Resilience thinking and adaptive co-management from the development lens: is there anything new?

Francois Bousquet*1

1UPR GREEN – CIRAD – Campus international de Baillarguet - TA C-47 / F - 34398 Montpellier Cedex 5, France, France

Abstract

This paper is part of the session: "Resilience and development: progress for human development or for humanitarian governance? "

Since the seminal work of C.S Holling in the early 70s a group of researchers has developed theoretical research on the trajectory of social and ecological systems. The same group of researchers has developed and tested new concepts on management practices which are consistent with resilience thinking. Adaptive management was defined a systematic process for continually adjusting policies and practices by learning from the outcome of previously used policies and practices. Each management action is viewed as a scientific experiment designed to test hypotheses and probe the system as a way of learning about the system. Twenty years ago the concept of adaptive co-management became the new management process in harmony with resilience thinking developments. Novelty of adaptive co-management came from combining the iterative learning dimension of adaptive management and the linkage dimension of collaborative management in which rights and responsibilities are jointly shared. Key features of adaptive co-management include:

- A focus on learning-by-doing
- Synthesis of different knowledge systems
- Collaboration and power-sharing among community, regional and national levels
- Management flexibility

For the last fifty years development went through different periods. The objective of the session aims at clarifying the breaks, continuities and deepening compare to the development policies initiated by the colonial administrations, the post-independence developmentist project or the recent poverty alleviation policies. Different theories have been developed, different management models were conceived and tested. In this communication we will examine whether resilience thinking and adaptive co-management correspond to any of these theories, models and practices of development. We will look at the lessons drawn from the application of these models and see if they apply to resilience thinking (RT) and adaptive co-management (ACM). We will assess what the novelty is brought by RT and ACM. To reach this objective, we will do a literature review in the field of the history of development. We will also use concrete cases of adaptive co-management process that we conceived and operationnalized.

Keywords: development, resilience, history

*Speaker