[Reframing/Redefining Governance] Design + Log

[9-3-19] - [9-17-19]
Accountable: Zulayka (and team :)

https://theworkingcaregiver.org/2015/08/11/break-out-of-your-box/

[How might we generate our own definition of governance in a way that steps away from

models of 'command and control' towards an ethos of surrender?]

If [hypothesis] **then** [hypothesis outcomes] OR Assumption

If:
- We create our own definition of governance that is not rooted in archaic models of 'command and control'
- We allow ourselves the freedom to truly think outside the box
- We don't constrain ourselves by someone else's standards

Then:
- We can begin to free/decolonize our imaginations to bring to life something that begins to allow us to live into our values of equity, love and liberation.
- We can find something much more customized, and well-fitting for who we are, or who we want to become.
- We are more free to be who we truly are.

This worksheet is designed to help you design and track your experiment. Use it to collect and analyze your data as well as capture lessons learned and decisions made. Contact Alison <alin (at) changeelemental (dot) com> with questions or suggestions for improvement.

Experiment Design

Note: What you write in these boxes will go into our online experiment dashboard.

Participants *Who is involved in the implementation of this experiment?*	Everyone in our experiment group.
High Level Experiment Plan How will you test your hypothesis/assumptions?	On our next call: ● Reference existing definitions of governance. ● Brainstorm possibilities for alternatives (via words, drawings, poetry, song) ● Share with group

What is the action or activities that you'll undertake to complete this experiment? Please put more detailed plan below in Detailed Experiment Design	● Explore if there are ideas we are all coalescing around.
How will you **measure the success** of this experiment? What would success look like? What is a felt sense of success? What are the minimum standards of success? What would failure look/feel like?	Success: ● We share a brief moment of uninhibitedness with each other. ● We have an opportunity/excuse to tap into our inner child/playful side ● We come up with a definition for governance that is closer in alignment of who we are. Failure: ● No one wants to participate. ● People get stuck in their heads. ● We limit ourselves with internal/external restrictions.

Drop images here:

Tracy:

Definition of governance: all of the decision-making processes and structures for steering yourself, projects, families, businesses, organizations, or networks toward a purpose.

The process of decision-making and the systems by which decisions are implemented, toward a purpose (U.N.).

Wikipedia definition of Governance
Governance comprises all of the processes of governing – whether undertaken by the government of a state, by a market or by a network – over a social system (family, tribe, formal or informal organization, a territory or across territories) and whether through the laws, norms, power or language of an organized society.[1] It relates to "the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions".[2] In lay terms, it could be described as the political processes that exist in and between formal institutions.

NPQ: What is Governance: https://nonprofitquarterly.org/what-is-governance-definition/
"Nonprofit governance has a dual focus: achieving the organization's social mission and the ensuring the organization is viable. Both responsibilities relate to fiduciary responsibility that a board of trustees (sometimes called directors, or Board, or Management Committee—the terms are interchangeable) has with respect to the exercise of authority over the explicit actions the organization takes. Public trust and accountability is an essential aspect of organizational viability, so it achieves the social mission in a way that is respected by those whom the organization serves and the society in which it is located."

NPQ again: Reframing Governance: https://nonprofitquarterly.org/reframing-governance-2/
"But now, single organizations can no longer appropriately match the scale for the most critical and substantive community issues and problems. It has become increasingly necessary to develop alliances and coalitions—extraorganizational entities—to address the multifaceted complexity of these critical needs and issues. And the most successful systems we've developed to govern these alliances reflect the same scale and complexity as the alliances themselves. These systems of leadership mirror the design of social movements, with the fluidity and responsiveness that characterize the most effective of these movements. As anthropologist Luther Gerlach describes them, emerging systems of governance have the following characteristics:1
- **Segmentary**: they comprise multiple groups and organizations, each of which is only one segment of the whole that works to address the issue at hand;
- **Polycentric**: they have multiple centers of activity and influence to advance progress in addressing the cause of the whole, though each does its own work;
- **Networked**: the multiple centers of activity are linked via a web of strategic relationships, and an important source of the organizational power of this web

comes from the informal relationships that exist among those in leadership roles in the various centers of activity; and

- **Integrated**: these networks are connected by a core but evolving ideology that crosses organizational (and even sectoral) boundaries as those who work to address the full range and complexity of an issue go wherever necessary to engage in their work."

Id like to question if viability of an organization should be the primary focus of a governing board. I wonder if its something about the viability of the purpose or the greater movement.

What if boards are less about decision making and more about meaning making -- helping to be the tentacles that reach into key communities and constituencies and political spheres etc to feel out what is happening there and bring that information back to make meaning with others on the board. Surrendering to that complexity and then adapting collectively and consciously.

From the University Network for Collaborative Governance:
Collaborative governance refers to community and public policy decision making processes and structures that enable participants to work together to enhance their communities and shape sustainable public policy decisions. Collaborative governance does this by engaging participants collectively and constructively across the boundaries of the public, private, and civic sectors to leverage the unique attributes and resources of each for the greatest impact. The collaborative approach to governance can encompasses any method, model, or process that is deliberative and consensual including civic engagement and service, public engagement, collaborative network management, public consultation, multi-stakeholder collaboration, collaborative public management, dispute resolution, and negotiation. (other definitions of collaborative governance)

 I don't know who Mike Foley is, but i was struck by Zulayka's "ethos of surrender" line and so i googled and found a ton of photos of this quote … the line about surrendering to the task but not the taskmaster connects to the idea of command and control.

Mycelium model of Governance (This is cool!)

As we recognise the need to see global challenges as a requirement for more global coordination and cooperation, and hence, the need for governance to become one global organisation, we at the same time see organisations of all sizes shifting from simple decision making structures towards a more complex governance culture. Governance at any level and organisations of any size are becoming increasingly synonymous concepts

The Mycelium Model of Glocal Governance
Paradigms of organisation in human history

Mycelium shaped governance
Awareness-based
The bottom line is the collective awareness for the right path forward

Circle shaped governance
Dialogue-based
The bottom line is what we decide together
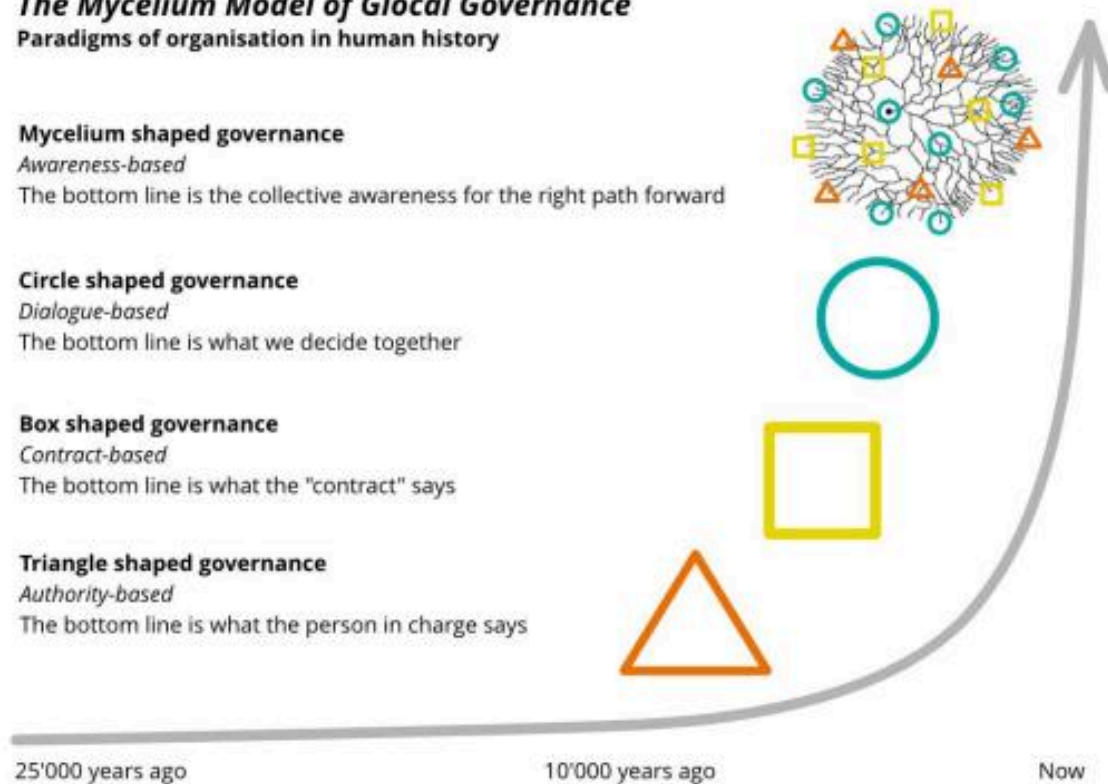
Box shaped governance
Contract-based
The bottom line is what the "contract" says

Triangle shaped governance
Authority-based
The bottom line is what the person in charge says

25'000 years ago   10'000 years ago   Now

.

Governance less about decision making and governance more about meaning making and for things to arise?

Trish: People gathered at a Well

Spent a few moments thinking of images that brought to mind community care without specific people being elected or 'in charge.' Thought of a well that is precious to everyone in a community because it is seen as an obvious life source, the way that folks create order and natural rules around it without much policing.

Matrilineal societies in Kerala and North east India/West Bengal….. Thinking about what the balance of [Kali](), [Durga]() and [Guan Yin]() can teach us about governance (Nico)

Alexis
Looked up origin of governance is a really colonized word. To rule over someone. Is that what is needed is it becoming, cocreating. Did an image search on google and was so corporate-y. What aere other alternatives to understanding of that word.

Nat

"what, shall King Henry be a pupil still, **under** the surly Gloucester's **governance** ?"

Establishment of policies, and continuous monitoring of their proper implementation, by the members of the governing body of an organization. It includes the mechanisms required to balance the powers of the members (with the associated accountability), and their primary duty of enhancing the prosperity and viability of the organization.

 Read more: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/governance.html

Found poem

 prosperity and viability

of the members

enhancing powers of

The continuous body of an organization and

Still balance

See also

what King?

Learning - not a small tweak, it's a seismic shift.

KENT: What I would like governance to feel like is a source of nutrients for folks doing the work we need. The image of mycelium is, for me, a good metaphor for doing the work….and then mycelium needs sustenance of its own. If we think of governance as sustenance (versus governance is the mycellium)….where does that get us?

Sean - ethos of surrender isn't that different from command and control because you're surrendering to someone else.

Systemic shift not a tweak at the edges!!!!! - Natalie

Detailed Experiment Plan

What is the action or activities that you'll undertake to complete this experiment?

Include date benchmarks for each steps and document the people responsible. How will you collect the data or complete the analysis?

Data

Enter and store your feelings, experiences, observations and outcomes from your experiment here.

What is standing out in looking through these definitions?
- Tracy **-** is our definition of governance change or whether or not our system of governance is changing? When you look online for definition of governance, you find all this language that is really colonial. That's what our governance system has been about. Term governance has baggage of colonization and empire. Part of the reason why we need to reclaim this word. Not another word that conveys the constellation of things that is networked governance. Grounding in our values, we'll see network functioning more in alignment with values. Codifying governance are keys to transparency, inclusion, equity. If we're going in with our values - thinking about mycellial network. Tree, using metaphors is helpful.
- Nicola - brain was going in a similar place? Well, if we could kind of synthesize 1,2,3 version of what we think networked governance is, that would be useful. What I get from a lot of

definitions in documents, it's not about day to day work, but it's **the systems we set up to live our values.** Could we create a couple of synthesized definitions.

- Trish - I would agree - part of the reason folks gravitated towards this experiment on first call. What is this thing we're talking about? What else is possible? Name a system that actually facilitates our values.
- Nat - was getting a little lost and getting overwhelmed but "the systems we set up to live our values" really helps to rein it in. Would love to move forward with the proposal of a few definitions: **How might we identify some of those systems that we already have in place for living out our values that we don't necessarily call governance?**
    - We have a value of working in deep partnership with other organizations so we say "networked governance" but adding the term "networked" only reflects this one value.

T - there are systems we set up to live our values that aren't governance - water systems (e.g.,). Decision making is key and making decision making is a explicit. Central to governance and equity. You need to decide how people participate and have it be explicit so that you can look at the outcome.

Definitions of governance
Governance is the systems we set up to live our values. The process of decision-making and the systems by which decisions are implemented toward a purpose
Having a sense of shared purpose is a first act of governance.
"The processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions".[2]
Governance is the rules for how we make the rules.
Governance gives form to power - values, culture, norms. Culture is bigger than governance. Governance are those processes and systems by which we give form to power.

Trish - Zulayka's original invitation - HMW generate our own definition of governance that steps away from models of command and control towards and ethos of surrender. Debate about whether surrender steps away from command and control. She was asking us to test out freedom. Appreciate that the way we talk about governance in change elemental spaces - centering governance around redistribution and making sure everyone gets resources they need.

Centering governance around redistribution and making sure everyone gets resources they need.

Tracy - yes. Resource distribution is a key part of governance. Sounds like we're pretty much clear about what governance is. Can we move into what we want governance systems to be? How do we want things to be. That is an act of governance - if we're engaging in an act of governance to say what we want it to be and how does voice that comes out of this group? What are the mechanisms that's here and what's the system about whether voice is included or not. Do we have any power to hold board members accountable. Proposal is to sharpen up proposal for what is governance.

Paul - fascinating to hear this. Learn a lot and resonates for me. Confused when talking about power - are we talking about expansive model of power -a sense of power growing in world and not zero sum and infinitely possible. Also talking about and identifying a finite form of power that is being misused

by people for too long. When I hear words like networked governance, I think you can take it both ways. By redistributing power, might we create something bigger?

Tracy - interesting notion of power and you're talking about expansive power. Governance gives form to power. I wonder about idea of redistributing power and finite power. Finite power I look at as control. Important to distinguish control from power. We say you can't give people power. When people can access power, we give more power to mission. We all have access to power. Question: does liberation rely on me dampening down or suppressing power or is liberation being explicit about the structures of power and how we're using our power.

Nicola: want to take a step back and align on what our definition of power is - do we have to dampen down power is pulling an assumption of is power a bad thing. People say that power is the ability to make things the way you want. When I think about those questions of power, it's much less a question of what we're doing with power.

Natalie - we spend a lot of our time at CE spinning our wheels about power and ultimately got to the place where what is important is what we're building power for. So building power toward liberation is very different from building power for flipping a house.

Nicola: those differences are getting into ethics and morals.

Tracy: if your ethic is around liberation, you want everyone to bring all the power towards what they have. You wouldn't want to repress people on your way to liberation and use a power over kind of power. Would you want to disempower people who have power now in this current system?

Nicola: that's a really interesting convo that we got to a couple years ago in this community organizing group I was talking about. In the metaphysical world we live in people who disagree with us won't disappear. Are we trying to destroy those people? We're not actually trying to destroy people is the work of forgiveness. But people have to engage in ethical conversation to take the logic of discriminatory beliefs to their end.

Tracy: that's why the principle of consent for basis of governance is so important. WE define consent within a range of tolerance. If people are being forced to live without and other live with excess people can say it's against our consent. What is it from these other perspectives - where are those boundaries. Talking about what is out of consent for people starts to define the boundaries of where there is shared ground.

Trish: sitting with Nicola's def of power as the ability to act. Like simplicity. Landing on top of call where we were talking about power. Wanted a baseline definition. We were using definition that Dr. King offers - power at it's best is love implementing the demands of justice. Power properly understood is the ability to achieve purpose. Trying to feel out what resonates more and why it's important for a conversation about governance. Folks are saying: power isn't neutral. Needs to be a moral and ethical component to negotiate it. When I think about power as ability to act, it feels neutral. Feels like just the activity - agency - instead of power.

Definition about acheiving purpose - we don't need to negotiate what power is, what's important is what we're acheiving power for. Piece around trying to achieve purpose is resonating more. This definition calls in the responsibility of governance. To create the space for naming and alining on purpose and making sure power is being used in a way that moves folks towards that purpose and aligns with values.

Nicola - I like that - **power as the ability to achieve purpose**. That maintains that power is neutral and what we choose.

Analysis

Reflect on your experiment and the data above.

Debrief, Reflection, Learnings

*What were the most impactful 3-5 **lessons learned** from this test? Be concise!*	NB: ● in order to define governance we also felt like we needed to define power. ● We seemed to coalesce around some definitions of power and governance that were helpful. "Power is the ability to achieve purpose." NC: finding simplicity that can allow for a more adept navigation of complexity NC: I'd like to see what we do with some of the synthesis we did today in other experiments TT: Taking the time to define does not limit the experimental nature of an experiment. It can create parameters that we need in order to think bigger. TT: "Governance is the set of systems we set up to live out our values."
*Record any **decisions made** during or upon finishing this test. For example, "We will now keep meeting notes for all of our internal and external meetings."*	TK: It seems like we could shape definitions of governance and power to carry forward. Not exactly decisions, but movement toward more synthesis, and possibly another experiment. TT: +1! POB +2
*What **questions** do you have as a result of your experiment?*	POB: If we are honing in on governance as a form of ethical or purposeful power, when do we use "power" to mean "ability" (e.g. in our governance experiment we might want group X to be able to do Y/have ability Z) and when do we use it to mean a "relationship" (we want group X to make a decision that used to be made by Y) and is it important to have the same understanding about this. Do we have a sense of an integrity of concept around governance, or are folks questioning the basic definitions of governance? TT: I don't think we ever quite got to the question of harm which I think was sort of the impetus for setting up this experiment originally - ID'ing the role of governance and governing bodies in addressing harm. POB +1.

Will you do another iteration of this experiment? (Yes/No)	NB: I would like to a version of this experiment again and really lean into multiple ways of knowing to share what governance could be. I feel like we leaned heavily on the written word and definitions of governance that already exist. What is the vision for what we move forward? What does it look like? Feel like? Sounds like? I'd like to an experiment that uses song.

Tracy - trying to frame a question: working with a lot of non hierarchical space. People in their interest to not have hierarchical power dynamics can make things vague. It creates another issue. You create shadow power dynamics.

How deep are we questioning governance. Conceptually seems like governance isn't very controversial but more how we carry out governance. But I'm not sure if we're diving deeper questioning that. That can damage people who don't have power.

Paul - hierarchy - words like command and control - my personal experience with this was in repro rights in ireland in 80s and 90s. They wanted hiearchy and command and control of their own bodies. That form of taking a very distributed form of power was poweful to me. Some folks say, I want power named that is oppressing me - I want it named and I want to take it. I think a governance experiment needs to be created on both fronts.

Tracy - yes, that's resonating for me and I want you all to know - holding space for this - could be a blindspot for me. If there's something about basic definitions of governance.

We were leaning on definitions that already exist, it would be interesting to start from a place of complete imagination - maybe a next experiment? Share a feeling or song or art to start building a collective definition of governance to hold up against what we came up with here.

Tracy - I be would open to that.

Trish - Really curious what we did versus didn't get to which is what Tracy is trying to name - Paul echoing that tension. Definition being equated with command and control versus more a share/distributed being more vague - I want to keep going to get clearer because I feel like you're presenting a third way of talking about this that I'm not grasping.

Tracy - I'm going to take definitions of governance and make a written definition of governance - I'll do that as a next step. Lets look at that and think about different ways of expression.