

**From West Coast Timber Supply Area to Great Bear Rainforest:  
Exploring power in governance innovation**

Co-Authors: Michele-Lee Moore\* and Ola Tjornbo\*

\*McConnell Fellow, Social Innovation Generation (SiG@Waterloo)

The concept of power is essential to understanding governance innovation in complex systems. The emergence of social change that genuinely challenges and alters existing governance frameworks often involves the (re)integration of marginalized social groups and alternative discourses into mainstream institutional settings that actively resist this challenge. In order to achieve both disruption and reconciliation, change agents have to find means of accessing different and often novel sources of power, and must become skilled at employing this power for a variety of strategic ends. The case of the Great Bear Rainforest in British Columbia, Canada provides an example where innovations in governance emerged and can be better understood by using power as an analytical lens.

Forestry management in British Columbia has been contentious for decades, peaking with the protests of Clayoquot Sound over clearcut logging practices which resulted in the largest mass arrest in Canadian history. Avoiding a repeat of Clayoquot Sound in the West Coast Timber Supply Area required federal, provincial, local, and First Nations governments, private industry, transnational environmental NGOs, labour unions, and foundations, to cooperate and develop an agreement – a process which resulted in key governance innovations. These innovations, which include using ecosystem based management as a framework for an integrated community economic development and land management plan, along with a government to government negotiation model for First Nations and the Province, represent a significant shift for resource management.

Critical to realizing the extent of the transformation is an understanding of how the agents that produced the governance innovations needed to disrupt the existing structures of legitimation (rules), domination (resource and authority allocation), and signification (interpretation and meaning) and how they leveraged various sources of power. The subject of power however, is too often neglected in discussions of governance transformation. Ultimately, substantive theorization about power, an issue commonly debated in the broader scholarship on global governance, remains limited in the emerging domain of complexity governance. This oversight can impede both our understanding of the sources of power and the actors' ability to leverage those sources to achieve positive change.

Using the taxonomy developed by Barnett & Duvall (2005) to dismantle the nature of power into categories of compulsory, institutional, structural, and productive concepts, this paper will provide an examination of power used by the different agents to disturb existing governance structures and how new constellations emerged that created the space for innovation. Based on empirical research using grounded theory, the paper will explore the emergent and nonlinear dynamic of the West Coast Timber Supply Area as it transformed into the Great Bear Rainforest and will suggest that the interplay of structural, institutional and productive forms of power provides a pivotal part of the explanation for the resultant complex governance innovation. By drawing on recent work in global governance scholarship,

this paper yields meaningful insights for complexity governance regarding the power that cuts across the institutional contexts and drivers of innovation.