

***Civic Engagement and 'the Social Agenda'
in Toronto:***

Methodological reflections in the light of
preliminary data



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[1] What is the question?

- (a) How robust are *local* and *associational* dynamics about *equity & inclusion*
- (b) How do they relate to such dynamics re. *growth*?
- (c) Do they affect (i) policy / governance *outputs*, and (ii) equity / inclusion *outcomes*?

Hypothesis: High score on (a) correlates with positive results for (b) & (c)

[2] What do interviewees say?

- 9 interviews, 7 with city officials
- [a] Much associational activity, but little 'centre' or 'pattern'
- [b] Weakly linked to growth agenda, but not antagonistic
- [c] Mixed-to-positive *output* assessment;
- Interviews less relevant to *outcomes*.

[3] My methodological concern

- How can [2] help us answer [1]?
- (a) Can we *rely on subjective evaluations* of robustness, connections, impact?
- (b) Implications of (possible) *weak 'centre' or 'pattern'* of (possibly) robust dynamic?
- (c) What do local dynamics owe/contribute to *non-local* ones?
- (d) What do associational dynamics owe/contribute to *non-associational* ones?

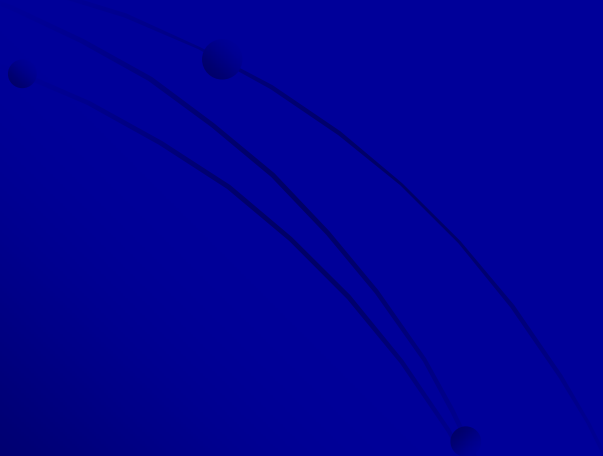
[4] Networks, hierarchies & markets, & scale

Addressing (c) & (d):

- Importance of local / associational requires assessing alternatives, & nexus
- Williamson: Associational networks contrast with hierarchies & markets
- Re-scaling lit: local 'nested' in regional, national ... (and more)
- **So:** Interpret interview data in light of a table of options

	State <i>hierarchies</i>	Associat. <i>networks</i>	Economic <i>markets</i>
National	x	x	x
Regional / provincial	x	x	x
Local	x	x	x

- Is bottom-centre cell 'foremost' site of output/outcome-relevant dynamics?
- Is local associational dynamic positively/negatively related to others?
- What is relation's morphology?



[5] Events & causal mechanisms

Addressing (a) & (b):

- From positivist generalization re. universes
- ... to realist explanations of events
- Trace processes over time; explain via linking mechanisms
- **So:** locate dynamics in relation to 'real' events; seek multiple interpretations
- Some actors partake, others don't
- Outputs exist independently of interview response

- & media/document trail is check on interview
- Non-eventual associations invite higher scrutiny, not rejection.
- ***A modified hypothesis:*** bottom-centre cell's importance varies, is positively (& variably) related to others ...
- ... in ways that can be specified causally for different policy/governance contexts
- ... by tracing distinctive mechanisms at work in different events
- Quantitative ***invaluable*** re. ***outcomes***