



ROUTLEDGE
INTERNATIONAL
HANDBOOKS



The Routledge Handbook of Global Public Policy and Administration

Edited by Thomas Klassen, Denita Cepiku
and Tae Joon Lah

Collaborative governance: rationale, conceptualization, instances and management issues

Prof. Dr Denita Cepiku
University of Rome Tor Vergata
cepiku@economia.uniroma2.it

Abstract

Public problems are increasingly complex, global and interdependent. Be it international terrorism, Ebola, climate change, financial crisis, youth unemployment or else, it no longer makes sense to ask who is in charge. While government roles become more demanding but also more indirect, policy makers feel confident that collaborative governance, a hybrid mode of decision-making and service provision pooling public, non profit, businesses, or community associations, is the most effective answer to problems that cannot be solved by single organizations. The paper offers an essential guide, based on state-of-the-art research, on how to manage collaboration. It includes case studies from around the globe that ground the exposition in real experience.

Keywords: Collaboration – Collaborative governance – Network – Co-production – Interdependency

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Introduction

The need for public managers to work across organizations and societal sectors is not new although the number and scale of complex problems, their global nature and interdependency has escalated in the past two decades (Friend et al. 1974; Huxham 2000). Simultaneously there has been a change in government roles, becoming more demanding but also more indirect. The collaboration-based public administration approach to decision-making and service delivery is also considered a reaction to the institutional fragmentation and contraposition created by previous public sector reforms such as the New Public Management.

Similarly, evidence of collaborative governance can be found decades afore but it has multiplied since the mid 1990s. Achieving environmental sustainability, reducing poverty, alleviating global health problems, homeland and urban security, improving quality of life of the elderly, social inclusion of immigrants, urban renewal, territorial development, recovery from drug addiction, emergency management, raising school standards, improving community wellbeing, cannot be solved by any single organization, be it public, non profit, business, or community association. Attempts to reduce fragmentation include inter-institutional networks, public-private partnerships, joined up government (horizontal coordination and integration between departments and agencies within government), and co-production, and can be found today in almost every sector of general interest.

While policy makers and public managers feel now confident that collaboration is the most effective answer to such problems, less attention is paid to what it requires to function properly and achieve its aims. Managing mechanisms and systems are reasonably expected to change compared to how they work in traditional organizations.

The paper provides an integrated framework for understanding collaborative governance, regardless of the specific forms (networks, co-production, public-private partnerships) or labels (coordination, cooperation, collaboration, collaborative public management, collaborative governance, civic engagement) it may assume (O'Leary and Vij 2012). Competencies required by public managers who engage in hybrid modes of service provision are identified and recommendations for policy makers drawn. The theoretical framework is illustrated through evidence gathered from a wider range of sources.

The central thesis of the paper is the imperative of going beyond the early years' euphoria, adopting what Alford and Hughes (2008) call public value pragmatism: this means abandoning the cult of collaboration considered a panacea and addressing the managerial challenges of collaborative, non-hierarchical environments.

Defining collaborative governance

Collaborative governance theory draws on a variety of disciplines such as political science, public administration, urban affairs, social welfare, public management, and organizational/sociological research (Keast et al. 2014). It can be defined by considering the two words that compose it. The term *governance* is loaded with ambiguity and several definitions, normative and positive, can be found in the literature (Frederickson 2005; Cepiku 2013). In this paper, a neutral definition has been chosen, which allows the meaning to be carried by the word collaboration rather than governance. Thus, governance refers to "government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services" (Fukuyama 2013:350).

Collaboration is "a purposive relationship designed to solve a problem by creating or discovering a solution within a given set of constraints" (Agranoff and McGuire 2003: 4). This relationship is "intended to increase public value by their working together rather than separately" (Bardach 1998: 8; Huxham 1996). It "is based on the value of reciprocity and can include the public" (Agranoff and McGuire 2003).

These definitions of collaboration seem to apply equally to many different words that are often used interchangeably (Behn 2010). It is possible to distinguish among: 1) cooperation, which is short

term, informal and limited to sharing information; 2) coordination, in which organizations remain separate but contribute to a specific, agreed program of action; and 3) collaboration: long term, risky, needing system changes and based on strong linkages with a commitment to common missions and part of a total picture (Mandell 2010).

Alternatives to collaboration are hierarchy and competition, both practiced in the public sector and well known under the headings of Weberianism and New Public Management. Differently from hierarchy and competition, collaboration is voluntary; partners can step out at any time if they are not satisfied or aware of the value achieved through it (Hill and Lynn 2003: 65).

Collaborative governance is, thus, a hybrid mode of decision making and service provision in which a public agency deliberately and directly engages non-state entities in a formal, consensual, and collective decision-making process to manage programs, and to solve problems that cannot be easily or at all solved by single organizations (Ansell and Gash 2007: 544; Agranoff and McGuire 2003). This definition sounds simple but it belies the reality of numerous collaborative forms, each entailing specific management issues (Huxham 2000: 341).

Collaboration can be institutional or individual; in other terms, it can take place mainly among organizations or among people. This distinction, though helpful to categorize empirical evidence, is fine line: collaboration among institutions is always carried out by people interactions; on the other hand, individual collaboration has a short life if not embedded in an institutional framework.

Why collaborate? Rationale and drivers to collaboration

Organizations and people work together to achieve collaborative advantage; i.e. something that could not be realized by acting alone (Huxham 1996). Bretschneider et al. (2012) identify three different approaches to understand incentives to collaborate: i) theories of organizational behavior; ii) public value theory; and iii) the availability of performance information. Organization theories refer mainly to resource dependency theory. Its basic assumption is that individual organizations do not have all the resources they need to achieve their goals (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). Public value theory is more recent theory. Public managers are willing to give away some of their autonomy if they feel that public value will be more easily and effectively created through a joint collaborative effort. Finally, performance information can be a motivator for the sharing or reallocation of resources among organizations (Bretschneider et al. 2012).

Two recurring concepts in collaborative governance theory are wicked problems and interdependency. Wicked problems are unstructured as causes and effects are difficult to identify and continuously evolving. They cross multiple policy domains, levels of government and jurisdictions and, consequently, several stakeholders, each bringing in different views, priorities, values, cultural and political backgrounds and championing alternative solutions (Weber and Khademian 2008). If not managed, this multiplicity easily translates in high conflict degrees.

Interdependency is created when no single actor, public or private, has all knowledge, information, power required to solve complex, dynamic and diversified problems. No actor has sufficient overview to make the application of needed instrument effective or sufficient action potential to dominate unilaterally in a particular governing model (Kooiman 1993: 4).

Collaborative arrangements are established when there is a wicked problem and the multiple actors involved are aware of the interdependency and recognize a certain value of working with others (Kickert et al. 1997: 6; Mandell 2010).

Since collaboration is voluntary, collaborative interactions to exchange resources and negotiate shared purposes, are rooted in trust and regulated by shared rules, instead of sovereign authority.

At an individual level, citizens are motivated by different reasons to collaborate with public sector professionals (Alford 2009, 2014). These include both material self-interest (utilitarian connotations and public choice theory) and intrinsic rewards such as satisfying the need to feel competent and self-determining sociality (sense of belonging). The way in which these motivations affect the willingness of people to collaborate or co-produce depends on personal features, on the kind and

salience of the service provided, on transaction costs that make voice more relevant than exit, and ease of involvement, among others.

One of the main motivations of public agencies to collaborate with citizens and civil service organizations in delivering public services is achieving strong user and citizen engagement per se (OECD 2011: 48). For instance, collaboration with citizens in designing and delivering healthcare services has proven to improve implementation processes and strengthen compliance.

Other determinants include governance drivers such as low administrative capacity of public sector and logistical drivers often deriving from the intrinsic nature of the specific public service (Bovaird 2007; Joshi and Moore 2004: 855). For instance, monitoring the quality of lake water or parks or urban streets can be far more effective and less expensive if communities and residents are involved¹.

Box 1: NASA taps citizen-scientists to find novel ways to use earth science dataset

NASA is well known as an innovator that employs some of the smartest people alive. The agency has recently announced two related Earth science challenges designed to take ideas from a much larger source: the public.

The challenges give citizens a chance to provide NASA with new ways to make use of the extensive datasets its Earth science satellites capture, much of which are available to the public through the Open NASA Earth Exchange, or OpenNEX. OpenNEX is a data, supercomputing and knowledge platform hosted on the Amazon Web Services cloud, where academics, developers and users can search through a massive collection of climate and Earth science datasets. NASA already collects the data, but the public could help the agency better figure out to do with it.

The challenges come in two phases. The first is the ideation stage, which will offer as much as \$10,000 in awards for ideas that lead to “novel uses of the datasets.” The second aspect is the builder phase that will build off the ideas generated during the ideation stage and will offer between \$30,000 and \$50,000 in awards for the development of applications or algorithms that promote climate resilience using OpenNEX datasets.

The OpenNEX challenges also address policy mandates on big data, open data and climate data from the Obama administration, but bringing innovation from outside the agency is likely where its biggest efforts will lie.

Speaking at the Amazon Web Services symposium in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, Tsengar Lee, program manager in the Earth Science Division of the Science Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters, said building the data simply isn't enough: “The agency wants to maximize its uses. The expectation was if you build the data, they will come, but that was not the case,” Lee said.

Source: Extract from <http://www.nextgov.com/technology-news/2014/06/nasa-announces-earth-science-challenges/87280/> June 25, 2014

Modes of collaborative governance: networks and co-production

Several forms and modes of collaborative arrangements exist, aimed at achieving public value.

Two principal forms of collaborative governance are inter-institutional networks and co-production. Networks are relatively stable patterns of social relations among interdependent actors, which take shape around policy problems and programs and that are being formed, reproduced and changed by an ecology of games between these actors (Kickert et al 1997). Networks include multiple organizations, tied by some form of structural interdependence in which one unit is not the subordinate of others by virtue of its formal position (O'Toole 1997: 45). They are often viewed as pooled authority systems that are based more on expertise than on position (Agranoff, 2003: 11). Milward and Provan (2006: 11) distinguish among service implementation, information diffusion, problem solving, and community capacity building networks.

A second form of collaborative governance is co-production. The term was coined in the late 1970s to explain police performance in Chicago. Elinor Ostrom discovered that effectiveness of policing in terms of public safety was not a function of the resources available, but of the behaviors of the citizens. Her pioneering work on why crime goes up when the police get into patrol cars made her the first woman and the first non-economist to win the Nobel Prize for economics.

¹ For a comprehensive survey of existing practice at the international level, see the 58 co-production projects from 28 countries in OECD 2011.

Co-production can be defined as “[...] the mix of activities that both public service agents and citizens contribute to the provision of public services. The former are involved as professionals, or ‘regular producers’, while ‘citizen production’ is based on voluntary efforts by individuals and groups to enhance the quality and/or quantity of the services they use” (Parks, et al., 1981, 1999).

Co-production is different from volunteerism or community self-organization and represents a step beyond public consultation, being more in-depth and systematic. It transforms the relationship between service users and providers, enabling the user to take more control and ownership. It contributes to aligning results with citizens’ aspirations and needs and can lead to better outcomes and make better use of resources, thereby reducing the need for expensive services. Co-production has also been classified in co-governance, co-design, co-management, co-production, and co-evaluation, with users being involved to different degrees (Bovaird 2007).

Cross-sector collaboration and community engagement are equally spread at the local and global levels. They are increasingly being adopted in global development strategies, including the post-2015 Development Agenda that will follow the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals. These are not always initiated by public agencies but are often part of philanthropic projects. Since the 1980s, private foreign investment in developing countries has risen 15-fold; and since 2000, private capital has accounted for 80 per cent of all capital flowing to these countries².

Box 2: Tigray: a community-based network to fight malaria

Malaria is an entirely preventable and treatable mosquito-borne illness that accounted for 207 million cases and 627.000 deaths in 2012. Remedies include insecticidal nets and artemisinin-based combination therapies. Health costs of malaria stand for 40% of public health expenditures and 30-50% of inpatient hospital admissions (WHO 2013).

Despite steep increases in global malaria financing that have occurred since 2003, people continue to die. The “unclearly defined potpourri” of corporate giving, philanthropic and CSR projects, although may do good for a while, lacks effectiveness in the longer-term. Low access to health structures, inadequate diagnosis, low provider compliance and patient adherence to therapy, bring down the impact of treatment from a 98% of clinical efficacy of the drugs to a 37% real effectiveness.

The Tigray project, named after the Ethiopian region in which it was implemented, sheds some light on how collaborative governance can dramatically improve the impact of traditional intervention strategies, be they State-centered or philanthropic.

From 2005 to 2009, a global public-private network was created including as partners Novartis Italia, the Italian Ministry of Health, the WHO, the Tigray Health Bureau, and two local hospitals. It made use of community health workers (CHWs) to provide diagnosis and treatment of malaria. CHWs are subsistence farmers, members of the communities where they work, supported by the health system, and who have shorter training than professional workers.

During the project, 98 health workers were trained in malaria diagnosis and treatment, including 33 CHWs. With a limited US\$569.901 investment, they treated 130.000 people in their villages, approximately 58% of all suspected and confirmed cases of malaria.

The collaboration-based strategy led to a 40% reduction in malaria deaths compared to the traditional hospital-based approach. Caseload for health structures was reduced of one fourth and proper diagnosis saved US\$ 1,41 per patient examined. Services provided by CHWs were assessed as more appropriate to health needs than those of clinic-based services, less expensive, and able to foster self-reliance and local participation

Columbia University, has estimated that financing needs of 1 million CHWs in Africa would be US\$2,3 billion per year, 0.005 per cent of donor GDP. This collaborative approach among international institutions and donors, local authorities and recipient communities is considered the most effective and less expensive to achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals (Earth Institute 2011).

Source: Adapted from Cepiku 2014.

Another interesting form of co-production is user innovation, which encompasses an understanding of key user needs and a systematic involvement of them in the innovation process (Wise and Høgenhaven 2008). The organization makes use of assets from other organizations and individuals to discover, develop and implement ideas within and outside its boundaries (Eggers and Singh 2009: 98; Bommert, 2010). Citizens, civic groups and users of public services are deemed able to

² Cf. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2014/04/private-sector-post-2015-agenda>, April 2014.

trigger innovation by engaging in the co-creation and co-production of public services (Alford 2009; Pestoff 2012). Benefits include improved awareness of social problems, more effective practices based on broad citizen experience, and increased trust between government and citizens. Key conditions that enable user innovation are found at different levels: public policies and country traditions of stakeholder involvement at the macro level; legal and institutional conditions at for participatory governance in specific policy fields at the meso level, power resource asymmetries, incentives and past experiences at the organizational level (Sørensen and Torfing 2011: 860). User innovation has an impact on organizational structures and behaviors and requires a focus on expertise rather than on position (Meijer 2014: 213).

Box 3: Patient innovation

User innovation can be feasible and rewarding even in a highly professionalized area such as healthcare. Patients can become experts in their own conditions and are the only people who are present at all stages during the provision of care: from diagnosis to recovery (Rathert et al. 2011). Especially in chronic and rare diseases, users or patients know things that many professionals may not know and their engagement can make a service more effective by the extent to which they go along with its requirements (users as critical success factors; self-management of long-term conditions; Bovaird 2007). Moreover, supporting user innovation is key to implementing innovative ways of addressing such diseases at reasonable costs (Von Hippel et al. 2011).

The increasing availability of medical information on the internet and stronger patient communities are some of the drivers to more active patients.

Recent evidence from rare diseases has highlighted the necessity of professional support to complement patients' lack of expert knowledge. The combination of a service-oriented working climate and an efficient cooperation and mindset of healthcare professionals to motivate and support patient innovation has the potential to foster patients' innovative stimuli (Henrike and Schultz 2013).

Public managers must revisit their outlook on the roles that they and the public should play in public services. The ways in which organizational cultures mediate patients' empowerment matters. Patients make a transition from simple users and choosers to makers and shapers of health services (Cornwall and Gaventa 2000).

Source: Adapted from Cepiku & Bonomi Savignon 2014.

Management challenges in coping with collaborative governance

Collaborative governance is not immune to failure, just as market and hierarchy. Still, there are policy issues that can only be satisfactorily solved through collaboration. Critical aspects of collaboration are varied commitment to common goals and different perspectives of the actors involved on the nature of the problem, the desired solution or the best organizational arrangements, culture clash, power issues, loss of autonomy, coordination fatigue and commitment of time and costs, lack of incentives to cooperate and blockades to collective action, potential for reduced accountability by participants and closeness, few rewards for role in the collaborative setting as compared to role in organizations, absence of important actors, poorly deployed resources, erroneous task integration, among others (Kickert et al, 1997: 9, 167; Provan and Milward, 2001; Mandell and Keast, 2008; Kenis and Provan, 2009: 444). Well-known trade-offs and tensions intrinsic to of collaborative governance are: efficiency versus inclusiveness and equity, internal versus external legitimacy, and flexibility versus stability (Provan and Kenis 2007: 242-6; Cepiku and Giordano 2014). For instance, in community collaborations there is a risk of less vocal citizens or those 'willing but unable' to participate (OECD 2011). Co-production may be accessible only to specific social groups, thus worsening the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged social classes (Bovaird and Downe 2008; Brandsen and Helderma 2012; Sharp 1980).

Although most of these issues can be successfully addressed through effective management, collaborative governance remains a more complex approach and must be adopted only if the problem at hand is not satisfactorily solved by more traditional approaches. Moreover, often there is excessive focus on formally creating collaborative forms such as networks and community partnerships rather than developing systems and structures for managing them and steering competencies.

Managing a public-private partnership, a network or a co-production project is public management in situation of interdependencies. It is aimed at: mutually adjusting the behavior of actors with different objectives and ambitions; coordinating strategies of actors with different goals and preferences with regard to a certain problem; initiating and facilitating interaction processes; creating and changing institutional arrangements for better coordination (Friend et al, 1974; Scharpf, 1978; Kickert et al, 1997: 10, 43-4).

Collaborative public management includes designing the most appropriate institutional form, developing management mechanisms, including performance management systems, and ensuring an effective leadership.

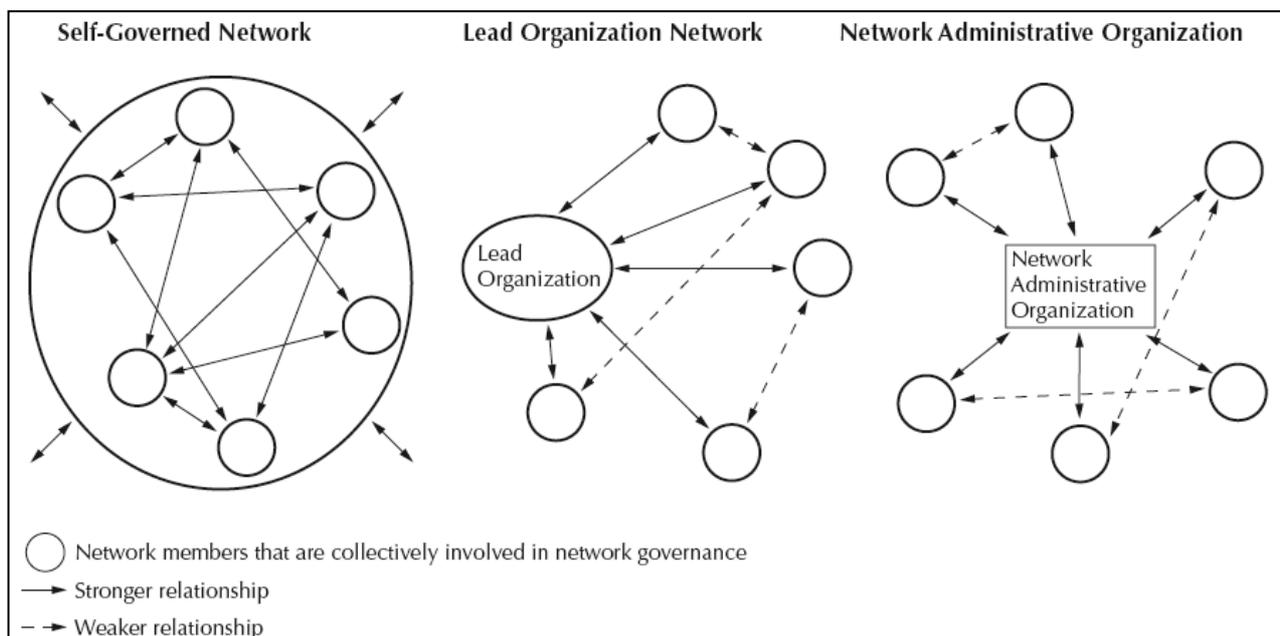
Institutional design

Just as there are design choices for organizations, there are design choices for collaborative arrangements and these affect the way collaborative agendas are formed and implemented and have consequences for what it can actually be achieved (Huxham and Vangen 2000; Kenis and Provan, 2009; Baker and Faulkner 1993; Provan and Milward 1995; Cross et al. 2002).

Defining the institutional design of collaboration includes designating the lead organization, influencing formal policy (division of resources and actor positions), defining the rules of entry and, thus, the boundaries of collaboration, influencing values, norms and perceptions (mass information campaigns, social engineering, collective learning processes).

With reference to networks, three ideal types of institutional forms have been identified: self-governance networks; lead-organizational networks; administrative-organization networks (Milward and Provan 2006; Provan and Kenis, 2007; Kenis and Provan, 2009).

Figure 1: Types of institutional design



Source: Kenis and Provan, 2009; Agranoff, 2003.

The main point for public managers is that the most appropriate institutional design form must be chosen and then implemented and this is critical for the sustainability of collaboration as it evolves. At an early stage of collaboration and when only a few actors are involved, it may be appropriate to operate as a self-governed network where decisions are taken on the basis of unanimous consensus. This form, however, may prove inefficient with frequent meetings and difficulty in reaching consensus, but the partners do not fear a loss of control. In a lead organization network, one member bears the responsibility for network management. It has a clear direction and is efficient, but the domination by the lead organization may produce lack of commitment by the partners. A

crisis of leadership may force the collaborative form to evolve towards a network administrative organization network, in which there is a distinct administrative entity set up to manage the network. It may be both efficient and sustainable, but hierarchy may be perceived and operational costs borne by the members.

Process management

During process management, the organizational structure (roles, rules, positions and resource division) is considered as given. Collaborative interaction process management includes a range of functions from activating collaboration, to arranging and facilitating interaction, brokerage, mediation and arbitration, and legitimacy building.

Identifying, motivating and activating the parties necessary for tackling a particular problem may require an analysis of previous strategies (Kickert et al. 1997). Once the collaborative arrangement has been put in place, mechanisms able to arrange interaction, manage accountability and avoid free rider behavior and premature pulling out are needed. This may require signing a formal agreement and defining, in advance, conflict-regulating mechanisms. Activities of a procedural nature such as ensuring that meeting places and times are agreed upon, notes and minutes are kept, and monitoring the quality of the dialogue are important to facilitate collaborative interaction (Milward and Provan 2006: 18). Brokerage consists in matching problems, solutions and actors.

Mediation and arbitration are carried out when conflict exists and the interaction process finds itself in an impasse. These consist in ensuring that relations are maintained, exploring standpoints, confronting the parties with the perceptions and interests of the “outside world”.

Building and maintaining legitimacy of the collaborative governance strategy is particularly critical, also due to its voluntary nature (Milward and Provan 2006: 19). An effective performance management and communication system and a wise use of early achievements can support this task.

Individual and distributed leadership in networks (or Weber versus Barnard)

As already mentioned, one key feature of collaborative arrangements is that there is no hierarchical authority, no formal subordination and interaction is based on expertise, trust and legitimacy rather than position. For a long time, this has translated into the wrong belief that collaborative governance is leaderless (Lipnack and Stamps 1994).

This lacuna has exacerbated by a prevailing Weberian approach in leadership studies consisting in a-priori locating the leader by office and assuming that whatever functions she/he performs are leadership functions (Weber 1947; Lemaire and Provan 2010: 10). While inappropriate in many traditional organizations, this approach is close to impracticable when it comes to collaborative settings. Traditional leadership theories that assume a leader–follower relationship fail to grasp the very meaning of collaboration (Ospina and Foldy 2010; Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Vangen and Huxham 2003). Even if one partner is more powerful than another, it still lacks hierarchical authority to impose goals, strategies or timeframes over other collaborating partners (Morse 2010). In collaborative settings, leaders need to count on other factors such as positive past experiences, suitable incentives for sharing authority, political consensus and the ability to instill trust (Eglene et al. 2007: 95).

More recently, a bottom-up approach, inspired by the works of Chester Barnard (1938), has emerged that first identifies the key leadership behaviors and functions, and then looks at who exhibits certain behaviors (i.e. performs the executive functions). This approach is in line with what is called distributed or shared leadership (Bryson and Crosby 1992; Crosby and Bryson 2010). Defining leadership by functions, rather than by formal position, allows finding multiple leaders throughout the collaborative arrangement (Lemaire and Provan 2010). Reconceptualizing leadership as a team-level construct shifts the focus from personal traits to steering processes and leadership behaviors. A model by Van Wart (2004; 2008), commonly used in the literature, includes three kinds of behavior: task-oriented, people-oriented and organization-oriented (table 1).

Table 1: Leadership behavior categories

Behavior categories	Description	Examples
Task-oriented	Express a concern for accomplishing the goals of the collaborative arrangement and are aimed at defining and organizing group activities. The primary concern is high efficiency in the use of resources and reliability of operations, products and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenda framing. - Taking charge when emergencies arise. - Making sure individual roles are understood. - Scheduling the work to be done. - Asking to follow standard rules and regulations. - Keeping work moving at a rapid pace. - Assigning to particular tasks. - Selecting performance measures.
People-oriented	Reflect a concern for the welfare of the participants and a desire to foster good interpersonal relations among members. The primary objective is to ensure commitment and high levels of trust and cooperation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treating all as equals. - Freely sharing information and providing the system of communication. - Looking out for the personal welfare. - Creating trust. - Brainstorming. - Sharing leadership role. - Inspiring enthusiasm and managing commitment. - Maintaining a closely knit between single partners and the collaborative arrangement. - Permitting participants to set their own pace. - Settling conflicts when they occur.
Organizational-oriented	The primary objective is to introduce major innovative improvements and adapt to external changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraging support from superiors. - Identifying resources. - Encouraging support from stakeholders. - Establishing a shared vision. - Establishing partners' commitment to joint mission. - Publicizing goals and accomplishments. - Influencing values and norms. - Changing the collaborative institutional structure.

Source: based on: Van Wart (2004; 2008), Silvia and McGuire (2010), Milward and Provan (2006), Mintzberg 2001.

Leadership of collaborative arrangements has been variously labeled as integrative public leadership, collaborative leadership, network leadership, and inter-organizational leadership (Sun and Anderson 2012). The steering role is taken on by “people willing to invest their resources in return for future policies in their favour” (Kingdon, 1984: 214). Motives may range from self-interest to genuine concern, including the possibility for an organization to stabilize its environment by building alliances and networks. Leadership in collaborative settings is crucial in matching governing mechanisms to context appropriately and should complement structure (Crosby and Bryson, 2010: 224; Martin et al. 2008: 770). Leaders in collaborative settings “[...] initiate discussions or joint projects that help others recognize public problems, their stake in those problems, and opportunities to resolve them. The challenge for such leaders is to integrate the interests and actions of multiple stakeholders by appealing to shared goals and structuring deliberative processes by which the stake holders can devise joint, flexible strategies to pursue those goals” (Page, 2010: 247).

The legitimacy to lead in collaborative settings is generally conferred on those who can “make things happen” (Huxham and Vangen 2000; Morse 2010; Sun and Anderson 2012). It is particularly those participants who have the skills to activate potential partners in a selective way who increase their influence on the collaborative decision making process. This can lead to situations in which an actor with a relatively small amount of resources wields more influence than an actor who has many resources but lacks the necessary skills. A smart manager will understand that dealing with the network structure will give them a very powerful instrument with which to increase their influence in the collaborative decision making process (Klijn and Teisman, in Kickert et al. 1997).

Reticulist skills include the ability to assess who should be involved in the interaction and which information should be given to them, the ability to negotiate and mediate, to distinguish among different target groups and adapt approaches to them, have a certain amount of technical expertise and “tactical and strategic” know-how. The ability to retain an independent position and the legitimacy are also important.

Managers involved in collaborative projects need to identify leadership functions that are needed to complement the organizational structure, rough out how these are ensured and who has the most appropriate skills in the network to cover them.

Box 4: Distributed leadership in the Tigray anti-malaria network

The official agreement establishing the Tigray network gave the idea of a “leaderless” network. A careful analysis of meeting minutes, reports and interviews to the partners allowed developing a multifaceted leadership picture.

The organization-oriented leadership exercised through the Project Management Team (PMT), composed by all the partners. The people-oriented leadership highly centralized and carried out by Novartis, the private partner. The task-oriented leadership was shared and based on:

- geography: Novartis, coordinated the PMT interaction, and the Tigray Health Bureau coordinated the project implementation activities in Tigray
- and competencies: with Novartis leading managerial activities and the WHO assuming the technical and scientific leadership aspects.

Sharing leadership was fundamental in overcoming some tensions, identified by the literature as common in networks. For instance, the trade-off between efficiency and inclusiveness was successfully managed as the PMT allowed full participation of all the network members in the decision-making process, while the Novartis representative dedicated significant efforts to drafting agendas, action plans and setting up a monitoring system of the network management, thus improving the speed of action and efficiency.

Performance management

The voluntary nature of collaborative arrangements makes measurement and use of performance information even more relevant in these settings, especially when these are community-based and composed of both public and private actors. A key part of management tasks of collaborative arrangements includes understanding the most relevant performance dimensions, as perceived by the different constituencies, and the determinants that influence performance.

Performance of collaborative arrangements, including effectiveness, needs to be analyzed at multiple levels considering that the achievement of the goal of one of the actors or the aggregate impact of collaboration itself would be both relevant but partial views. According to a conceptual framework originated in the seminal article of Provan and Milward (2001) and further developed in the literature (Klijn et al. 2010; Cepiku 2014), performance of collaborative settings includes: i) intermediate outcomes in terms of quality of collaboration management; ii) outcomes produced for the benefit of each partner (or organizational-level performance); iii) outcomes achieved for the community at large (figure 2).

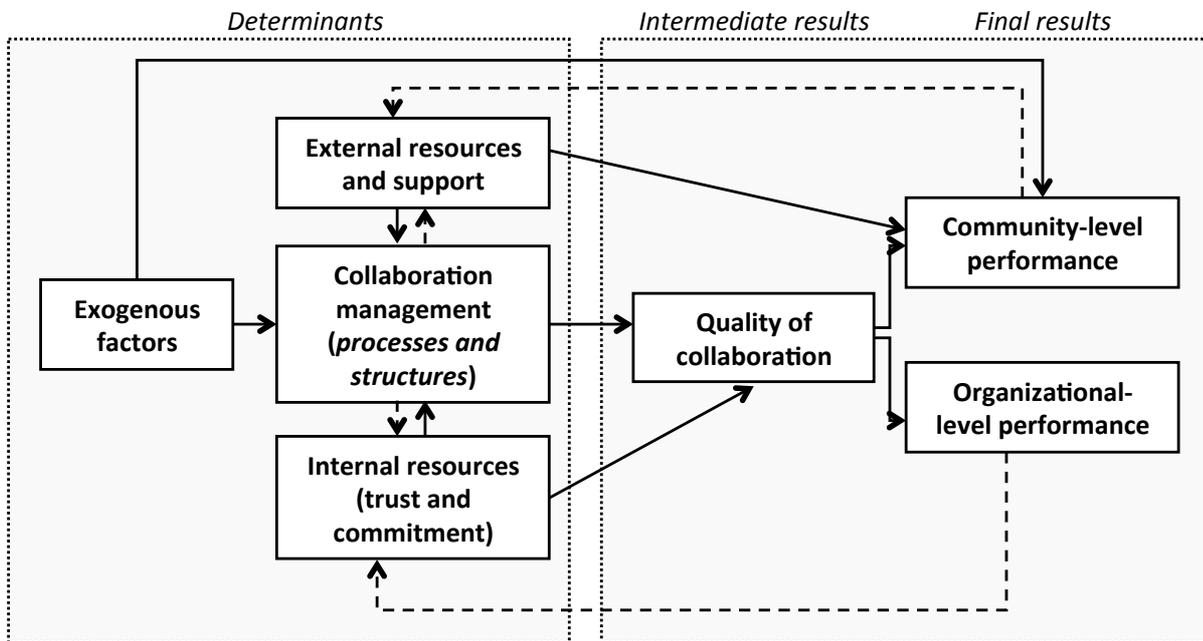
The quality of collaboration can be assessed by measuring: conflict resolution; the extent to which the collaborative process has encountered stagnations or deadlocks; the productive use and reconciliation of differences in perspectives; and the frequency of interactions between actors (Klijn et al. 2010). Administrative efficiency, inclusiveness of decision-making, stability and flexibility of rules and of the organizational form, and satisfaction of the participants with network management are other criteria useful for assessing the quality of interaction (Mandell and Keast 2008).

The outcomes of the collaboration at the single-partner level refer to the satisfaction of each member with both the management of the interaction and the results coming from collaboration (Crosby and Bryson, 2010: 226).

The outcomes at the environmental level involve the assessment of the overall benefits for the community that go beyond partner-increased well-being. Beside the direct benefits to the users of the service or the beneficiaries of the policy, the costs to the community, the social capital created and public perceptions that problems are being solved must be considered (Provan and Milward

2001). A particular attention must be paid to negative and unforeseen effects in terms of equity and external accountability and to longer-term impact.

Figure 2: Performance dimensions and determinants in collaborative arrangements



Source: Cepiku 2014

Especially in collaborative arrangements focused on service delivery, it is worth distinguishing between an immediate impact on the service delivered and a longer-term aggregate impact on the community (Cepiku and Giordano 2014). The former refers to aspects such as effectiveness (including quality dimensions like accessibility, responsiveness, and customer satisfaction), efficiency, innovation stimulus, and jointness. In addition, collaboration could be a means for achieving broader effects such as enhanced social capital through cohesive communities, shared values, which are the basis for active citizenship, and generation of mutual trust. It can be a means for the strengthening or revitalization of democracy, contributing to the development of a new relationship between citizens and the State based on trust, ethical standards, and accountability (Alford 2009; Cahn and Gray 2012; Ostrom 1996; Pestoff 2006).

Finally, exogenous and endogenous determinants of collaborative performance are used for interpreting performance. Exogenous elements include those characteristics over which collaboration managers or partners have little or no control and include system stability, resource munificence and cohesion, existing goal consensus among partners prior to collaboration, competing institutional logics and the complementarity of partners, their number and geographical location, trust and previous collaboration history, external legitimation (support from public opinion, community and other stakeholders), the purpose of the network, the nature of tasks and severity of the problem, environmental shocks, and the number and kind of constituencies, among others (Provan and Milward 1995; Provan and Sebastian 1998; Kenis and Provan 2009). The presence and relative relevance of these elements changes from case to case and from one policy sector to another. The context in which collaboration takes place is a relevant determinant of both the quality of interaction and the final outcome produced for the partners and the community.

Endogenous factors, on the other hand, can be instrumentally managed by the collaborative leaders. These include elements such as the organizational structure, the management processes and the leadership style, assumed to be primary determinants of success and failure (McGuire and Agranoff, 2007: 23).

While the majority of the literature on collaboration is quite positive, not always collaborative governance pursues the public good. Some authors have adopted a more holistic view and focused on dark networks developed around international drug, terror, diamond and weapons trade (Raab and Milward 2003). Conflicts of interest and trade-offs between short and long-term aims are common in public-private collaborative governance. Performance management systems should be carefully designed to support dialogue, interaction and strategic choice among different strategic policy options and governance arrangements.

Box 5: Large-scale partnerships with the private sector could undermine Africans' land rights, drive inequality and damage the environment

Government policies and almost US\$6 billion in aid money in support of large partnerships with the private sector to fight poverty and food insecurity are risking Africans' land rights, worsening inequality and damaging the environment. With growing global demand for natural resources, donors and African governments are looking to capitalize on increasing interest from the private sector in African land. Mega-public-private partnerships (PPP) 'growth corridor' projects in Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Ghana and Mozambique illustrate this trend.

"After decades of underinvestment, governments in Africa are turning to partnerships with donor aid agencies and large companies or investors to develop the agriculture sector. This offers the allure of capital, technology and foreign exchange, but the downside risks of this approach are huge – particularly for the land rights of local communities in the investment areas," says Robin Willoughby, Oxfam's Policy Adviser on Agriculture and Food Security.

According to Oxfam, long-term development goals have been sacrificed in order to quickly establish mega public-private partnerships, as companies are offered land, tax and trade incentives to enter these schemes. Due to weak land tenure found in many African countries, these land subsidies and transfers are likely to undermine local communities' land rights. This model also threatens to worsen inequality in African countries, which is already severe across the continent, and damage the environment through the introduction of plantation agriculture.

Rather than prioritizing partnerships between governments and donors with large private sector players, Oxfam is calling for the tried and tested investment to deliver benefits for almost 600 million Africans working in agriculture. This involves public sector investment in smallholder farmers, local markets and regional markets, and strong regulation to ensure that private sector investment can 'do no harm' and benefit millions of smallholder producers living in rural areas.

Source: Extracted from <http://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2014-08-26/giant-partnerships-threaten-small-farms-africa-xxx>, September 1st 2014.

Performance information affects partners' willingness to collaborate with others and can be used to strengthen commitment and to inform them on the convenience of the collaborative arrangement as compared with other organizational forms (McGuire and Agranoff, 2007: 21; Bretschneider et al. 2012).

Policy and operational implications

Several implications originate from the analysis of collaborative governance carried out in this paper. First and foremost, collaborative governance arrangements are far more complex and difficult to manage than traditional hierarchical organizations and the likelihood of disappointing outputs is high (Huxham 2000; Vangen and Huxham 2003; Bardach 1998). When desired outcomes can be achieved only through collaboration, public managers must equip themselves with the necessary skills and tools.

Second, this sensibility at the level of public managers must go hand in hand with an adaptation of public sector policies to support and facilitate collaboration. Lack of collaboration is not the consequence of the stupidity or intransigence of public managers but highlights their ability to comprehend and respond to a myriad of incentives from hierarchical superiors, legislative overseers, and self-appointed accountability holders (Behn 2010: 435). Risk is higher in collaborative settings. If public policies do not acknowledge this, risk adverse behavior may prevent innovative solutions to wicked problems (Osborne and Brown 2010).

Too often, networks and co-production are launched as exceptional projects isolated from the rest of the organization. This approach makes them an exit strategy to capacity deficiencies and puts at risk their own sustainability. Instead, integrated planning and management is recommended.

Context – what we called exogenous determinants of performance – matters. Therefore, the launch of large-scale collaboration initiatives should be preceded by interventions aimed at strengthening community ties and inter-institutional collaboration. This also means that collaboration is generally not free but requires resources and investment for its full potential to be realized.

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