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## Article

# Antecedents, process, and equity outcomes: A study about collaborative governance

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## MANAGEMENT | REVIEW ARTICLE

# Antecedents, process, and equity outcomes: A study about collaborative governance

Dany Flávio Tonelli<sup>1\*</sup>, Lindsay Sant'Anna<sup>2</sup>, Elenice Barcelar Abbud<sup>1</sup> and Suelen Aparecida de Souza<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract:** The purpose of the present study is to draw a general structure, based on a scoping literature review, to better understand the collaborative governance, as well as their elements and complexity. After defining the search meshes and selecting the criteria to apply, 35 papers about were found in the Web of Knowledge<sup>®</sup> database. The analysis identified its central elements and features, in terms of Antecedents, Collaboration Process, and Equity Outcomes, each of them with its properties. The study highlights the properties of each category, and it provides the possibility to improve the quality of the decision-making processes in collaborative arrangements.

**Subjects:** Political Studies; Community Planning and Planning Techniques; Business, Management and Accounting

**Keywords:** public-private partnerships; collaboration process; scoping review; public policy management

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dany Flávio Tonelli is a Professor of Public Administration in the Department of Administration and Economics of the Federal University of Lavras (DAE-UFLA), vice dean of Extension and Culture (PROEC-UFLA), and Coordinator of Technological and Social Development (CODETS-UFLA). Tonelli's research focuses on the (i) innovation in the public sector and innovation policy; (ii) technology-based entrepreneurship in the context of public research institutions; (iii) collaborative arrangements and public management technologies; and (iv) other topics relating science, technology, innovation, and society. The present paper related to the collaborative arrangements, specifically with the project Science Parks in Brazil: Guidelines for a model of collaborative management. The co-authors Lindsay Sant'anna, Elenice Abbud and Suelen Souza are participants of the research group which investigated the theoretical approach of collaborative management applied to Science Parks. Besides this effort, the group continues working on empirical applications of the model developed in the present paper.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The public administration structure is not able to deliver alone all the services that the society demands. This aspect is crucial in the current world, which requires efforts to approximate the public and the private organizations to solve the critical problems of the society. The collaborative governance is a way to provide mechanisms of relationships between different organizations, including the public and private sectors. However, the literature is extensive, challenging the use of the concept in the day-to-day, which motivated to elaborate the following question: What are the principal elements of collaborative governance? To answer this question, the authors immersed in the literature to enumerate central elements and to order then in an input, process, and outputs model. We think that the model will help the decision-making process based on the collaborative governance.

## 1. Introduction

A new governance approach has taken place within the State and non-State relationship contexts. Such approach concerns the temporary arrangements between the public and private actors responsible for collective decision-making processes applied to public demands (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Ulibarri, 2015; Van Oortmerssen, Van Woerkum, & Aarts, 2014). According to Bingham (2010) and Purdy (2012), the collaborative governance emerges from public policies focused on replacing traditional commands and control approaches. Purdy (2012) and Siddiki, Carboni, Koski, and Sadiq (2015) highlight that participation makes the collaborative processes more responsive to complex situations and the acceptance of public deliberations more comfortable in comparison to the traditional governance procedures.

Many studies about the topic above do not use to provide functional analyses about the performance of collaborative processes, despite the literature contributions to the development of a collaborative governance approach Bingham (2010), for instance, highlights the lack of consensus in the literature about the best collaborative practices. Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) and Sullivan, Barnes, and Matka (2006) emphasize that, although the efforts of presenting many interactive components of collaborative governance regimes, it is not necessary using all of them, all the time, and in the same degree of extent. There is a noticeable gap in the literature, which is expressed through the need of better understanding how to analyze the collaborative governance regimes and how to assess the essential elements in each scenario. Bingham (2010) affirms there is no consensus about how to construct the best practices in collaborative governance. Beyond, Emerson et al. (2012) emphasize there is the need for future investigations to identify what components are essential to a successful collaborative process and how to identify the level of the collaboration. By presenting a bibliographical revision and proposing a structure to attribute an organized comprehension about the issue, this paper searches to fulfill part of the gap.

The current study aims to contribute to broadening the understanding of collaborative governance through the identification of the central elements of collaborative arrangements. The goal, based on a scoping literature review, is to propose a theoretical structure that makes it possible understanding the collaborative arrangements, as well as their elements and complexity. The central question is: what are the main topics and tendencies of the collaborative governance field? Such effort can be useful for practitioners and scholars in the development of appropriate institutional arrangements, such as the core aspects of the collaborative phenomenon.

The second part of the current study regards the phenomenon of the collaborative governance from the literature. The third one justifies the choice made for the herein adopted research method and inclusion and exclusion criteria. Next, the findings are presented in such a way that the understanding of the collaborative governance regimes and their properties gets more clarified. The discussion about the study implications and the conclusion offer some reflections necessary for future improvements in research and public management.

## 2. Collaborative governance in public administration

The collaborative governance *locus* and *focus* was defined in a view to attribute a plain sense to it. The *locus* is the space where the government relationship with other social actors takes place. Besides the State participation, the public management system often demands broader civil society and market participation (Agrawal & Lemos, 2007). Governance is not limited to the administrative machine or the State apparatus in the state sector, but it consists of multiple interactions between State and society (Kissler & Heidemann, 2006). Accordingly, relatively new perspective premises that governments can be as entities inserted in an intricate techno-political process comprising other social actors, such as companies, non-profit organizations, and civil society. A broad discussion about public governance and its variations emerged in the late 1980s (Bovaird, 2005), and the influence of non-governmental actors on public management

networks grew ever since (Bache & Flinders, 2004; Bovaird, 2005). Public policies are no longer limited to governmental entities since they are shaped by and become relevant to the management of networks composed of different actors; although, each of these actors has its interests, resources, and expertise (Crosby, 1999).

Regarding *focus*, governance is like a set of laws and management practices limiting and allowing the public provision of assets and services (Lynn and Hill, 2001). It also concerns changes in the traditional sense of government or in the way each society is ruled (Peters, 1997; Rhodes, 1996). According to Stoker (1998), the convergence point among scholars lies in the concept of governance as the development of a style showing no distinct edges (in and outside the public and private sectors). Brown, Gong, and Jing (2012) highlight that this movement launches an alternative perspective because the uncertain boundaries between the public and private entities open a window of opportunities to actors who practice collaborative activities focused on different purposes.

Many terminologies, such as collaborative process (Ansell & Gash, 2008), institutionalized participation (Freeman, 1997), collaborative capacity (Goodman et al., 1998; García-Ramírez, Paloma, Suarez-Balcazar, and Balcazar (2009), coalition and collaborative partnership (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, and Allen (2001), collaborative governance regime (Emerson et al., 2012), horizontal management (Fierbeck, 2010), and teamwork and partnership (Sullivan et al., 2006) stand out in relevant studies about collaborative governance and help to understand the complicated interaction process that takes place among multiple actors (Mah & Hills, 2014). Bingham (2010) and Emerson et al. (2012) understand collaborative governance as a set of issues, such as civic engagement, deliberative democracy, collaborative public management, conflict solving, negotiations, and other deliberative and consensual means found in the political process, although it is not limited to them.

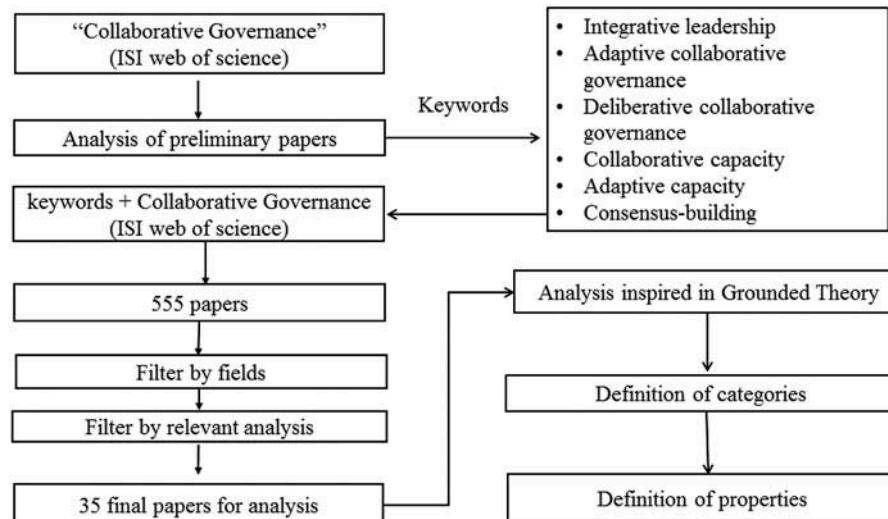
Some of the leading collaborative governance approaches present collaborative arrangement characteristics (Ansell & Gash, 2008), assume collaborative governance as an ideal normative model (Freeman, 1997), offer the necessary conditions for collaborative partnership development (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001), address networks as governance structures and conditions to collaborative capacity building (Sullivan et al., 2006; Weber & Khademian, 2008; Weber, Lovrich, & Gaffney, 2007), explore the political acceptance and the avoidance of social movements (Newman, Barnes, Sullivan, & Knops, 2004), intend to understand collaboration as a collective learning process (Mah & Hills, 2014; Saavedra & Budd, 2009; Scott, 2015), and emphasize knowledge management to collaboration construction (Weber & Khademian, 2008).

### 3. Methodology

The scoping review is an example of bibliographical study (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005), and its stages are as follows: identifying the research question; identifying relevant studies; study selection; charting the data; and collating, summarizing, and reporting the results. The scoping reviews often present a broad question of research, may or not involve data extraction, and are more based on qualitative and typically not quantitative (Armstrong, Hall, Doyle, & Waters, 2011). As the aim of this research, Arksey and O'Malley (2005, p. 21) affirms that a reason to undertake scoping reviews is to provide "a mechanism for summarizing and disseminating research findings to policymakers, practitioners, and consumers who might otherwise lack time or resources to undertake such work themselves."

Following the protocols of scoping reviews (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005), the mesh "collaborative governance" was searched in the Web of Science (ISI) database to collect pre-reading papers. Twelve studies presenting the expression "collaborative governance" in the title proved to be relevant to the aims of the present study. Keywords, such as integrative leadership (Page, 2010), adaptive collaborative governance (McDougall & Banjade, 2015), deliberative collaborative governance (Gollagher & Hartz-Karp, 2013), collaborative capacity (Emerson & Gerlak, 2014), adaptive capacity (Cheng, Gerlak, Dale, and Mattor (2015); Emerson & Gerlak, 2014), and Consensus-building

Figure 1. Research steps.



(Buuren & Nooteboom, 2010; Newman et al., 2004; Purdy, 2012) were selected after reading and analysing the 12 preliminary papers.

A second search in the Web of Science database applied these keywords as meshes, what resulted in 555 documents. Figure 1 shows all the steps of the research.

A first filter after the 555 documents delimited them regarding fields of research. Considering the focus of the investigation, we elected the following fields: “Public Administration” OR “Government Law” OR “Sociology” OR “Social Sciences other topics.” This proceeding resulted in 97 papers (62 in Public Administration, 21 in Government Law, 7 in Sociology, and 7 in Social Science other topics).

The second filter was the relevant analysis. We considered relevant analysis the papers published in periodic journals (peer-reviewed papers), which presented the expression “collaborative governance” in their abstracts. We discarded 62 documents. First, we discarded book reviews, conference papers, proceeding papers, and some papers with too specific discussion, for instance, some papers about public health. After exclusion, we choose 35 more cited papers (Table 1), which evidences the quality of the addressed approaches and to reach the number suitable to apply the content analysis.

A content analysis inspired by the Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2008) was adopted to define the categories and properties of the most relevant collaborative elements. The open line-by-line coding process started after the papers in the final sample were selected; it was done to

**Table 1. Sample of research**

**35 Papers more cited**

1-Ansell e Gash (2008); 2-Choi e Robertson (2014a); 3-Emerson, Nabatchi, e Balogh (2012); 4-Emerson e Nabatchi (2015); 5-Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); 6-Freeman (1997); 7-Howlett (2014); 8-Mah e Hills (2014); 9-Purdy (2012); 10-Siddiki et al. (2015); 11-Sullivan, Barnes e Matka (2006); 12-Tang e Tang (2014); 13-Ulibarri (2015); 14-Robertson e Choi (2012); 15-Weber, Lovrich e Gaffney (2007); 16-Johnston et al. (2011); 17-Garcia-Ramirez, et al.(2009); 18-Gazley (2010); 19-McDougall et al. (2013); 20-Van Oortmerssen, Van Woerkum, e Aarts (2014); 21-Newman et al. (2004); 22-Richie, Oppenheimer e Clark (2012); 23-Gazley (2010); 24-Richie, Oppenheimer e Clark (2012); 25-Shrestha (2013); 26-Buuren (2009); 27-Emerson et al. (2012); 28-Weber e Khademian (2008); 29-Garcia-Ramirez, et al. (2009); 30-Scott (2015); 31-Richie et al. (2012); 32-Bingham (2010); 33-Saavedra & Budd, (2009); 34-Fierlbeck (2010); 35-Brown, Gong e Jing (2012).

extract the concepts and to reveal their properties (see Strauss and Corbin (2008) for more details about the coding process and the identification of properties and their dimensions). The collaborative governance categories were set to bring sense to identified properties, as well as to organize the content addressed in a broader, more didactic and synthetic way, as expected in scoping studies. Studies focused on broadening the meaning of collaborative arrangements can be very useful for practical analysis. Ulibarri (2015), for instance, identifies specific collaborative dynamic elements from empirical cases. These cases based on the analysis of small, medium, and high collaboration levels linked to each of the identified collaborative governance assumptions. Differently, from Ulibarri (2015), the idea in the present study is not to explore the low, medium, and high collaborative dimensions in each property, but to identify and characterize the properties, and to fit them into explanatory categories that allow their subsequent use in empirical studies.

#### **4. Processual view of collaborative governance**

The collaborative arrangement categories and their properties were extracted and identified through a content analysis applied to the selected papers. These features were analyzed and determined to allow finding the collaboration process and its antecedents, as well as the expected equity outcomes. Table 2 summarizes the structure used to help to understand the collaborative arrangements.

One of the highlights of the analyzed papers is the evidence a processual approach. For example, Howlett (2014) says the collaborative arrangements link to a policy designing process, and Ansell and Gash (2008 p. 544) explore “a collective decision-making process.” Emerson, Natatchi, and Balogh (2012, p. 2) highlight the “public policy making and management processes and structures”; and Gazley (2010 p. 654) states that a co-labor is “a process to facilitate and operate multiorganizational arrangements able to solve effort-requiring problems.” Other authors evidence a dialogic process (Johnston, Hicks, Nan, & Auer, 2011); and a process that can be monitored for equity outcomes (McDougall, Jiggins, Pandit, Thapa Magar Rana, & Leeuwis, 2013). It is the reason for putting the processual view in the center of the structure for explaining the literature about the issue.

##### **4.1. Antecedents**

The antecedents are the collaboration process inputs, which can be the values and ideas of residents engaged in a community (Page, 2010) or of stakeholders involved in a collective decision-making process (Ulibarri, 2015). However, these inputs are the basis from where the collaborative process lies on and produces results.

###### **4.1.1. Multiple actors**

The main collaborative governance feature lies on the grouping of many public and private agents who have different skills (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Emerson et al., 2012; Mah & Hills, 2014; Siddiki et al., 2015; Sullivan et al., 2006; Tang & Tang, 2014; Ulibarri, 2015). Such multiplicity of actors enriches the decision-making process and broadens the possibilities of having actions taken through collaborative networks (Choi & Robertson, 2014a; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001). Howlett (2014) explains that, although these actors have different interests, resources, knowledge and information, the new design for public policy orientation concerns their interaction throughout time. Besides, Freeman (1997) pinpoints that the presence of multiple actors reinforces the collaborative process legitimacy, since the grouping of different perceptions may lead either to the best solutions and rules or the construction of accountability instruments. Such multiplicity of actors is so essential that the interaction between them may happen before the formal collaboration construction because they define the initial collaborative process project.

###### **4.1.2. Common goals**

Although the actors have different interests, they must have a common *focus*, awareness, and goals to accomplish the successful collaboration (García-Ramírez et al., 2009; Mah & Hills, 2014; Weber & Khademian, 2008; Weber et al., 2007). They must have shared goals so that

**Table 2. Properties for collaborative governance based on the scoping study**

| <b>Stages</b>      | <b>Properties</b>          | <b>The influence over the quality/nature of:</b>                  | <b>Authors</b>  |
|--------------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Antecedents</b> | Multiple actors            | Decision-making process; resources access                         | Ansell and Gash (2008); Choi and Robertson (2014a); Emerson et al. (2012); Emerson and Nabatchi (2015); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Freeman (1997); Howlett (2014); Mah and Hills (2014); Purdy (2012); Siddiki et al. (2015); Sullivan et al. (2006); Tang and Tang (2014); Ulibarri (2015). |
|                    | Common goals               | Collective gains; and power balanced                              | Ansell and Gash (2008); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Emerson and Nabatchi (2015); Emerson et al. (2012); Garcia-Ramirez et al. (2009); Mah and Hills (2014); Purdy (2012); Weber and Khademian (2008); Weber et al. (2007).  |
|                    | Facilitative leadership    | Achieving results; solving conflicts; including motivating actors | Ansell and Gash (2008); Buuren (2009); Choi and Robertson (2014a); Emerson et al. (2012); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Page (2010); Purdy (2012); Richie et al. (2012); Robertson and Choi (2012); Weber and Khademian (2008); Weber et al. (2007); Ulibarri (2015).                           |
|                    | Preliminary rules          | Behavior and role of actors; the relationship between actors      | Ansell and Gash (2008); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Freeman (1997); Gazley (2010); Richie et al. (2012); Shrestha (2013); Siddiki et al. (2015); Ulibarri (2015).   |
|                    | Interdependence perception | Skills; information access  | Ansell and Gash (2008); Choi and Robertson (2014a); Freedman (1997); Emerson et al. (2012); Newman et al. (2004); Robertson and Choi (2012); Siddiki et al. (2015); Tang and Tang (2014); Weber et al. (2007).  |
|                    | Initial investment         | Tangible and intangible resources                                 | Emerson and Nabatchi (2015); Emerson et al. (2012); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Gazley (2010); Mah and Hills (2014); Purdy (2012); Scott (2015); Tang and Tang (2014); Weber and Khademian (2008); Weber et al. (2007).   |

(Continued)

| <b>Table 2. (Continued)</b>  |                                     |   |  |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Stages</b>                | <b>Properties</b>                   | <b>The influence over the quality/nature of:</b>  | <b>Authors</b>   |
| <b>Collaboration Process</b> | Inclusive deliberative process      | Democratic process; active participation; legitimacy of the decision-making processes   | Ansell and Gash (2008); Choi and Robertson (2014a); Choi and Robertson (2014b); Elias and Alkadry (2011); Emerson and Nabatchi (2015); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Freeman (1997); Johnston et al. (2011); McDougall et al. (2013); Mah and Hills (2014); Newman et al. (2004); Purdy (2012); Richie et al. (2012); Robertson and Choi (2012); Sullivan et al. (2006); Weber and Khademian (2008); Ulibarri (2015); Van Oortmerssen et al. (2014). |
|                              | Commitment to the process           | Maintenance of collaboration and coalition perception; permanent motivation; innovation | Ansell and Gash (2008), Emerson et al. (2012); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Johnston et al. (2011); Sullivan et al., 2006; Weber et al. (2007).   |
|                              | Trust building                      | Active collaboration; collaboration experiences; motivation of actors                   | Ansell and Gash (2008); Johnston et al. (2011); García-Ramírez et al. (2009); Gazley (2010); McDougall et al. (2013); Sullivan et al. (2006); Weber et al. (2007); Van Oortmerssen et al. (2014); Ulibarri (2015).   |
|                              | Internal and external relationships | Co-creation; social capital; improving collaboration potentials; networking             | Ansell and Gash (2008); Bingham (2010); Saavedra and Budd (2009); Emerson et al. (2012); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Freeman (1997); García-Ramírez et al. (2009); Siddiki et al. (2015); Shrestha (2013); Sullivan et al. (2006); Weber and Khademian (2008); Van Oortmerssen et al. (2014).  |
|                              | Consensus building                  | Communication; equity of interests; shared understanding                                | Ansell & Gash, 2008; Buuren, 2009; García-Ramírez et al., 2009; Robertson & Choi, 2012; Weber et al. (2007).   |
|                              | Knowledge management                | Sharing of information; network performance   | Buuren (2009); Newman et al. (2004), Rogers and Weber (2010); Weber and Khademian (2008).  |

(Continued)



**Table 2. (Continued)**

| Stages          | Properties                               | The influence over the quality/nature of:                         | Authors  |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| Equity outcomes | Multiple investment sources              | New programs; autonomy of the network; reputation.                | Emerson and Nabatchi (2015); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Shrestha (2013); Tang and Tang (2014); Weber et al. (2007). |
|                 | Accountability                           | Transparency; responsibility of actors; access to the information | Bingham (2010); Fierlbeck (2010); Freeman (1997); McDougall et al. (2013); Weber and Khademian (2008).                 |
|                 | Discourse and practice                   | Coherence between discourse and behavior                          | Purdy (2012); Weber et al. (2007).   |
|                 | Development of new competencies (skills) | Solving the new demanding challenges                              | Emerson et al. (2012); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Garcia-Ramirez et al. (2009).                                     |

the collaboration with other actors becomes crucial to succeeding (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Therefore, the intention to state that there will be no different goals between members is untrue, but mutual understanding is worth even in the face of adversities. Participants must keep the *focus* on collaboration since the very beginning (Emerson et al., 2012). Therefore, the actions resulting from partnerships set through collaborative regime must align with the goals leading to collaboration (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). Divergent interests impair long-lasting cooperation and cause instability in the network (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Thus, the dedicated parts need to feel like belonging to the process and trust that the results will reflect the many gains of the network rather than the achievements of particular actors (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Thus, collaboration depends on the results to pursue; therefore, it is quite relevant avoiding power unbalance and guiding members in case of possible divergences (Purdy, 2012).

#### 4.1.3. Facilitative leadership

Leaders are mediators; they are neutral citizen aiming at achieving the best collaborative governance results rather than good results for themselves or the engaged groups. According to Ansell and Gash (2008), the mediator role played by the leaders makes them crucial for trust building. Weber and Khademian (2008) state that leaders do not necessarily have to be public managers, they can be community leaders, businessmen or any other person who can transparently mediate and communicate with other actors. Leaders must be able to collaborate with and to encourage innovation, as well as to motivate the development of alternative ways of solving problems (Weber & Khademian, 2008). Accordingly, Buuren (2009) emphasizes that the ability to solve complex problems is not found just in governmental authorities who know and deal with bureaucracy, it is also found in different actors, as far as they have unique organization skills. On the other hand, there are times when leadership is in the hands of governmental bodies responsible for setting and strengthening democratically constructed rules established by the group (Purdy, 2012; Richie, Oppenheimer, & Clark, 2012). According to Purdy (2012), the authority within the collaborative governance process is flexible and shared with other participants. Leadership also plays a significant role in the “inclusive deliberative process” and “trust building.” Robertson and Choi (2012) state that the leader may either wish to set an agenda that reflects the majority’s preferences to make deliberation easier or take the minority’s preferences into account to encouraging the debate. Such choices may lead to more flexible and acceptable alternatives.

#### 4.1.4. Preliminary rules

Although rules are created based on an ongoing process, some of these rules should be clear even before the creation process starts. For the legitimacy, beyond the social actors adequately follow the rules and standards, they must have the opportunity to give an opinion and participate in the rule-setting process (Freeman, 1997; Ulibarri, 2015). Such scenario adds domestic value to decisions and reinforces interdependence (Freeman, 1997). Rules shall not be unchangeable, but, actually, open to continuous enhancement and review processes (Freeman, 1997), they must be clear and transparent (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Richie et al., 2012). Hence, the collaborative governance must emerge from a preliminary formal agreement composed of rules defining the role and responsibility of each member and the precise orientations to all the members involved in the collaborative process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Richie et al., 2012; Siddiki et al., 2015). According to Gazley (2010) and Ulibarri (2015), such role definition may increase the perception of successful collaboration.

#### 4.1.5. Interdependence perception

The interdependence between social actors means that they will not accomplish the common goals set by the collaboration network alone (Choi & Robertson, 2014a; Emerson et al., 2012; Freeman, 1997; Robertson & Choi, 2012; Siddiki et al., 2015; Tang & Tang, 2014; Weber et al., 2007). The collaborative process will lose its meaning if a person becomes able to achieve the goals alone since the essence of collaboration lies in making collective efforts to accomplish common goals (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Newman et al. (2004) exemplify how interdependence happens between society and State. According to him, State actors depend on citizens to trigger debates between the dedicated parts, to assess the public policies and to produce legitimacy to the policy-making process. Citizens, in their turn, express their dissatisfaction with the policies put in place to the State actors; thus, government members depend on feedback mechanisms to understand citizens' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the public services, even in the absence of representatives or leaders (Newman et al., 2004). Briefly, social actors change due to the influence of other players.

#### 4.1.6. Initial investment

The initial investment must be made to launch a collaborative process (Mah & Hills, 2014; Scott, 2015; Weber & Khademian, 2008). According to Tang and Tang (2014) and Purdy (2012), these resources include tangible assets, such as financial, human, technological, and supply resources; as well as intangible resources, such as knowledge, status, identity, ideology, culture, and skills. These investments may have to be higher in new partnerships so that collaboration can start up (Gazley, 2010). Emerson et al. (2012) explain that such useful resources may include financing, time, technical and logistic support, management and organizational absence, as well as an analysis focused on assessing skills and other knowledge. Weber et al. (2007) include the political support as a critical resource to accomplish collaboration goals. Thus, the initial investments may come from a single actor or may, later on, be shared among other social actors; therefore, they may give rise to multiple investment sources. On the other hand, Purdy (2012) states that the financial resources may work as influence instrument and strengthen the power of a group over another, the fact that may affect the members' will to participate in the collaboration process.

### 4.2. Collaboration process

The collaboration process is at the heart of the herein developed scheme, which focused on helping better understanding what collaborative governance means. Ansell and Gash (2008) state that this process is not linear, but cyclical and iterative. The collaboration processes are hard to represent because there is always the permanent risk of simplifying them (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Instead of attempting to set cause-and-effect relations, the current study has just gathered the process elements.

#### 4.2.1. Inclusive deliberative process

It is considered an intrinsic characteristic of collaborative governance and democratic principles; it is much more than the opportunity to have all the involved parts participating in the

process (Choi & Robertson, 2014a; Elías & Alkadry, 2011; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Johnston et al., 2011; Purdy, 2012). Deliberation must be inclusive and valorize opinions to meet the actors' expectations about their influence on the decision-making process (Richie et al., 2012; Robertson & Choi, 2012; Ulibarri, 2015). The discarded opinions must be justified (using feedbacks), as well as the views heard and incorporated into the decision-making process (Freeman, 1997; Newman et al., 2004). All these actions reinforce trust and encourage actors' participation (Van Oortmerssen et al., 2014), through debate and mutual understanding (Choi & Robertson, 2014b). Besides, such process leads to a set of shared knowledge (Elías & Alkadry, 2011; McDougall et al., 2013). It is worth respecting the inclusion time necessary to get the members' confidence, because "the cost of slowing down the collaborative process is high, but it may be lower than the cost associated with trust breaking" (Johnston et al., 2011, p. 715). Therefore, Choi and Robertson (2014a, p. 227) pinpoint that "smaller groups can help assuring that stakeholders have equal opportunities to express their interests and exercise their influence (...)." According to them, it is worth keeping deliberation at a manageable level by adopting the practice of setting small discussion centers and councils. On the other hand, Choi and Robertson (2014a) warned about the disadvantages of making such option, since the high complexity of the problem makes it difficult making global collective decisions (unanimous or majority based) able to encompass the preferences of each council successfully. Elías and Alkadry (2011) launched the concept of constructivist conflict, which consists of the idea that conflict is inherent to the inclusive deliberative process. The constructivist conflict relies on integrating differences; therefore, people understand that differences and similarities may lead to a better comprehension of problems and more accessible solutions, a goal that would not be met through separate and individual actions. Thus, it is possible generating shared values among several stakeholders (Choi & Robertson, 2014b). Moreover, the right to participate in deliberative processes implies sharing responsibilities and mutual obligations (Freeman, 1997), social actors must develop responsibility-taking mechanisms to understand that the quality of their participation affects the quality of the expected results (Sullivan et al., 2006).

#### 4.2.2. *Commitment to the process*

All the parts must be committed to collaboration construction and maintenance (Johnston et al., 2011; Sullivan et al., 2006). All efforts must focus on collaboration-construction means, rather than on individual benefits or projects limited to certain groups. Therefore, Ansell and Gash (2008), and Emerson et al. (2012) make it clear that the commitment to the process depends on the consolidation of trust built between participants due to business collaboration and to a long-lasting partnership. Weber et al. (2007) say that commitment associate the idea that members will be heard and that correct information will be shared. Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) understand that members must be positively encouraged by themselves, by others, and by the group which they belong. The actors must be pushed to remain collaborative and to innovate in collaboration (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Ulibarri, 2015). Weber and Khademian (2008) state that the permanent motivation and commitment helps to solve conflicts in an easy way. Managers must count on the collaborative strength to overcome resistances in their organizations (public or private). For emphasizing the importance of the leader role, Weber and Khademian highlight that a leader must embody the responsibility of convincing members to remain committed and to share mutual results. Therefore, managers must use their authority, as well as the available resources, to promote, reinforce and protect the collaboration agreements (Weber & Khademian, 2008).

#### 4.2.3. *Trust building*

It is a widely-discussed property because building trust relationships is a challenge since not all participants remain committed to the assigned responsibilities (Van Oortmerssen et al., 2014). According to Weber et al. (2007), collaborative partnerships last longer and provide effective solutions to conflict situations where exists high trust levels. Gazley (2010) emphasizes that trust between partners may either be an ingredient of active collaboration or a result of it. Thus, according to the author, the trust may not be a fundamental characteristic of the process; it may emerge from partnership agreements (preliminary rules) and previous collaboration

experiences shared by the dedicated parts (Gazley, 2010). Thus, basing on the analysis by Ansell and Gash (2008), Weber et al. (2007), Sullivan et al. (2006), and Ulibarri (2015), the lack of trust between parts leads to limited knowledge sharing, motivation, and participation in deliberative processes, as well as in long-lasting collaborations. On the one hand, trust can be set since the very beginning of or throughout the process. However, it is noticeable that the trust level does not often remain the same during the whole collaboration process (Van Oortmerssen et al., 2014). It may change in different phases of a collaborative cycle, either due to different interactions between agents or to new process stages (Van Oortmerssen et al., 2014). Therefore, full trust in collaborative arrangements happens when members are not afraid of disclosing information relevant to the decision-making process since they do not need to worry about controlling and doubting the behavior of others (Van Oortmerssen et al., 2014).

#### 4.2.4. *Internal and external relationships*

The relationship between members must be long-lasting (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001) because the communication between parts leads to collaboration. Communication can be either personally or through other means, such as virtual contact (Bingham, 2010; Emerson et al., 2012; García-Ramírez et al., 2009). Besides, actors must try to get close to different local authorities and to the community to understand and recognize the collaboration potentials (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001). According to Ansell and Gash (2008) and Bingham (2010), the face-to-face debate is crucial for collaboration, since it breaks stereotypes and communication barriers. However, the face-to-face communication instrument is not unanimous; Freeman (1997) states that sometimes it is not enough to express collaboration cases. According to him, it is worth considering internal communication in a constant information-sharing sphere, which involves all members, no matter if personally or virtually, to achieve a successful collaborative process (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001). The internal communication between members stands out in the literature as the factor reinforcing trust between members (Van Oortmerssen et al., 2014). Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) emphasize the importance of external relationships and cite groups, such as neighborhood associations, religious organizations, public bodies, community members, and other communities and partnerships. These relationships must focus on identifying innovations and on practical enhancement solutions (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001). Another crucial aspect of them is the expansion of partnerships between non-governmental organizations and local communities (Sullivan et al., 2006; Weber & Khademian, 2008). Actors from these organizations and communities legitimize the process and open the possibility to diverse gains. Thus, community members must feel that their community will benefit from the collaboration process (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001). Sullivan et al. (2006) highlight that the collaborative actions must meet public needs, they must support the participation of communities and citizens in the opportunities brought by the collaboration process.

#### 4.2.5. *Consensus building*

The agreement is apparently assigned as a factor to be pursued by the collaborative governance (García-Ramírez et al., 2009; Robertson & Choi, 2012; Weber et al., 2007). Thus, individual decisions are better to the network and agreements must comprise all members involved in the process (Robertson & Choi, 2012); however, members shall not impose their interests, mainly State interests (Ansell & Gash, 2008). According to Ansell and Gash (2008), the State shall not impose or struggle to have its interest met to the detriment of the benefit of other actors; they believe that power unbalance a disturbing element to collaborative governance since all stakeholders must have a degree of representativeness and importance. Buuren (2009) explains that social actors share the understanding about problem identification and the solutions to it through the consensus building process. Accordingly, inclusive, deliberative processes are the best way to get to a consensus since the large participation features and influences decision making (Robertson & Choi, 2012).

#### 4.2.6. *Knowledge management*

Knowledge sharing and transferring are a challenge to the collaborative process (Newman et al., 2004), as well as an inherent collaboration characteristic (Buuren, 2009; Rogers & Weber, 2010; Weber & Khademian, 2008). Weber and Khademian (2008) advocate that long-lasting

collaboration is assured and made viable through continuous integration. The trust degree must be high and consolidated to enable knowledge sharing between actors to enhance the network performance. The government must be part of this knowledge management process and share its information and expertise (Buuren, 2009; Weber & Khademian, 2008). On the other hand, Buuren (2009) states that knowledge sharing does not assure positive results since knowledge is the most substantial fragmentation and disagreement source in governance networks. Therefore, he understands that different learning components must be treated to diminish social controversies and the intervention must lead through trust and interaction among actors, as well as through the mobilization of competent professionals who guide the collaborative governance process (Buuren, 2009).

### 4.3. Equity outcomes

Equity must define the collaboration cost to each member to avoid distrust and conflicts (Shrestha, 2013). Therefore, “the legitimacy of the process depends, in part, upon the stakeholders” perception that they have gotten a *fair hearing* (Ansell & Gash, 2008, p.557). Accordingly, Choi and Robertson (2014a) state that the main effect of power balance is the acceptability and equity of decisions made by a group of stakeholders. McDougall et al. (2013, p. 571) point out that “the inclusion and equity aspect explicitly relates to the sense of engagement in governance” and that the significance of these the two issues is essential for actors’ commitment. Thus, equity outcomes are crucial to assure the collaboration process continuity.

#### 4.3.1. Multiple investment sources

It is worth thinking about aggregating different investment sources to have a long-lasting network (Tang & Tang, 2014; Weber et al., 2007) because then actors remain interdependent and not overloaded. According to Foster-Fishman et al. (2001), financial investments are necessary to implement new programs and hire a qualified workforce. Weber et al. (2007) and Shrestha (2013) point out that multiple financing sources coming from different actors indicate enhanced collaborative capacity level since they show the network’s broader support and greater autonomy to search for external resources. Thus, Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) state that the collaborative governance regime demands good reputation from its members to attract investments and resources since it indicates external legitimacy.

#### 4.3.2. Accountability

The transparency of actions taken by the involved actors and of results from collective efforts reinforce accountability (Freeman, 1997; Weber & Khademian, 2008). The government must be the example and account for all human and financial investments made in members and communities participating in the collaboration network (Weber & Khademian, 2008). Therefore, Bingham (2010) explains that transparency is an instrument to assure the government’s responsibility and to emphasize that the access to information is essential for collaboration in governance. Thus, the access to the necessary information avoids conflicts and reinforces participation and transparency in the public discourse (Bingham, 2010; Fierlbeck, 2010; McDougall et al., 2013).

#### 4.3.3. Discourse and practice

The goals launched by the involved actors must be defined to explicitly reflect on the results achieved by the network (Weber et al., 2007). The discourse must meet the practices to encourage actors’ participation and commitment (Weber et al., 2007). The way information flows in collaborative processes may influence the collaboration power, since the involved actors share common goals that must be clear to all (Purdy, 2012). However, the power to positively affect social actors expresses through the coherence between their discourse and behavior. The collaborative organization ability to represent dialogue or to speak about an issue in the public sphere is called “discursive legitimacy,” according to Purdy (2012).

#### 4.3.4. *Investment in new competencies (skills)*

The collaborative process is not linear. Therefore, its continuous enhancement and improvement demand the network's investment in new skills, in the incorporation of new actors, in the search for new competencies and solutions, and in the emergence of new leadership. Thus, the goal of networks is not to be always the same because, depending on the maturity degree, new challenges will be demanding (Emerson et al., 2012; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; García-Ramírez et al., 2009).

### 5. Implications of the collaborative governance structure analysis

The analysis of categories and their properties permits to explore some effects of the collaborative regime. Such structure analysis (Table 1) become unreal when it lacks adequacy to the assumptions, values, and practices resulting from local cultures. Nevertheless, the collaborative governance regime demands horizontal policies focused on all social actors. The interested agents lose their interest in remaining committed to the process when they are excluded from the decision-making process (Johnston et al., 2011; Shrestha, 2013). Therefore, it is worth including the minorities excluded from the decision-making process because such inclusion is the most significant contribution from the collaborative governance (García-Ramírez et al., 2009; Robertson & Choi, 2012). Besides the lack of inclusive deliberative processes, cultural issues may impair the construction of other essential collaborative governance properties, such as trust building.

According to Newman et al. (2004), the lack of trust environment, in combination with political aspects, is a limiting factor to collaborative participation; therefore, it is a limiting factor to the active political participation. Trust is an obligatory point of passage to start and maintain collaboration (Johnston et al., 2011; Ulibarri, 2015; Weber et al., 2007). Being engaged in a partnership relationship means having a political relationship. It is worth checking the collaboration goals and the decision-making processes at some point, since the results may not reflect the expectations. Such scenario indicates the time to intervene and reorganize the process to assure trust and motivation among members (Richie et al., 2012) and to identify the power unbalance among the involved actors. Power is unbalanced when the State uses its authority without legitimacy and imposes collaboration rules when a more influent group controls the collaborative process (Purdy, 2012). This factor limits collaboration (Richie et al., 2012; Sullivan et al., 2006) because power is not often equally distributed among the parts; thus, collaboration may change depending on goals, resources, positions and opportunities (Choi & Robertson, 2014b). Power balance is mandatory to have consensus during deliberations to accomplish an inclusive decision-making process within the collaborative deliberative process, as well as to have the decisions endorsed by all participants (Choi & Robertson, 2014a, 2014b). The lack of consensus among participants in the collaboration process leads to individual actions, and it means network fragmentation due to collaboration losses. On the other hand, results found by Robertson and Choi (2012) show that the debate about inclusive deliberative processes does not necessarily need to have a low conflict index. Surpreendently, high conflict levels may favor the quality of deliberation. The affected agents must be willing to adjust their preferences during the debate because it encourages the deliberative process and increases satisfaction (Robertson & Choi, 2012). It is noticeable that power unbalance compromises the deliberative process, as well as the trust among participants and the consensus expected from it.

Collaborative arrangement studies address the economic aspects of the collaboration phenomena. Most collective and collaborative actions would not exist without the favorable analysis of the link between cost and benefits (Emerson et al., 2012; Freeman, 1997). McDougall et al. (2013) show a positive example of the application of collaborative arrangements from the economy. Accordingly, Purdy (2012) states that financial resources give more influence power to organizations or groups, since these funds may be used either to favor some part, to affect other participants, or even to reward them for their support. It is possible stating that the existing investments in the collaborative governance regime may trigger the power balance and unbalance

effects. Nevertheless, the authors must pay attention not to turn these questions into a trust and motivation maintenance problem, but to use it in consensus building and to care for the nature of the deliberative process.

Finally, it is possible stating that regulation excesses and strict rules impair collaboration since they cause asymmetry and power unbalance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Freeman, 1997). The State must encourage collaborative actions and avoid regulations that demand high requirement levels (Freeman, 1997). According to Weber and Khademian (2008, p.341), the local government must be *the catalyst to produce the broad and endured capacity to address, manage, and cope with wicked problems*. Hence, the government must attract partnerships through investments, i.e., through the construction of institutional safety to attract other actors (Weber & Khademian, 2008). Trust building can be through transparency, inclusive deliberative processes, feedback, and flexible and changeable rules depending on the circumstances and the actors' common interests (Freeman, 1997; Newman et al., 2004). Therefore, an essential category such as "the rule of the game" (formal agreement) influences other critical categories such as inclusive deliberative processes, trust, and initial investments. On the one hand, the excess of legal demands may discourage collaboration, but on the other, the legal gap results from the lack of a precise definition of "public participation." According to Bingham (2010), this engagement needs proper regulation and must perform since the very beginning of the collaborative process. In other words, other essential categories such as the apparent "preliminary rule," "trust building," and the "inclusive deliberative process" need to be consolidated to achieve the "knowledge management" set as other processual effects of the current study.

The categories created in the present study may guide practitioners and policymakers involved in the management of collaborative arrangements. It is possible diagnosing the collaboration regime conditions and identifying their properties' performance. Besides, it is possible drawing an action plan to improve the weak properties, as well as to reinforce the existing ones. Accordingly, it is possible going farther in the development of collaborative arrangements, the fact that would produce positive effects on the governance process. It is worth emphasizing that an essential ground needs to be constructed and developed throughout time as a way to support collaborative practices.

## 6. Conclusion

The present study aimed to fulfill part of the research gap identified by Emerson et al. (2012), which refers to the need of performing investigations to find the necessary components to accomplish a successful collaboration. Thus, the present study has identified the properties of a collaborative arrangement through a scoping study. The categories and its properties were not gathered to give a sense of "steps to go upwards" in collaborative governance since they do not represent a direct cause-and-effect relationship. However, after the analysis of the literature, it is evident that some features of the collaboration must preexist to establish a virtual cycle of building cohesion and engage different agents in this process. This evidence motivated to attribute meaning for the set of papers extracted from the literature using a processual scheme. It was possible including properties in this processual scheme considering the moments or categories named as antecedents, collaboration process, and equity outcomes. Besides, the current research identified cultural, political, economic, and legal implications, which directly or indirectly influence the evolution and consolidation of the presented properties.

Not all collaborative arrangements will perform all the herein addressed features. Neither all the properties will deserve the same attention in different contexts. The structure serves as a contribution for decision makers comprehend better their environment and establish their strategies of collective action. In considering the processual approach, it is possible identifying the necessary measures to achieve higher collaboration levels and perceive its interconnectivity. For example, a regime which does not pursue the "inclusive deliberative process" between partners has serious

problems in promoting all the potential of “knowledge management.” Practices that do not to accomplish “preliminary rules” legitimated by the parts have severe difficulties in further all the potential of “knowledge management.” All of these dynamics influence the continuities or discontinuities of “trust building” and the alignment between “discourse and practice.” In the same way, the attempt to have consensus becomes impossible due to the absence of a deliberative process in which all members are equal and have the equity as expectation resulting from the collective action. The present study highlights the properties to develop in a particular arrangement and the ones that may contribute to the process, as well as those able to boost governance practices.

The limitations of the study relate to its general format achieved by the chosen methodology. Scoping review depends on the researcher choices since the database to use to the documents to include. Quality criteria were implicit in the quality of the base and the journals where the papers figured. It was not an exhaustive investigation trying to answer all the question involved or propose a new theoretical approach. Instead, the objective was modest but widely significant for contributing to synthesize and promote the understanding of contemporary issue for public administration field.

There are many possibilities for new research from the processual structure presented in this work. The main point to highlight is the potential to generate a model of analysis which a survey or a qualitative study can empirically test. The empirical investigation can help understanding the collaborative arrangement and identify the necessary elements to accomplish a high performance and to explore the relationship between them better. Another way to follow is to focus the attention on each property separately. Detailed research about the processual view and its properties is appropriate since little is empirically explored about collaborative governance, especially considering the equity outcomes resulting from collaboration regimes involving public and private agents.

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