# Networks and Governance Research Workshop

## FEEDBACK REPORT

**Dr. Mark Exworthy and Prof. Ewan Ferlie**
School of Management
Royal Holloway-University of London

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### [1] Rationale

In discussion with projects and with SDO, there appeared to be a need to have a structured discussion between related projects addressing `governance' and `networks.' The general approach was loosely modelled in the ESRC programme meetings, involving a mix of general talks and discussion, with more detailed exchange relating to individuals projects. The meeting was also designed to have some flexibility to take account of participant suggestions and emerging issues.

In spring 2007, the principal investigators of eight SDO–funded projects (in the Governance and Networks streams) were approached, inviting them to participate in a workshop. All agreed.

[a] Structure
Projects were invited to send up to 3 members of their team, for logistical and financial reasons. All PIs and most researchers attended (some projects had yet to appoint their researcher(s)).

A 24-hour meeting was considered most effective in meeting the aims of the workshop, not least in fostering collaborations among projects and especially individual researchers (a one-day meeting effectively means about 6 hours, say 10am to 4pm, whilst a 24-hour meeting lasts one and a half days).

The workshop was held on 4 and 5 September 2007 in the Brunei Gallery, SOAS – University of London.

The first session (day one) involved opening comments and introductions, a statement about the purpose of the meeting, and a presentation on multi-disciplinary research. General discussion followed. Day two involved separate streams (Governance and Networks) presentations and a session to examine common issues across all projects (see agenda in appendix 2).

[b] Aims
The workshop aimed to:
1. Discuss shared topics
2. Report emerging findings
3. Develop collaborations
4. Develop researcher capacity and skills


## [2] Feedback

The four projects in each stream were assigned the morning of day two to present their emerging findings and/or raise issues (of concern or general interest). Ample time was also allocated for general discussion.

[a] Governance
The emergent themes across the projects included:

- *Multi-level governance:*
  Governance issues apply at organisational, institutional and system levels. The intersection and interaction between them are a significant field of inquiry about the 4 projects which were presented. The nested levels of governance are shaped by the motivation and behaviour of individuals acting within in complex organisational structures.

- *Devolution:*
  The impacts of the natural experiment of (political) devolution within the UK were of concern to some projects[1]. A more structured approach to drawing lessons from these projects, other SDO-funded and those funded by other organisations (e.g. ESRC) would seem worthwhile.

- *Foundation Trusts:*
  The motivation and incentives to exercise new `freedoms' offered by Foundation Trusts are emerging as a common theme across projects, not just confined by the study led by Dr. Pauline Allen. The impact of FTs stretches beyond their organisational boundaries. The intersection of FT action upon the rest of the health system would present interesting empirical questions.


[b] Networks

- *Top-down and bottom-up Healthcare Networks*:
  All studies were examining and contrasting top-down (mandated) networks and bottom-up (voluntary/collaborative) networks. The group had found/ expected to find top-down bureaucratisation/ cooption of networks.

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[1] Note that the project "Contractual governance in a system with mixed modes of regulation" includes a comparison of Wales and England.

- *Common methodology and approach to analysis:*
  There was a common spine to research methodology which was comparative qualitative case studies, based upon interviews, observation, documentary analysis and a broadly narrative approach to analysis. In addition some groups were also using social network analysis and email analysis.

- *Network context:*
  The group agreed that examining the context that networks were situated in was important, as well as the timing and stage the networks were in within their lifecycle.

- *Defining network effectiveness:*
  The group agreed that it was difficult to define exactly what a network was and therefore even harder to agree on what constituted network effectiveness (for staff and patients). They questioned the utility of Dephi studies, arguing that in their experience of using the method, outcome may reflect who responded to the study rather than necessarily being representative of stakeholders.

[c] Common issues

- *Value of such workshops:*
There was common agreement that such workshops provided a unique opportunity to convene similar projects in a constructive and formative environment. A second workshop towards the end of projects (in mid/late 2009) would shift the focus towards sharing findings, consider joint dissemination and exploit new collaborations between projects.

- *Access:*
  o *Database of case-study sites*: It has already emerged that some projects in this workshop had approached or were intending to approach the same organisations for data collection. Not only does this fail to maximise the potential data collection efforts but it also creates a sense of dis-organisation among SDO and/or its funded projects. A database of case-study organisations which had been approached might overcome such difficulties. Such a facility might need to be managed by SDO and conform to confidentiality restrictions.
  o *SDO-Net:* This new development was welcomed but there was some concern that this might prejudice recruitment in the sense that it might divert attention to `research-friendly' organisations (and away from others). Recognising the limits of such a database and encouraging non-research active organisations would be important ways of avoiding bias.

- *Ethics and research governance:*
  o There was common experience of the difficulties associated with securing approval from REC and through Research Governance structures. Coordination of multi-site research had proved especially challenging.
  o There was some debate about the timing of the application process. Some projects had applied for ethical approval before the formal start of their project; others had waited for the appointment of a researcher to begin that process. Either way had important implications for funding of these projects. In terms of the former, PIs were involved in off-budget work relating to the project. In terms of the latter, SDO-funded researchers were taking several months, accounting for a reasonable proportion of the overall project period.

- *Methodology:*

All projects demonstrated evidence of multi- and inter-disciplinary working but there was a need to ensure that researchers were sufficiently skilled and grounded in specific disciplinary paradigms and techniques. Despite the emphasis on multi-disciplinary research, most external drivers still focused on uni-disciplinary approaches.

- *Policy and practice:*

It was hoped that a steam-lined dissemination process could be developed across projects which would maximise the impact on central government and the NHS (see common reporting framework, below).

- *Common reporting framework:*

To ensure that the projects create a synergy, a common reporting framework was proposed. Without being too prescriptive, this framework could ensure that common lessons could be disseminated to policy and practice audience.

- *Future research agenda*:

The projects were able to discern the outline of a future research agenda for networks and governance. This focused on the following key themes:
  o Inter- and multi-disciplinarity
  o Comparative
  o Mixed methods with an emphasis on case-studies
  o Tracking impacts across organisational systems

- *Devolution*:

Comparative analysis between Wales, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland was a significant issue in some studies (and a minor one in others). Drawing lessons across these and other (SDO-funded and ESRC-funded) studies was considered an important issue to address in the next 1-2 years.


**[3] Conclusions**

Overall, the workshop was deemed a success in terms of its objectives. It had provided a constructive environment within which researchers currently involved in studies could examine shared concerns and discuss emergent findings. It also provided some space within which future collaborations could be developed.

In terms of researcher capacity and skills, the original intention to make the workshop more oriented around the needs of `research fellows' had proved difficult given the (low) numbers involved, the fact that some fellows had not been appointed, and the time available. That said, the event brought together such researchers, providing the start of a process of capacity development.

Given such success, it is hoped that SDO will consider funding future workshops for this and other groups of projects, around common themes. Experience from this event suggests that it is a worthwhile exercise.

All the material, including presentations and project contact details, is available for consultation at the following address:
http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Management/Research/CPSO/index.html

**<u>Acknowledgements:</u>**
We thank SDO for supporting the costs of this workshop.

The importance of an experienced, competent Administrator in organising the workshop cannot be under-estimated. The work of Fulvia Fiorenzi (School of Management, Royal Holloway) ensured that success of the workshop.

## Appendix 1 . List of participants (26)

### Governance stream:

**[1] Decentralisation and performance: Autonomy and incentives in local health economies**

PI      Dr Mark Exworthy, Royal Holloway, University of London
        Dr Francesca Frosini, Royal Holloway, University of London
        Dr Lorelei Jones, LSHTM
        Dr Jacky Holloway, Open University Business School

**[2] Contractual governance in a system with mixed modes of regulation**

PI      Prof David Hughes, Swansea University
Co-PI   Dr Pauline Allen, LSHTM
        Dr Christina Petsoulas, Imperial College London
        Prof Justin Keen, Leeds

**[3] Comparative governance arrangements and comparative performance: a qualitative and quantitative study**

PI      Prof John Storey, Open University Business School
        Dr Richard Holti, Open University Business School
        Dr Nick Winchester, Open University Business School

**[4] Investigating the governance of Foundation Trusts**

PI      Dr Pauline Allen, LSHTM
        Dr Jean Townsend, Leeds
        Dr John Wright, LSHTM
        Dr Andrew Hutchings, LSHTM

### Networks stream:

**[5] Networks in health care: A comparative study of their management impact and performance**

PI      Prof Ewan Ferlie, RHUL
        Dr Gerry McGivern, RHUL
        Dr Rachel Addicott, Kings Fund
        Dr Melanie Ceppi, De Montfort University

**[6] Comparative evaluation of children's services networks**

PI      Prof Graeme Currie, University of Nottingham
        Dr Tina Howell, University of Nottingham

**[7] Understanding professional partnerships and non-hierarchical organisations**

PI       Prof Rod Sheaff, University of Plymouth


**[8] Delivering health care through managed clinical networks (MCNs): Lessons from the north**

PI       Prof Huw Davies, University of St Andrews
co-PI   Prof Bruce Guthrie, University of Dundee
          Dr Rosemary Rushmer, University of St Andrews
          Dr Isabel Walter, University of St Andrews

**CPSO**
Fulvia Fiorenzi, RHUL

## Appendix 2. Agenda

## First day:  Tuesday, 4th of September

15:30                              Arrival refreshments                              (room B201)

Afternoon session:                                                                (main room B202)

16:00-16:10                **Welcome & Overview**

[Prof. Ferlie Ewan, CPSO Director]

16:10-16:40                **Update from SDO**

[Dr Pauline Allen, LSHTM]

16:40-17:00                **Purpose of workshop**

[Dr Mark Exworthy, RHUL School of Management]

17:00-17:20                **Multidisciplinary research with an organisational perspective**

[Prof. Huw Davies, St. Andrews]

17:20-18:00                **Questions and comments**

7 pm                              Dinner at Navarro´s

**Second day**: **Wednesday, 5th of September**

**Morning session**

8:30- 9 am                    Tea and coffee                                                     (main B202)

**Two streams: Networks and Governance.**

Each project presents on progress and emergent findings (20-30 minutes each)

|  | **Group A: Governance** Chair: **Dr. Exworthy** (**main** B202) | **Group B: Networks** Chair: **Prof. Ferlie** (**B201**) |
|---|---|---|
| 9:30 am | Decentralisation and performance: Autonomy and incentives in local health economies **[Dr. Frosini, RHUL]** | Networks in health care: A comparative study of their management impact and performance: **[Dr. Mc Givern, RHUL]** |
| 10:00 am | Contractual governance in a system with mixed modes of regulation **[Prof. David Hughes, Swansea]** | Comparative evaluation of children's services networks **[Dr. Tina Howell, Nottingham]** |
| 10:45-11 | Coffee break **(main B202)** | |
| 11 am | Comparative governance arrangements and comparative performance: A qualitative and quantitative study **[Prof. John Storey, Open University]** | Understanding professional partnerships and non-hierarchical organisations **[Prof. Rod Sheaff, Plymouth]** |
| 11:30 am | Investigating the governance of Foundation Trusts **[Dr. Pauline Allen, LSHTM]** | Delivering health care through managed clinical networks (MCNs): Lessons from the north **[Prof. Huw Davies, St Andrews]** |
| 11:30-12:30 | Wrap-up and cross-studies discussion | Wrap-up and cross-studies discussion |

12.30                    **Sandwich Lunch**                                                (main B202)

**Second day**: **Wednesday, 5th of September**


**Afternoon session**


1.30-3.00pm          **Common issues** (main room B202):

**Methodology, access, ethics, policy and practice.**

**Projects to provide insights from their research**


People to initiate discussion around the above issues:

1. Methodology: Gerry

2. Access: Mark & Francesca

3. Ethics: Mark and Francesca

4. Policy and practice.


**Conclusions and close**

[Prof. Ferlie Ewan, CPSO Director]