



*Evaluation Research:
Improving Process Design and Practice
Through Systematic Reflection*

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Purpose of Evaluation

- examine the impacts of facilitative practice on policy arena;
- clarify barriers to effective decision-making;
- evaluate the costs and benefits of collaboration;
- recommend improvements in process design and management;
- document effective/ineffective uses of facilitators; and
- clarify “best practices” used.



Examples

● Multi-Case Evaluations

- ❑ Brownfields
- ❑ Project XL
- ❑ Facility Siting, Georgia Solid Waste Management Act

● Single Case Evaluations

- ❑ Carpet Policy Dialogue
- ❑ Non-Road Engine RegNeg

● Self Evaluation

- ❑ Atlanta Historic Preservation Process



Research Approach

- Case-based analysis
 - ❏ Contextual
 - ❏ Descriptive detail
- Interview-based survey
 - ❏ Comparability
 - ❏ Incorporation of scales



Systems Characteristics:

Project XL

Objectives of Project XL

- Seeks to promote innovative initiatives that improve environmental performance
- Projects initiated and individually designed by sponsor
- Projects reviewed by EPA
- If approved, the project sponsor is afforded flexibility on an experimental basis

Objectives of Stakeholder Involvement

- Share information
- Assess (scan) social/political/physical environment
- Promote transparency
- Legitimize process and outcomes
- Improve outcomes through dialogue
- Empower stakeholders



System Characteristics: Brownfield Redevelopment

Legal, Regulatory, and Financial Barriers

- weak market for land
- high perceived cost of environmental cleanup
- environmental liability
- greenlining: institutional barriers to financing, development
- deteriorating infrastructure
- cycle of deterioration:
 - ❑ abandonment
 - ❑ deteriorating property affects value of adjacent land
 - ❑ contamination spreads

Political Dimensions

- Linkages among stakeholders and decision makers vary
 - ❑ bankers/developers
 - ❑ government officials
 - ❑ community reps
- Dependency on public/private partnerships
- Highly variable power amongst actors, both perceived and real
- Inertia against tackling complex problem
- Lack of institutional framework to bring together necessary parties to re-develop brownfields



Selecting Cases

Project XL

- Andersen Corporation (window manufacturing)
- Atlantic Steel (brownfield redevelopment)
- CK Witco (chemical specialties)
- ExxonMobil (Superfund site)
- HADCO (printed circuit boards)
- Intel (new semiconductor facility)
- New England Universities Laboratories (waste management)
- Vandenberg Air Force Base (air emissions)



Selecting Cases

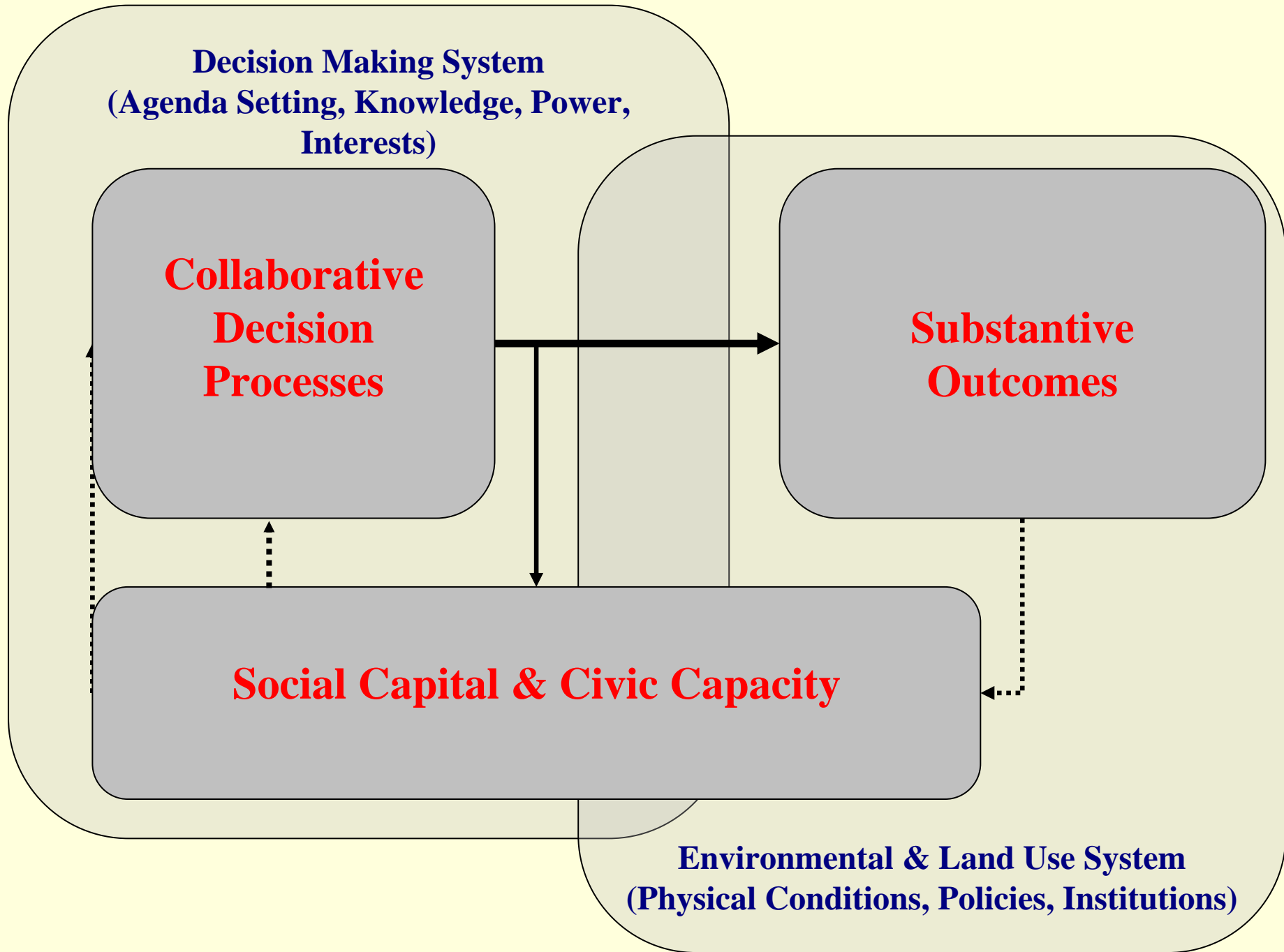
Brownfields

- 41 brownfields assessment pilots with facilitative support
 - ❏ facilitation, mediation, convening, training, mentoring
- “locally initiated facilitations”
 - ❏ 28 initiated by Brownfields Assessment Pilot participants, as a result of locally perceived needs
- “nationally supported facilitations”
 - ❏ 13 directly support and encouraged by the EPA Office of Site Remediation and Enforcement’s Alternative Dispute Resolution Program
 - ❏ experimental program designed to enhance and investigate facilitated consensual decision making within brownfields redevelopments projects



Evaluation Criteria

Overall Desired Impact	Variables for Measuring Impacts
Improve quality of environment and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Beneficial● Durable
Improve social capital and civic capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Knowledgeable● Interactional, Communicative● Empowering
Improve decision making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Responsive● Efficient



Decision Making System
(Agenda Setting, Knowledge, Power, Interests)

**Collaborative
Decision
Processes**

**Substantive
Outcomes**

Social Capital & Civic Capacity

Environmental & Land Use System
(Physical Conditions, Policies, Institutions)



What can we learn from these evaluations?

High Confidence

- The interplay of system dynamics
- Direct impacts on decision making quality
- Satisfaction of participants with process
- Short to medium term impacts on civic capacity

Moderate to low confidence

- Changes in system dynamics
- Long term impacts of decisions made
- Effectiveness of specific practices
- Long term impacts on civic capacity



Examples from Project XL



Factors That Shape the Demand for Stakeholder Participation

- proximity of the stakeholders to the project site,
- potential impact on specific stakeholders,
- trust afforded to the sponsor and EPA,
- relationship that existed between the sponsor and stakeholders prior to the Project XL application,
- perceived desirability of the project,
- technical complexity of the project,
- potential for setting precedents, and
- scale of the stakeholder groups.



Sponsor-Initiated Processes

- Sponsors maintain a high degree of control over
 - ▣ the selection of participants,
 - ▣ the design of the involvement process,
 - ▣ the issues discussed and
 - ▣ the outcomes of the processes.
- Significant tension when expectations of stakeholders exceed willingness of project sponsors to involve stakeholders
- no systematic mechanism for reconciling differences between sponsor's intentions and stakeholder expectations



EPA Coordinator is Most Important External Impetus to Sponsor

- EPA minimum standards for stakeholder involvement, as interpreted by the regional XL project coordinators
- Reasons:
 - ❏ Project XL is a voluntary program
 - ❏ Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)
 - ❏ Project XL coordinators are more concerned with improving environment quality



Factors Affecting Satisfaction With the Participatory Process

- the willingness of project sponsors to involve stakeholders at a level consistent with the stakeholders' concerns and expectations
- the consistency between the stakeholders' expectations as to their influence over decision-making and the stakeholders' perception about their actual impact
- the level and efficiency of effort required to participate.



- Sponsors are most likely to design interactive, dialogue-based forums for participation when:
 - ❑ the proposed project affects a clearly recognizable community of stakeholders,
 - ❑ those stakeholders are capable of organizing, and
 - ❑ the stakeholders are important constituencies of the project sponsor



Barriers to Effective Stakeholder Involvement

- in consultative and consensus building processes
 - ❑ time commitments required to participate
 - ❑ the capacity of stakeholders to understand technical issues.
- in information exchange processes
 - ❑ the absence of systematic approaches for outreach and eliciting community responses.



Barriers, continued

- Efforts to keep the XL project meetings focused exclusively on XL issues creates considerable frustration when stakeholders are primarily concerned with associated community issues
- Interaction between the local and national groups is very limited.
- The management of meetings is rarely an issue in and of itself.
- Participation drops significantly during the implementation phase.



Strategic Opportunities for Improvement

- Link goals, roles, expectations and resources through effective process design.
- Develop incentives for more meaningful participation.
- Promote facilitative leadership within EPA.
- Develop clearer guidance on how best to involve national stakeholders, particularly in strategically directed XL projects.
- Systematize and share the experience of past XL projects to improve future efforts.
- Examine the impact of the Federal Advisory Committee Act on efforts to promote stakeholder participation in innovative and experimental processes.