

Collaboration among NPO's in Policy Discourse

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To question and challenge:

- To what extent can policy ideas around collaboration in the current era be considered 'new'?
- Can Discursive Institutionalism (DI), (Schmidt 2008) help make sense of policy change around collaboration over time?
- What are the implications for inter-organisational collaboration in the next five years?

Inter-organisational collaboration

Why is this important in policy and for the sector?

- From welfare to self service (Erikson, 2012; Watson, 2013).
- Austerity is the new 'normal' (The Guardian, 2012).
- Collaboration and economies of scale.
- New forms of organisations and collaboration, NPO'S delivering services.
- Frequency of collaboration is increasing (Guo and Acar, 2005; La Paina 2000).

Discursive Institutionalism

- Institutionalism
 - Historical Institutionalism
 - Rational Choice
 - Socio-cultural
- Discursive Institutionalism explains the evolution and revolution blending discourse and ideas for the right audience, at the right time, in the right place.

(Schmidt, 2008)

Discursive Institutionalism

- Takes ideas and discourse in the process of institutional change seriously
- Focus on the content of ideas and the interactive processes of discourse by which they are generated/ communicated in given institutional contexts.
- Explains the interactions between ideas and institutions to develop our understanding of political action

Discursive Institutionalism

- Recent developments point to forms of ideational power.
- What are they and how do they apply to this research?

Power in ideas, power over ideas, power through ideas

Habermas describes discourse as communicative action and communication in action – how power is conceptualised

(Habermas, 1889; 1986)

Discursive Institutionalism

Power is central to the notion of Discursive Institutionalism.

Through ideas – persuasion

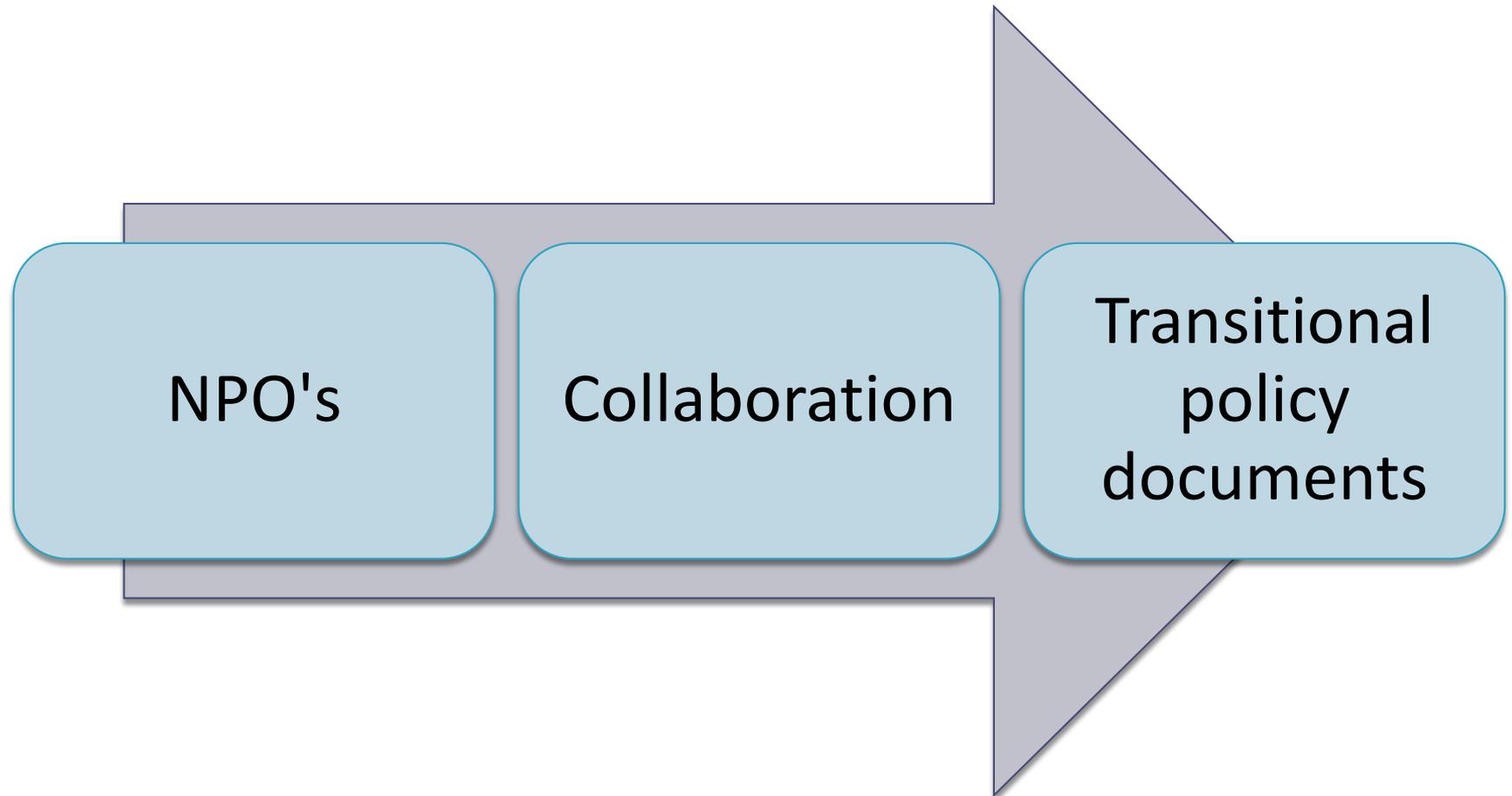
In ideas - imposition

Over ideas – establishing hegemony

(Carstensen and Schmidt, 2016)

The effect of DI in policy and is thus played out by actors in the field

Research Process



Collaboration in transitional policy documents

- *‘This is an exciting and challenging time for people working in the voluntary sector. Over the past five years we have seen a growing understanding of, and emphasis on working with, the voluntary sector across government. **Partnership working has become the norm...**’ (Etherington, 2002).*

Power through ideas

...by contrast to the Starbucks example a voluntary project that succeeds in Brixton is unlikely to be replicated in tower Hamlets, still less Birmingham and Bristol, because the lack of expected return - a profit reinvested in good causes- means that there neither the incentive nor the means to finance the costs and risks of rapid replication

Conservative party 2008

'I want a society in which ambition and compassion are seen as partners not opposites – where we value public service as well as material wealth'

Tony Blair - Labour Party 1997

... its aim is to build a nation of self-reliant individuals, living in strong communities, backed by an enabling government.

Paddy Ashdown

Liberal democrats 1997

Power over ideas

Those who form **effective** partnerships are **far** more likely to win those bids.

Conservative manifesto, 2010

‘...charities, businesses and cultural organisations **must** collaborate more closely in the future.’

Labour manifesto, 2010

‘We **will** pass a new mutuals, co-operative and social enterprise bill to bring law up to date...’

Liberal Democrats 2010

Power in ideas

Those who do not have jobs are then required to work for a specific period on a community project

Conservative manifesto 1997

It is our social contract. We help you. You help yourself. You benefit. The country benefits.

Labour manifesto, 2005

Three quarters of policies formed the backbone of the Coalitions policies.

Liberal Democrat manifesto, 2015

What does this mean for the sector?

- To what extent can policy ideas in the current era be considered 'new'?
- Power over ideas – compulsory collaboration,
- Economies of scale, easier to deal with larger organisation than smaller one
- Smaller NPO'S collaborating with large players in the sector contracting.

- Can Discursive Institutionalism (DI), (Schmidt 2008) help make sense of policy change over time?

- What are the implications for inter-organisational collaboration in the next five years?
 - Collaboration is here to stay
 - Economies of scale
 - New forms of organisation

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