The Great Pacific Garbage Patch

Teaching Note

"The Great Pacific Garbage Patch" is a role play simulation designed to illuminate the challenges of collaboration for addressing wicked problems. The role play requires actors from six organizations to come together to discuss the possibilities for creating a collaborative governance regime to address the problem of the Garbage Patch.

The role play can be used in a broad range of courses, including but not limited to public administration, public policy, political science, conflict resolution, collaboration, and international relations, among others.

In terms of collaboration, the role play can be used to help students understand and analyze the system context, drivers of collaboration, the initiation and formation of collaborative governance regimes, and the challenges of developing a shared theory of change. For this reason, we highly recommend that students read the first several chapters of *Collaborative Governance Regimes* by Kirk Emerson and Tina Nabatchi (Georgetown University Press 2015). Additional readings are suggested below. The role play can also be used to help students identify positions and interests, understand the role of values in conflict situations, and develop skills and capacities in conflict analysis and resolution, negotiation, facilitation, and collaboration.

In terms of other substantive areas, the role play allows students to experience issues such as international policy making; decision making; personal, organizational, and policy ethics; and leadership and teamwork. We suggest some readings for these topical areas below.

Setting up the Role Play

Minimum number of students required: 6

Optimal time: 3-5 hours (excluding preparation time). Instructors should also set aside preparation time for the students as necessary. For example, the instructor might ask all of the representatives of each individual organization to come together to devise a broader organizational strategy that actors should follow in their individual teams. The instructor might also ask each team to get together before the deliberations begin to establish ground rules and other expectations for the negotiations. Alternatively, the instructor can set the ground rules and expectations for the students in advance of the deliberations.

Set-Up: The role play is very easy to set up. Instructors should divide their students in groups, so that each group has *at least* one representative of each of the following six organizations:

(1) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
(2) American Chemistry Council
(3) Research Institutes (including Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Algalita Marine Research Foundation, and Ocean Voyage Institute)
(4) Greenpeace
(5) United Nations Environment Program
(6) Japanese Ministry of the Environment

Once the student groups are established, the instructor should distribute the role play materials. ALL students should receive a copy of the role play, the public information on actors, and the instruction sheet. Each individual student should receive a copy of the confidential organizational information sheet for the organization they are representing.

Instructors should then review the role play, including both directions and assignments. The students should be instructed that they are expected to represent their organizational positions and interests, even though they might have a different personal view, and behave responsibly and professionally. To assist with the setup of the role play, we have provided (1) an instruction sheet to be distributed to the students along with the case and actors' information sheets and (2) a PowerPoint that instructors can use and edit to meet their specific course needs. We have also used the following additional instructions in the past:

☒ The instructor should underscore that there are no set expectations for how the group organizes itself, manages and runs its meetings, approaches the subject, or reaches an agreement or specific result. Simply put, there is no specific expected result because the purpose of the role play is to demonstrate the difficulties of initiating a collaboration. Although this role play is designed to focus on the challenges of creating of a collaborative governance regime, it can be used to explore other topics, such as decision

making, conflict resolution, and environmental policy making, among others. If the simulation is being used for one of these other topics, the instructor should decide whether to inform the students and clarify the focus.

- Each group should decide on how to organize itself and conduct its meetings. Different channels/tools of communications (e.g., face-to-face, video/voice conferencing, Skype) can be used to meet, but groups should be aware of the challenges associated with different tools. Each group should keep track of its meetings - date, location, attendees, duration, etc. - and submit a brief record at the end.

- All students are required to participate in the roleplay. It is the student's individual responsibility to actively participate in the group discussions. The participation of each member will impact group performance.

- All participants will receive general information on the six actors. The confidential organizational information sheets should not be shared.

- Students should NOT conduct extra research and should NOT investigate the actors involved.

When we have used this role play, we have required students to submit the following assignments: (1) a peer evaluation to assess team members' participation in the role play, (2) a brief presentation highlight the group's proposal, and (3) an individual written assignment in which the student reflects on what s/he learned in the role play and connects it to theory and research. General instructions for the written assignment are included and can be amended to meet the instructor's needs.

Following the student presentations, instructors should lead a debriefing conversation. We have used the following questions to lead this discussion and to help students think about their writing assignment:

- What are the main challenges and issues involved in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch?

- Is collaboration necessary to address this problem? Why or why not?

- What are the overarching issues in the greater system context for the Garbage Patch? How do these issues in the system context help or hinder the potential for collaboration?

- In what ways are the drivers for collaboration (initiating leadership, uncertainty, interdependence, consequential incentives) present? In what ways are these drivers lacking? What might be done to strengthen the drivers?

- Are the right parties present? If not, who else needs to be at the table?

- What was the nature of collaboration dynamics in your group? How well did you address issues such as principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action? In what ways were your collaboration dynamics strong? In what ways could

they have been improved?

- How did the collaborative process contribute to or hinder your efforts to develop a shared theory of change? What were the issues around setting a goal and making decisions?

- Did the organizations have different visions of how to address the problem? Why?

- Did the organizations have different visions about the proper role of government (and its agencies) in addressing the problem?

- What were the impacts of having nonprofits involved in the discussions?

- As an individual, did you encounter or feel any tensions between your professional obligations and your personal views? How did you deal with these tensions?

- To what extent did leadership or teamwork skills play a role in reaching or obstructing a solution?

- What role did power (and national sovereignty) play in the conversation?

- How were you able to determine the benchmarks or indicators to measure performance (of the organization, of the role play process, or of the proposed solution)?

- What roles could new technologies play in the ability to address this complex issue?

Suggested Readings on Various Topical Areas

Instructors can pick and choose from the list of readings below, depending on the topic they are trying to cover. This is not an exclusive list.

Collaborative Governance

As noted above, we strongly recommend that students be required to read:

- ☒ Emerson, Kirk and Tina Nabatchi (2015). *Collaborative Governance Regimes*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will be particularly useful.

As an alternative, students could be required to read:

- Emerson, Kirk, Tina Nabatchi, and Steve Balogh (2012). An Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 22(1):1-29.

The following additional readings on initiating collaborative governance may also be useful:

- ☒ Linden, Russell M. (2010). Getting the Collaborative Process Started. In *Leading Across Boundaries: Creating Collaborative Agencies in a Networked World*, 95-121. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- ☒ Margerum, Richard D. (2011). Convening Collaboratives. In *Beyond Consensus: Improving Collaborative Planning and Management*, 49-81. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- O'Leary, Rosemary and Lisa B. Bingham (2007). *A Manager's Guide to Resolving Conflicts in Collaborative Networks*. Washington, DC: IBM Center for the Business of Government.

- ☒ Wondolleck, Julia M. and Steven L. Yaffee (2000). Why Collaboration? In *Making Collaboration Work: Lessons from Innovation in Natural Resource Management*, 23-68. Washington, DC: Island Press.

International Policy Making

In a changing global environment, government at all levels has found itself with new responsibilities but without the capacity to manage them effectively. Moreover, we increasingly are seeing the involvement of non-state actors in the global public policy process, sometimes at the expense of the role and sovereignty of national governments. The role play allows participants to experience these and other issues involved in international policy making. To set the stage, the following readings might be useful:

- ☒ Abonyi G., Van Slyke D.M. (2010). Governing on the Edge: Globalization of Production and the Challenges to Public Administration in the 21st Century. *Public Administration Review*, 70(S1): s33-45.

- ☒ Kettl, Donald (2000). The Transformation of Governance: Globalization, Devolution, and the Role of Government. *Public Administration Review*, 60(6): 488-496.
- ☒ Stone, Diane. (2008). Global Public Policy, Transnational Policy Communities, and Their Networks. *Policy Studies Journal*, 36(1): 19-35.

Decision Making

Decision making is an implicit part of collaborative governance, conflict resolution, policy making, and nearly every other aspect of organizational and public life. Accordingly, this role play can be used to help students understand and parse through various models of decision making. To that end, the following readings may be useful:

- ☒ Cohen, Michael D., James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen. (1972). A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17(1): 1-25.

- • Garvin, David A. and Michael Roberto. (2001). What You Don't Know About Making Decisions. *Harvard Business Review*, 79(8): 108-116.

- • Lindblom, Charles E. (1959). The Science of "Muddling Through." *Public Administration Review*, 19(2): 79-88.

- ☒ Simon H. (1955). A Behavioral Model of Rational Choice. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 69(1): 99-118.

Personal, Organizational, and Policy Ethics

The role play will challenge the attitudes and beliefs of some, if not all, of the participants. If we consider ethics as a process by which we clarify right and wrong, and act on what we understand to be right, many participants will encounter or feel tensions between different ethical obligations. To help guide students through the ethical challenges, the following readings may be useful.

We strongly recommend that students of public administration be required to read:

- • Waldo, Dwight (1980). Public Administration and Ethics: A Prologue to a Preface. In *The Enterprise of Public Administration: A Summary View*, pp. 99-115.

- Malloy, David Cruise, and James Agarwal. (2010). Ethical Climate in Government and Nonprofit Sectors: Public Policy Implications for Service Delivery. *Journal of Business Ethics* 94(1): 3-21.

- The following additional readings may also be useful:
- Cropanzana, R., Bowen, D. E., & Gilliland, S. W. (2007). The Management of Organizational Justice. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 24(1): 34-48.
- Jurkiewicz, Carole L., and Robert A. Giacalone. (2015). How Will We Know It When We See It? Conceptualizing the Ethical Organization. *Public Organization Review*, 1-12.

- Liautaud, Susan. (2012). An Organizational Ethics Disaster. *Stanford Social Innovation Review.*
- O'Leary Rosemary (2006). *The Ethics of Dissent: Managing Guerrilla Government.* Washington, DC: CQ Press. (excerpts of)

Leadership and Teamwork

The role play provides many opportunities for students to play a variety of leadership roles. The following readings can set the stage for helping students to dissect, analyze, and respond to these roles:

- ☒ Goffee, Robert and Gareth Jones. (2000). Why Should Anyone Be Led By You? *Harvard Business Review*, 78(5): 62-70.

- ☒ Janis, Irving (1972). *Victims of groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign-Policy Decisions and Fiascoes.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

- ☒ Lencioni, Patrick. (2007). *Conquer Team Dysfunction.* Lafayette, CA: The Table Group. Available at: https://www.tablegroup.com/imo/media/doc/Conquer_Team_Dysfunction.pdf

- ☒ Mintzberg, Henry. (2004). Enough Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 82(11): 22-22.

- ☒ Scharpnick, Matthew. (2014). How Groups Make Great Decisions. *Stanford Social Innovation Review.* Available at: https://ssir.org/articles/entry/how_groups_make_great_decisions