



## **A comparative analysis of collaborative watershed partnerships: are they swimming or are they sinking?**

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Many attempts have been made to explain the formation of collaborative watershed partnerships in the USA - that is, multi-actor groups which work together to resolve problems at a watershed scale. But to what extent do these explanations 'travel' from the US to other contexts? This article critically evaluates how well one leading theory, namely the political contracting framework (PCF), explains not only their development but entire life history in a different institutional context – the United Kingdom. Drawing on a database of national practices, it argues that when suitably amended, the PCF explains many important aspects of their development but not all. The implications of this finding for future theoretical, empirical and policy-related work in this and other comparable jurisdictions are identified and explored.