Scenario Mapping: Collaborating for Transformation in North America and Indonesia.

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Abstract

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Abstract:

Through a series of case studies, we trace the evolution of a method of collaborative planning based in resilience thinking and institutional analysis. In particular, we address the need for collaborative methodologies for intensional transformative change that emphasize the importance of individual and collective agency, account for the effects of institutional logics, power structures, social discourses and underlying normative assumptions, while engaging with divergent standpoints and perspectives.

We first describe a case of a collaborative effort involving community, governmental, NGO and commercial stakeholders working for social, economic and ecological transformation in forest-dependent communities in North Central Java. Using resilience language we highlight the importance of understanding the standpoint dependence of conceptualizations concerning the nature of the current regime, the desirability of alternative aspirational regimes, and the crucial role that institutional forces and discourses play in the stabilization of regimes in social systems.

The long-standing multi-stakeholder process for recovery of endangered salmonid species in the Columbia River Basin exemplifies another context of divergent standpoints and perspectives concerning the nature of the current state of the system, the need for either adaptive or transformative change, the desirability and accessibility of envisioned alternative regimes, and the range of potential strategies for implementing change. In the context of a broad collaboration working to prepare for the renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty, we describe a methodology that uses the stability landscape as a space where alternative scenarios for aspirational change can be mapped, compared and negotiated.

Employing resilience methods and metaphors to collaborate in change processes in social contexts calls for methodologies that rethink notions of scale, question the nature of regimes in reflexive complex systems and engage with existing research on the institutional influences that stabilize regimes. We describe such a methodology in the context of an ongoing engagement with a regional quasi-governmental conservation organization, highlighting the need to address agency and structure at levels from the individual to the organizational to the social.

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