



Institut de recherche et débat sur la gouvernance
Institute for research and debate on governance, France

Center for International Studies, University of Virginia
Centre d'Etudes Internationales de l'Université de Virginie



with the support of the Embassy of France in Washington and the participation of UNDP



Non State Actors and Public Health Policies
*The role of civil society towards co-producing health services
and defining public health and social policies.
Experiences in China, France and the USA*

Aims of the project

The role of “non state actors” in governance is increasing. Associations, self-help networks, NGOs, trade unions or private enterprises contribute in many countries to the providing of public services. They also try to promote changes in public policies by contributing to their conception, their implementation or their monitoring.

One of the aims of the Institute for Research and Debate on Governance (IRG)’s action consists of identifying, analysing and comparing the interaction, recognition and mutual legitimization processes taking place between these actors and the authorities, by means of conferences, research and publications. A Franco-Chinese forum was organized in Beijing in 2007 concerning the role of NGOs in education and health care.

The IRG, in collaboration with the University of Virginia, is now proposing to spread this approach beyond the Franco-Chinese framework and to confront it with the US experience, this time focusing on the issue of health. Indeed, the same question is being faced the world over with ever greater immediacy: that of devising public health policies that:

- would allow, thanks to specific dialogue arenas, to build on the expertise and dynamism of non-state actors with experience on both the preventive and curative health fronts and to capitalise on their experience and knowledge of existing needs;
- would both keep the non state actors’ growing involvement in the delivery of public health care from infringing on the authorities’ legitimacy – or from releasing them from their responsibilities, and still achieve a collective coherence in the production of health policy.

In the United States, one of the priorities of the current presidential mandate is the creation of a generalised health care system. This system, while going some way to solving the question of costs is unlikely to settle the matter of provision of health services, or of the diverse – public sector, lucrative private sector, third sector – actors' respective roles in the field. In France, the problem is no less topical as a health and social protection system, while known to be effective, is being put into question, while in China too, the quest for a new model for the state funding of health care is confronting the health sector and civil society as a whole.

Proposal for an International Meeting

Accordingly, this international meeting will deal with the role of non-state organizations in the co-production of health services and domestic health policies and on the dialogue arenas accessed by these actors. It will bring together representatives from self-help movements, NGOs, researchers and members of public administration.

The objectives of the forum are as follows:

- to organise the exchange of experiences and allow a comparative analysis of the diverse parties' motivation, successes and failures in terms of the articulation of their activities and dialogue;
- to provide public policy makers with materials to reflect on, to stimulate non-state actors' strategies for action and envisage new consultation arenas with officials.

The meeting will be focused on two topics which are of special interest for non state actors.

- the struggle against Aids
- the access of the poor to health care.

Several questions will be singled out:

- What roles do non-state organizations undertake in the co-production of health services and policies in France, China and the USA? Are they implementers of missions delegated by the authorities (conceivably with some room for negotiation or proposal), partners associated by the state in the analysis of policy developments, pioneering outsiders, the gatekeepers of special interests...? At what point is there a sharing of public health governance? At what point, if any, is the capacity for criticism and innovation hampered? Is there a tension between partnership and independence and if so how is it managed?
- What factors impart legitimacy and competence to non-state actors in different countries? Do these elements cause problems for some of them? For instance, do self-help networks manage to be heard as readily as those who are in receipt of public services delegation or those who can boast partnerships with the research establishment? Any views on the fostering of such legitimacy?
- What is the status of the diverse expertise called upon in the relationships between state and non-state partners? How is it measured and how does it cross-fertilize?
- What are the dialogue arenas open to authorities and civil society and how do they interconnect (or not) with the policy-making arenas? When does co-production

(which may encompass co-designing, co-implementation, co-appraisal, etc...) actually occur and when is it a mere consultation?

This Forum will be held by the IRG on March 21st to 23rd 2010, in collaboration with the University of Virginia. It will take place in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA. It should bring together some thirty participants and last three days, with workshops and plenary sessions. There will be three working languages (French, English and Chinese) supported by simultaneous translation.

IRG

The Institute for research and debate on governance is a think tank based in Paris, France, with an office in Bogota, Columbia. Born of a private foundation initiative, its mission is to facilitate debate on governance by delivering expertise, setting up training modules, organising seminars, gathering and disseminating documentation through its website and publications.

www.institut-gouvernance.org

UVa

The University of Virginia is a public research university located in Charlottesville, Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson in 1819. It supports research and scholarship in many fields, including medicine and social sciences. The University of Virginia Health System is a nationally renowned academic medical center.

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