaps. The review discovered that although previously, the 10-Year Plan was focused on chronic homelessness, there was a gap on youth homelessness. The internal review process led to the development of recommendations and organizing government around those, and helping these various areas of government to understand their respective roles (I2 2016).

In 2013, then-Minister of Human Services David Hancock—who was a champion for inclusion of youth who at that time were not being served under the 10-Year Plan—initiated a secretariat to develop a response to that gap. The Minister had served in a number of ministries over the years and had seen a range of touch-points of youth homelessness as a result. Additionally, Hancock had experience as a community volunteer who had witnessed the issue "on the ground." Provincial leadership was strong for the Youth Plan following Minister

Hancock's involvement. Cabinet policy approval for the Youth Plan demonstrated cross-government responsibility for the issue and the work detailed (I2 2016).

Community leadership was also a key contributor to this initiative; communities demonstrated responsiveness to the Plan and undertook Point-in-Time (PIT) counts that demonstrated increased numbers of youth experiencing homelessness and a ground swell of support from Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness to undertake this work (I2 2016).

The Youth Plan officially launched in 2015. Although the plan has only been in the community for a short period so far, there have been a number of significant shifts. Firstly, increasingly the provincial government is recognizing the importance of this work; the community has been deeply involved in this work for a long time, and is now witnessing the government enter into the challenging aspects of the youth homelessness conversation. Secondly, the provincial government is providing funding with the use of a model that allows each of twelve communities to set its own priorities within the guiding principles of the Youth Plan priorities. In this way, the funding model is not prescriptive but rather direction-setting. The initiative has a similar governance structure to Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness.

Initiative purpose

Given that the primary issue is the lack of stable housing for youth who find themselves homeless, the key purpose of the initiative is to increase housing stability for youth. Ending youth homelessness will be an incremental process. Youth homelessness is completely avoidable; there simply need to be effective mechanisms in place to prevent it (I2 2016).

Increasing housing stability for youth encompasses a number of factors. One is to encourage youth to stay at home, and focus investment on helping youth to repair relationships at home before those relationships break down. Another consideration is how young people can be supported to stay at home or with family so that s/he doesn't enter into homelessness. However, this initiative recognizes that youth shelters are not a solution in and of themselves. Tensions can arise when youth leave care, or leave the youth justice system or mental health or addictions treatment. The Youth Plan is a social-well-being plan to develop youth resiliency, and includes strong prevention efforts, such as developing attachment of youth to school, community and programs (Alberta Human Services 2015; I2 2016).

Alberta's current response to youth homelessness places much of the emphasis on emergency response. While emergency services are important and necessary, we cannot rely on these as the 'system' to deal with youth homelessness. The strategies presented in the Youth Plan suggest a new way to address youth homelessness that builds on the three existing components: prevention/emergency services/housing and supports – but shifts the emphasis away from purely emergency response. As a result, implementing these new strategies allows prevention, as well as housing and supports to become a greater priority (Alberta Human Services, 2015). Emergency services are still provided, with support, in order to facilitate this shift in Alberta's response (I2 2016).

There are two overarching goals of the Youth Plan: firstly to prevent youth from becoming homeless through family supports and education and secondly to provide rapid rehousing of homeless youth through family reunification or supportive living by utilizing a client-centred approach (Alberta Human Services 2015; I2 2016).

The Youth Plan is a unified, integrated, provincial response to youth homelessness that engages government, communities, parents and youth in building solutions (Alberta Human Services 2015). The priorities of the Youth Plan include:

→ Prevention and Awareness – Prevent youth from becoming homeless.
→ Early Intervention – Youth receive supports before they become entrenched in homelessness.
→ Client-Centred Supports – Youth have access to client-centered supports.
→ Research and Evaluation – Youth homelessness in Alberta is understood, measured and evaluated.
→ Stakeholder Engagement – Community partners and youth mobilize solutions to address youth homelessness (2015: 15).

Process and Outcomes to Date

In the development of the Youth Plan, a number of processes contributed to the development of the Youth Plan, including an internal review of youth homelessness; collaboration through a cross-ministry committee; extensive research; dialogue with

community partners and stakeholders and youth engagement (Alberta Human Services 2015).

In the implementation of the plan, the first major process underway is the external drive by communities to inform Alberta's youth homelessness priorities. The communities have been funding a wide range of initiatives, based on the priorities they set that reflect both their local needs and the broad direction of the Youth Plan. For example, as a large urban centre, Edmonton's system can be very difficult for young people to navigate to access various services. Edmonton has decided to direct funding into the development of integrated youth hubs (like community hubs in Ontario) that can be one-stop shops for young people to access government and community services. Two youth hubs will be established; one north of the river and one south of the river, to reflect geographic realities of the city. Another example is that of Calgary, which has funded the first "host homes" approach in Canada to focus on providing housing for homeless LGBTQ2S youth. This model is based on engagement with community members who provide host homes for homeless LGBTQ2S youth (I2 2016).

Additionally, historically, the ten-year homelessness plan in Alberta only provided funding to major centres. However, the Youth Plan is also providing funding to programs in five rural communities (population under 25,000) to help them develop their priorities and innovative solutions in these small communities (I2 2016).

The launch of the Youth Plan also helped inspire A Way Home, a new national coalition in Canada that will focus on bringing together national, regional and local players with the single focus of preventing, reducing and ending youth homelessness (I2 2016).

Another major process underway to support the Youth Plan's implementation is the system change taking place within the provincial government. The Youth Plan is permission-giving to have challenging conversations within government regarding how government operations have not changed to respond to young persons' needs. These conversations are now increasingly taking place across government. For example, conversations have increased on child intervention processes and how various areas of government can better work together to prevent youth homelessness when young people leave care.

Initially, the Youth Plan adopted the same performance measures as the 10-Year Plan. Currently, these are being recalibrated to reflect youth homelessness (Alberta Human Services 2015; I2 2016). The four broad outcomes that will inform indicators and measures in the Youth Plan include outcomes at the individual level, sector and system level, community level and societal level (2015; 2016).

Key Factors of Success

There have been a number of key factors that have contributed to the success to date of the Youth Plan. One is that of the political and community champions discussed earlier. Other key champions were developed through the Interagency Council on Homelessness which brought together key leaders across Alberta to consider the gaps and advocate incorporation of overcoming youth homelessness into Alberta priorities. The governance structure of this Council is set up to be accountable to the Minister of Human Services, which has helped significantly with priority-setting. At a national level, two additional key champions included Tim Richter—President & CEO of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) and Vice Chair of the CAEH Board of Directors; previously President & CEO of the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF)) (CAEH 2016)—and Stephen Gaetz, Director of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and the Homeless Hub and the President of Raising the Roof, a leading Canadian charity that focuses on long term solutions to homelessness (Homeless Hub 2016).

Another related factor is the proactive engagement of government with community organizations early in the process, which enabled these organizations to begin realigning their work to reflect the direction of the Youth Plan (I2 2016).

Barriers or Limitations Encountered

An initial barrier included the timing in the release of the Youth Plan. There were changes in government (three premiers and three ministers) during the development of the plan, which required re-education, and the development of cabinet approval decision documents each time (Government of Alberta 2013; 2014; I2 2016).

Another barrier is that as strong as the cross-ministry and cross-community support may be, education is always required, as discussed earlier. The investment required in education, awareness-building and support cannot be underestimated (I2 2016).

Additionally, there were some difficult conversations to be had at the community level. For example, a recurring area of challenge is related to child intervention, which often involves a range of community providers that are regionally delivered. Child intervention itself is regionally delivered; homelessness providers are regionally delivered, as are mental health and addictions services. These discrete organizations often do not have built-in mechanisms to support integration of their services, which can lead to barriers that require some hard conversations (I2 2016).

Lessons Learned

The most significant piece of learning is not to underestimate the general lack of understanding regarding homelessness. There are many common misperceptions that can become paralyzing for policy makers and decision makers. For example, there is commonly a misperception that homeless youth are from low income or Aboriginal families; there's also the common misperception that becoming homeless is a choice. However, these aren't always realities. These misperceptions have been addressed regularly to policy makers and decision makers, but the need for education to overcome these ideas has been substantial (I2 2016).

On this education front, however, there have been some really strong partners who recognize the breadth and complexities of the issue. Additionally, there has been recognition that there are roles across government to contribute to this file. Big policy issues often become centralized in one ministry, but in this case, it has been clearly identified and framed as a whole-of-government issue (I2 2016).

Political and Public Acceptance

Overall, the reaction has been very positive. There will always be critics; for example, there has been some pressure that perhaps the plan doesn't speak to subpopulations as much as it should (e.g. new immigrant or Aboriginal subpopulations). The hope is that the plan can be broad-sweeping. There have been some barriers and challenges felt at the community level, specifically with respect to multi-sector involvement; awareness-building is again required (I2 2016).

Nationally, there has been some political reaction and interest, particularly from small city mayors and provincial governments on the rationale and implementation of Alberta's

approach. So far it has been too early to speak to some of the successes of the program, but it is anticipated this dialogue will continue (I2 2016).

There has been a very responsive and positive reaction from the community, to a greater degree than perhaps first anticipated, in particular from the youth sector. This community sector has been very adaptable and responsive to make the changes necessary in their planning and programs in order to align with the provincial policy. For example, the Youth Plan is the first policy document in Alberta that speaks to a harm reduction approach for youth under the age of 18. Community organizations had been using this approach for years in secret, because they knew from on-the-ground experience that it is effective. In this way, the Plan has been very permission-giving (I2 2016).

Another example of the community's responsiveness is the adaption that many community organizations have implemented to make their spaces more welcoming for LGBTQ2S youth. There was no funding provided to support this kind of adaptation; community organizations have taken these important changes upon themselves in order to align themselves with the provincial policy. The community was prepared when the plan was released given Alberta's focus on community engagement and collaboration throughout the Plans development. Two important examples of community preparedness to align with provincial policy include:

1. The release of the Community Strategy to End Youth Homelessness in Edmonton. This strategy was ready to be released months before the Youth Plan was released. But Homeward Trust wanted to be sure there was direct alignment so they delayed finalizing the Plan until the Youth Plan was released.

2. The 2011 Calgary Plan to End Youth Homelessness is now being refreshed because of the presence of the Provincial Youth Plan. They want to align it the work directly (2011 was misaligned). (I2 2016).

Motivation-Obstacles-Resources Context

Next, we will discuss the obstacles which helped to fuel the motivation for the adoption of the Youth Plan, and will then examine the mechanisms of policy capacity used in this case.

OBSTACLES

Key obstacles in this case included the three changes in the Alberta government that took place during the development of the Youth Plan, and the general lack of familiarity with the foundational aspects of youth homelessness. The changes in government included three premiers (Premiers Redford, Hancock, and Prentice, respectively) (Legislative Assembly of Alberta 2016) and three Human Services ministers including David Hancock, Manmeet Bhullar, and Heather Klimchuk, respectively (Legislative Assembly of Alberta 2014; Government of Alberta 2013; 2014). This required development of Cabinet decision documents each time, but also required development of briefing materials and education on the foundational aspects of youth homelessness and the importance of prioritizing development of the Youth Plan.

MOTIVATION

Young people under age 24 are among the fastest growing and most underserved of Canada's homeless population (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health [CAMH] 2014; Alberta Human Services 2015; Koeller 2008), with the number of homeless youth in Canada estimated to be approximately 65,000 (2015; Stewart, Reutter, Letourneau, Makwarimba and Hungler 2010). In 2012, point-in-time counts of homeless individuals revealed that youth under the age of 25 represented 13 percent of the Calgary homeless population; 37 percent of the Red Deer population; and, 13 percent of the Edmonton population (Alberta Human Services 2010). There was consistent agreement among community service providers that homelessness among youth is an issue that is distinct from general homelessness, and that the solutions must be distinct in order to be effective (2010; Kraus, Eberle and Serge, 2001; Vengris, 2005).

Additionally, the Minister's experience with the range of youth homelessness touch-points across several Alberta ministries, coupled with his own experience as a community volunteer having witnessed the issue on-the-ground enhanced the political motivation to create a homelessness plan targeted at youth.

RESOURCES

The changes in the political administration between 2013 and 2015 could have posed significant obstacles to the adoption of the initiative, were it not for the significant policy capacity resources at play in Alberta. Specifically:

→ The significant political championship of the Youth Plan reflects the political resources present in this case, particularly as this provided momentum in the early stages of the plan's development.

→ The analytical, operational and political elements of policy capacity reflected in the political will and internal leadership to continue to push forward the development and adoption of the plan throughout each change in political leadership.

   o Analytical resources existed in the extensive research and policy work that informed the development of the Youth Plan and the recognition of the importance of investment in ongoing education on the foundational issues of youth homelessness; operational resources were present in the inclusion of the plan's development within the framework of the 10-Year Plan, the MLA-led Internal Review of Youth Homelessness which also helped inform the analytical work as well as a Cross-Ministry committee to foster collaboration across all ministries involved in the priorities identified in the Internal Review; political resources included the significant political championship of the Youth Plan, particularly as this provided momentum in the early stages of the plan's development and provided momentum in the early stages of the plan's development.

→ Analytical, operational and political resources to recognize the value of and enable:

   o Inclusion of this priority in the 10-Year Plan framework.

   o Internal leadership to recognize that this Youth Plan will result in a shift in perspective from individual ministry portfolios to thinking about youth homelessness from a whole-of-government angle.

Discussion

INTRODUCTION

Several themes emerge in considering the policy capacity or resources that enabled each of the policy innovations described in this paper to be adopted and implemented. These include a whole-of-government perspective; transformation business management practices; strategic communications to build awareness and support; and lastly, activist leadership to champion each initiative. Below we will examine each of these to identify and discuss the specific policy capacity mechanisms of each. Readers will notice that each of these themes is inextricably linked, which suggests that *effective adoption of policy innovation requires coordinated employment of policy capacity mechanisms*. Senior leaders in the public service who were consulted on these findings and asked for additional input agree that while there is no silver bullet to guarantee innovation, there are contributing factors or preconditions that can create an environment that is conducive to the cultivation of innovation (I4 2016; I5 2016; I6 2016). Alignment of such a context with opportune timing can increase the likelihood of public sector implementation of innovation initiatives (I5 2016).

Innovation-supportive Context

In terms of an innovation-supportive context, a leader in public sector innovation in the Ontario government believes there is reason to be optimistic about the ability of the public sector to innovate, and echoes this paper's earlier discussion that the new norm invariably results in trade-offs in the level and type of services provided by public sector (I5 2016). As previously discussed, the context of the new norm is a key aspect of an environment in which innovation is more likely to occur in order to support effective responses to increasingly complex policy problems (O'Neill and Pfeffer 2011; I4 2016).

In addition to the new norm, other factors that can contribute to an environment that is primed for innovation include the context within which a policy initiative has been undertaken or committed to publicly. Senior leaders agree that there often needs to be a public driver – a

politically important issue that results in a public commitment (I4 2016; I6 2016). As one senior leader argues, political commitment-based initiatives within three particular contexts tend to be particularly conducive to innovative solutions (I6 2016). These contexts include initiatives whose implementation have been directed to be outcomes-based (instead of undertaken by a prescriptive process); "greenfield" policy areas within which a particular jurisdiction does not have experience; or public commitments that are transformative, aspirational or aggressive (I6 2016). However, in addition to political commitment, there needs to be public sector senior management commitment (I4 2016). Given competing priorities and complex issues, sometimes political commitments are made that may not be conducive to immediate implementation or to gaining firm buy-in from senior management. Additionally, implementation of a new initiative is not directly related to whether or not there are existing dedicated financial resources allocated for it. However, if there is both political and senior public servant will, then the necessary resources will be allocated (I4 2016).

Innovation-supportive Timing

The current pace of change is a significant factor in terms of opportune timing to support an innovation-ripe environment (I5 2016). As described by one leader, it is common to underestimate the pace of change, particularly technological change, as individuals and organizations are often biased by their existing experience with such change. However, exponential change is likely coming, particularly as technologies such as artificial intelligence, increasing automation and the internet of things escalate the likelihood of disruption (I5 2016). Although this may sound sensational to some, we are reminded by the Ontario Information and Information Technology (I&IT) Central Agencies Cluster that "in the 1980s, the 'world wide web' was still in its early stages, yet only 30 years on, life in 2016 is unimaginable without the Internet" (Office of the Corporate Chief Information Officer 2016).

THEMES OF POLICY CAPACITY

In discussing how context and timing can align to be particularly primed for innovation, it is important to note that innovation is not necessarily dependent on these factors. *These factors can cultivate the conditions in which innovation is more likely, but are not direct determinants of innovation*. Rather, the following themes of policy capacity include specific factors that can become mechanisms of innovation based on choice. In other words, a public sector organization could have the "ideal" alignment of context and timing and be undertaking a policy direction, without making any decisions to pursue innovative approaches. While certain circumstances can be an accelerator or an impediment to innovation, policy excellence is definitively action-oriented. If the public service is to pursue excellence, then it must be intentional in its decisions to incorporate innovation into its policy solutions.

1 Whole-of-Government Perspective to Embrace Collaboration

The whole-of-government perspective in each case study demonstrates political and public service leaders' openness to change, and comfort with investing greater analytical capacity to consider a wider diversity of considerations and perspectives. In the cases of Open Guelph and the Alberta Youth Homelessness Plan, a whole-of-government approach is expressly identified as the scope within which these initiatives operate. In the case of the Indigenous Council, the Winnipeg Police Board's *raison d'être* as an arms-length organization from the City inherently focuses its activities on providing civilian governance and oversight of Winnipeg's police services "in order to improve the transparency and accountability in the delivery of policing services" (Winnipeg Police Board 2016). Within the confines of this governance structure, the Indigenous Council reflects horizontality in its approach, in collaborating with the Indigenous Liaison Committee and the Mayor's Indigenous Advisory Circle.

Such horizontality requires a certain flexibility of thinking, as working across operational divisions involves the wide range of all involved areas' mandates, activities, decision making processes and outcomes. Political and public service leaders' commitment is clearly required in

order to support this flexibility. Firstly, an earnest cross-organizational approach to coordinate efforts and outcomes represents a shift in perspective from focusing on the work and achievements of one's own department, to thinking about the intersection of work across departments and considering achievement in terms of collective progress toward joint goals. Secondly, working in tandem with other areas requires increased analytical investment not only to consider a wider diversity of issues and perspectives of other organizations, but also the internal coordination, relationship management and communication capacity to allow that analytical investment to be useful in contributing toward those mutual goals.

This is also reflected in the input of an Ontario central agency leader who describes the importance of shifting individual perspectives to include the whole of government, including the broader public sector (I5 2016). This adoption of an expansive view needs to include an attitude of true collaboration characterized by earnest pursuit of common goals. An expansive and collaborative perspective requires an environment in which people can share information, share credit for successes, and share accountability for results (I5 2016).

Given this discussion, within the whole-of-government theme, specific inputs required include leaders' commitment to horizontal work and high quality internal coordination, relationship management and communication capacity. Governments have been evolving from working on department- or ministry-specific issues to taking a whole-of-government perspective, as there is recognition that the complexity of problems necessitates multiple departments, ministries and stakeholders. Issues are no longer neatly defined within a single organization (e.g. poverty reduction, economic development, health) (I4 2016; I5 2016). Although collaboration will not always progress easily, adopting an expansive whole-of-government perspective will rely on collaboration in order to be meaningful.

2 Transformation of Business Management Practices

Transformation in governments' approach to business management was also evident in each case. The case of the Indigenous Council highlighted the importance of an executive

recruitment process that values not only knowledge and experience of existing issues and programs pertaining to the hiring organization, but one that also values new ideas and proposals. While many human resources processes account for value-add aspects of a potential candidate in a hiring process, decisions to hire leaders who propose change reflect an attitude in the existing leadership that is open to new ideas. Implementation of these new ideas following recruitment of a new leader further reflects openness to change, as it suggests that an organization not only wants to hire a high-quality candidate who happens to have new ideas for solutions to an organization's issues, but that an organization is indeed interested in transformation.

The shift toward a whole-of-government approach to investment in their respective initiatives is closely linked to transformation of Guelph's and Alberta's business management practices. Guelph's experience demonstrated its internal willingness to consider how its implementation of open government may dramatically change its business management operations. Alberta's experience reflected its internal willingness to have challenging conversations within government regarding how government operations have not changed to respond to young persons' needs. A "new 'culture of governance' where 'the goals of openness, sharing and collaboration are reflected, more broadly, in government operations and priorities'" (Francoli 2011: 152) requires a transformation in how organizations go about their activities.

While there is a breadth of literature on change management beyond the scope of this study (By 2005), it is well understood that change can cause discomfort and apprehension, primarily because of the shift from that which is established and familiar to that which is vague and uncertain. As such, the two key inputs related to the theme of transforming business management practices are as follows. The first input is the recruitment of leaders who are empowered to orchestrate change within the organization. The second input is the internal willingness to have challenging conversations to identify gaps and propose solutions (implicitly requiring change) for recalibrating existing operations to meet new priorities.

As described by an Ontario government senior leader, business management units are responsible for institutionalizing corporate directives (I4 2016). While this institutionalization is often initially reactive to specific issues as they arise, this reactive stage is typically followed by a

strategic thinking phase in which business management units assess ways in which the organization can get ahead of the issues. This is the stage during which innovative ideas are most likely to be considered and introduced (I4 2016).

One area of business management transformation to support innovation is related to employee engagement and management practices that allow the development of innovative ideas. As described by another Ontario government leader, recent research suggests that innovative ideas primarily originate from staff; therefore, management must believe that staff members have value to contribute, and just as importantly, management must be willing to see innovative ideas through to delivery (I5 2016). This notion relates to employee engagement, in that, the information needs to flow up from staff level and needs an environment and context within which this can occur. It is possible to "be more formal without being more bureaucratic," (I5 2016) which gets at the idea that staff can be encouraged to develop innovative ideas that are incorporated as commitments into their learning plan. From there, the development of that innovation is dependent upon commitment from the manager, director, and through to senior management.

Openness to transformation of business management practices can also be particularly important in circumstances where an organization must determine whether exceptions or changes to established business management practices are feasible to support specific collaborations or innovations (I6 2016). This is especially relevant in situations where innovations result in resource savings (financial, FTE, etc.) (I5 2016). In theory, those resources could be reallocated to support other areas (I5 2016), however, the organization would need the business management practices (or flexibility thereof) in order to actually achieve that reallocation (I6 2016).

3 Strategic Communication Approach to Build Awareness and Support

In each case, well-framed communication to build awareness and support was an important aspect of adopting innovative initiatives. While provision of evidence-based advice in government runs the gamut of nuanced advice on specific components of issues, to awareness-

building on issues having existing or common misperceptions, in these case studies, communication was an important input to gaining buy-in.

In Winnipeg and Alberta, it was important to overcome internal concerns about the relevance or need for an Indigenous Council of the Board and a Youth Homelessness Plan, respectively. This was done in both cases by communicating the importance of these undertakings using the facts and figures to outline the context and issues each initiative aims to help support. In Guelph, it was vital to frame implementation of open government to officials in a way that spoke to individual external and internal leaders' concerns and priorities.

Communication to achieve buy-in in these three cases relied on the input of a strategic communications approach to customize conversations for targeted audiences; this strategic approach requires the ability to understand various target audiences' priorities, activities and concerns. Ontario public service leaders agree that communications has been evolving from relaying information and issues management, to also include interactive engagement, community-building and information sharing (I4 2016; I5 2016). This is particularly evident in consultation processes which are beginning to shift towards interactive dialogue, with a range of stakeholders being actively involved in developing proposed solutions (I4 2016) and building a coalition of stakeholder support (I6 2016).

Some files are not as conducive to this approach, particularly in circumstances where there are firmly entrenched and diametrically opposed beliefs or positions (I4 2016). This can be particularly poignant in public commitments that may be perceived as contentious and therefore spur public debate. However, if government stakeholders have expressed open support for a particular outcome, or if a coalition of stakeholder support can be developed, then the opportunity exists to support innovative initiatives by taking a collaborative communication approach (I5 2016; I6 2016). There is an increasing awareness among senior public servants of the value of investing in building a common language to encourage dialogue and allow for evaluation of whether or not innovations are achieving measurable goals. This approach to communication is highly collaborative as its purpose is to encourage public servants to try new things and to build a community of innovators who continue to engage in relationships with such a network (I5 2016).

4 Activist Leadership to Champion Innovative Initiatives

The last theme revealed in the three case studies in this paper is the presence of activist leadership to champion the adoption of policy innovations. It is important to note that this activist leadership need not necessarily rest in the political arena. The notion of this form of activism is not only personal involvement of a political or public service leader to highlight the importance and credibility of a policy, but also the ownership of and thereby implicit commitment to the policy by those same leaders (Giacchino and Kakabadse 2003). In the Winnipeg and Guelph examples in particular, this leadership emerged from within the public service.

The Indigenous Council's initial championship came from within the leadership of the Winnipeg Police Board and Open Guelph's initial championship came from the CAO and City Clerk (both public service leadership roles). Certainly political leadership played an important role in supporting the adoption of each initiative, but each innovation's implementation was not the result of championship from the political arena alone. Public servants in both Winnipeg and Guelph spearheaded these jurisdictions' consideration of innovative new undertakings to support public policy and service excellence. Activist leadership for Alberta's Youth Homelessness Plan was reflected politically by the Minister of Human Services who created a secretariat and championed inclusion of youth in efforts to reduce homelessness across the provincial government.

Inputs to this leadership include the research and analytical work, often at a staff level, to bring leaders' attention to the range of subject-matter issues, analysis and possible solutions, often including jurisdictional scans. Other inputs include open-minded leaders who are invested in long-term strategic thinking and who provide direction and support to staff to conduct policy analysis that may suggest innovative solutions or ideas that require change.

In terms of political leadership, political champions who have clout among their peers will be best positioned to persuade and influence their colleagues to support an innovation (I6 2016). A significant aspect of this leadership factor is the level of trust that political leaders have in the public service leadership to undertake innovative initiatives (I6 2016).

Senior Ontario leaders interviewed for this paper shared that the chance for success increases significantly when there is a senior management champion sponsoring a particular initiative (I4 2016). Without a senior management champion, a project has little chance of success. It is important to note that projects having a public sector executive champion can succeed even when faced with a lack of political support. Thus, having a public sector leader as a champion is exceptionally important in transforming business management practices (I4 2016). However, leadership at all levels is integral to innovation (I5 2016). Dialogue on innovation is often highly enthusiastic within the ranks of senior leadership and at the grassroots staff level. However, managers and directors are often concerned about the ability to deliver effectively on the development of potentially innovative ideas given the potential risks and time pressures they face as part of their daily responsibilities (I5 2016). Therefore, while it is vital for the senior leadership to champion innovation within the public service, it is just as important to cultivate an environment in which managers and directors are supported and equipped to commit to pursuing innovative new developments (I5 2016).

Additional Considerations

One key consideration that runs implicitly through each of the themes discussed above is the element of risk, whether that risk is actual or perceived. For example, a great deal of public sector work revolves around ownership and accountability. As we have established, innovation necessitates collaboration, which can transform relationships from more silo-like ownership and accountability to "dotted line accountability" (see Figure 1) (I5 2016).

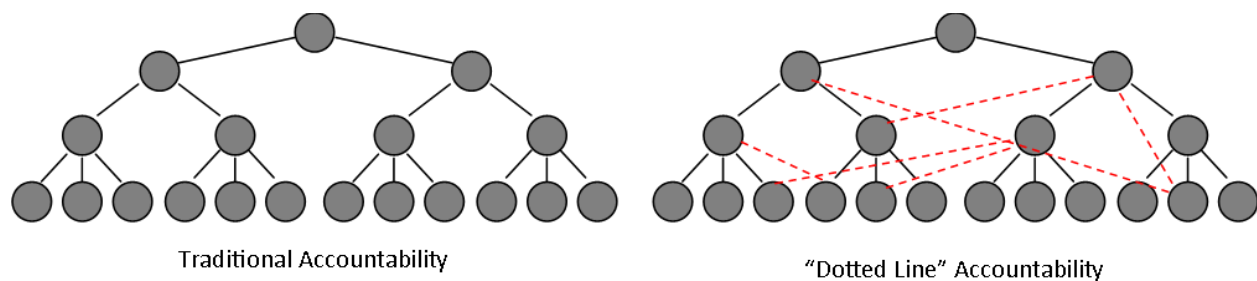Traditional Accountability   "Dotted Line" Accountability

Figure 1: Transformation of Relationships

Therefore, there must be flexibility within public sector organizations to permit and provide for the pursuit of projects that require dotted line accountability. This is directly related to the element of risk since this form of collaboration requires transformation, particularly within the public sector's traditionally hierarchical and well-defined reporting and ownership models (I5 2016). An environment that is conducive to innovation needs to allow for the tolerance of risk, such that risk should not always be managed or mitigated (I5 2016).

Conclusion

This study has explored mechanisms of policy capacity that can be instrumental in supporting innovation in the Canadian public sector. Three successful instances of policy innovation in public sector organizations have been explored to identify key aspects of policy capacity that led to these successes. Discussion of these policy capacity mechanisms has revealed the key choices that organizations can be intentional in pursuing in order to support innovation within their ranks. These include a shift to a whole-of-government perspective; transformation of business management practices; strategic communications to build awareness and support; and, activist leadership to champion innovation. The value of each policy capacity mechanism discussed in this paper is focussed on its potential to support innovative initiatives and does not consider these mechanisms' potential to serve other public sector priorities. It is important for governments to consider how their existing potential inputs to innovation can be supported by modifications to the innovation's context within the framework of the policy capacity themes addressed in this paper.

Organizations need to explore how these mechanisms may be best positioned to address particular challenges they are facing in pursuing innovative initiatives. The greater the number of mechanisms employed by an organization, the better equipped and more resilient organizations will be in pursuing innovation in the delivery of public service excellence in Canada. As underscored by senior Ontario leaders, the approaches discussed in this paper may all be modern, but there is no one perfect tool or solution to every issue facing governments in Canada. Despite the acknowledgement that there is rarely a silver bullet solution to any complex problem, there are crucial changes that organizations can make to improve their ability to innovate. Specifically, the common denominator evident throughout the discussions of the case studies is *an organization's purposeful investment in changes that allow innovation to be realized*.

This paper has focussed on mechanisms—framing factors of successful policy innovation as *tools*—that can be chosen and put into action. Granted, there are some factors in policy and program development and implementation that are beyond the control of governments. For

example, the timing of circumstances can be an accelerator or an impediment to the adoption of a new policy initiative. However, the approach of the public service in delivering policy excellence neither needs to nor should be as facetious as that. In particular, it is this author's opinion that particular emphasis needs to be placed on investing in managers' and directors' capacity to actively support staff innovation from conception to implementation. Additionally, it is crucial for organizations to allow the flexibility for dotted line accountability as government projects and operations increasingly demand collaboration and coordination across a range of internal and external stakeholders. While investment in these may be perceived as risky or messy because it involves a level of uncertainty, innovation and true collaboration *are* messy, and do not always fit—nor need to fit—within existing hierarchies or processes. Building up the willingness and capacity to risk these uncertainties will allow organizations to provide enhanced policy excellence in an increasingly challenging context, and to be nimble in an era that demands adaptability.

The Ontario government is currently exploring ways to measure the effectiveness of innovation. Two measures have been identified to date; work is being undertaken to develop the data infrastructure to support this assessment. The first measure is the connectivity of innovators, as this reflects the collaboration that may exist either formally or informally between these individuals and their networks. The second measure is the impact of an innovation, as this reflects the reach of innovative ideas within or beyond innovators' existing networks, and the weight of these ideas on various actors within these networks (I5 2016). In addition to these efforts, future research endeavours within the field of public administration should examine how public sector organizations can achieve greater comfort with the messiness that often emerges in meaningfully collaborative processes to support excellence in the delivery of value in Canadian public institutions. Future research should also seek to identify meaningful tools to allow greater investment in innovation at the manager and director levels to public service leadership.

As quoted by Baird and Green (2008), former Clerk of the federal Privy Council, Gordon Osbaldeston, commented that:

> "The world does not stand still and the public service must be vigilant and
> creative in identifying and responding to the complex issues that continue to

shape the environment and, most importantly, bold in how it shapes its future

as a respected, trusted and professional organization." (8).

Osbaldeston refers to the public service as being responsible to boldly shape its future

as an organization. This approach to policymaking is not passive, but definitively action-

oriented. If the public service is to be proactive in this way, then a productive approach

must be characterized by decidedly investing in tools to engender policy innovation

from coast to coast to coast.

Appendix 1: Personal Interview Key

I = Interviewee

I1: Executive Director, Winnipeg Policy Board. Personal interview. 12 January, 2016.

I2: Program Manager, Alberta Ministry of Human Services. Personal interview. 28 January, 2016.

I3: Program Manager, City of Guelph. Personal interview. 26 February, 2016.

I4: Assistant Deputy Minister, Ontario Government line ministry. Personal interview. 13 May, 2016.

I5: Director, Ontario Government central agency. Personal interview. 17 June, 2016.

I6: Assistant Deputy Minister, Ontario Government line ministry. Personal interview. 21 June, 2016.

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