Learning from Experience: Factors Influencing Public Advisory Councils

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Master’s Thesis Research
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Big Question: Why do AOCs differ in their progress?
Policy
Setting the target

Outcome
Enjoying the results
Expectation

Policy: Setting the target
Implementation: Getting the work done
Outcome: Enjoying the results

A → B
Policy: Setting the target
Implementation: Getting the work done
Outcome: Enjoying the results
Methods

- Semi-structured interviews w/ map exercise
- 29 past and present PAC participants

Cases Studied

- Kalamazoo
- Menominee
- Saginaw
- St. Clair
- White Lake
Interview Questions:

Why do AOCs differ in their progress?

What factors ENABLE a PAC?
- External
  - Community context
  - Community capacity
  - State & Federal actors & actions
- Internal
  - Origins, structure & function
  - Process & management
  - Attitudes & perceptions

What factors CONSTRAIN a PAC?
- External
  - Community context
  - Community capacity
  - State & Federal actors & actions
- Internal
  - Origins, structure & function
  - Process & management
  - Attitudes & perceptions
Research Findings

What factors enable or constrain progress?

See handout – or view [https://youtu.be/kLewfDnaRwg](https://youtu.be/kLewfDnaRwg)
Why AOCs differ in their progress?
### Why AOCs differ in their progress

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PAC’s perceived independence & influence

- Voice for the public interest
- Ownership of the process
Recommendation for OGL AOC Program

Assess and address shared control

- Understand expectations for influence
- Deliberate feedback mechanism
Why AOCs differ in their progress

Balanced & sustained PAC member networks

- Professional members’ networks
- Connections enable PAC capacity
Recommendation for OGL AOC Program

Assess the PAC’s balance and support strategic recruitment

- Systematic membership tracking
- Resources for strategic member recruitment and retention
Why AOCs differ in their progress

PAC’s robust translational capacity

• Effective advice and input
• Members, contractors, AOC Coordinators
Assess and invest in translation

- Assess skills and understanding
- Share experts among PACs
Public understanding & support

• Visible issues have more support
• Education on invisible issues

Why AOCs differ in their progress
Engage in strategic planning for outreach

- Invest in plan & implementation
- Leverage community partnerships
Effective PAC leadership

• Manage the process effectively
• Jointly define a common goal
Recommendation for OGL AOC Program

Lead the process by example

- Transparency in process steps
- Instill sense of fairness
Expectation

A  B
Policy  Implementation  Outcome
Setting the target  Getting the work done  Enjoying the results
Reality

A  B
Policy Setting the target  Implementation Getting the work done  Outcome Enjoying the results

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Thank you:
Dr. Paul Seelbach & Dr. Julia Wondolleck
Michigan Office of the Great Lakes:
Jon Allan, Rick Hobrla & AOC Coordinators
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Download the full thesis at:
https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/148807

See video at: https://youtu.be/E4Vd0Girwfc