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ABSTRACT

Who should be included in collaborative governance and how they should be included is an important topic, though the dynamics of inclusion are not yet well understood. We propose a conceptual model to shape the empirical analysis of what contributes to inclusion in collaborative processes. We propose that incentives, mutual interdependence and trust are important preconditions of inclusion, but that active inclusion management also matters a great deal. We also hypothesize that inclusion is strategic, with 'selective activation' of participants depending on functional and pragmatic choices. Drawing on cases from the Collaborative Governance Case Databank, we used a mixed method approach to analyse our model. We found support for the model, and particularly for the central importance of active inclusion management.

The rise of collaborative governance and the importance of inclusion

Public governance scholarship has made many claims that substantively better, more widely supported, more robust and innovative processes and solutions can emerge from network-driven rather than state-centric or even state-commissioned policymaking and delivery. For this to occur, part of the argument is that such collaborative platforms and processes need to encompass a wide range of stakeholders and perspectives from different sectors. In other words, they need to be *inclusive*.

Although we now know a great deal about the rationale and design of collaborative governance and public sector network management processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016), the issue of how inclusive to be remains a vexing one for those who promote, sponsor and design collaborative processes. On the one hand, inclusion can be seen as inherently desirable because it may enhance opportunities for citizen participation and thus have a 'democratizing effect' (Sørensen & Torfing, 2018: 305; Hendriks, 2008; Young, 2002). Wider inclusion may also be attractive for primarily pragmatic reasons – namely, its potential to generate richer deliberation and learning within

networks (Lee & Jung, 2018), ensure issue and opportunity coverage (Baird, Plummer, Schultz, Armitage, & Bodin, 2019; Koontz & Johnson, 2004; Leventon et al., 2017), enhance discursive representation (Dryzek & Niemeyer, 2008), and foster a sense of legitimacy and procedural justice (Nissen, 2014). Failure to include key stakeholders or prevent their defection can undermine the effectiveness and legitimacy of collaborative processes, forsaking valuable knowledge and resources and increasing the chance that disaffected stakeholders will refuse to cooperate in downstream implementation (Innes & Booher, 2018; Provan & Milward, 2001).

On the other hand, wide inclusion of actors in the networks that lie at the heart of collaborative governance processes may increase transaction costs, reduce the quality of deliberation, muddy negotiations or produce 'least common denominator' bargaining outcomes. There is evidence, for instance, that larger groups are more unwieldy vehicles for collective problem solving (Hodges, Ferreira, Mowery, & Novicki, 2013; Margerum, 2002; Ulibarri & Scott, 2017). In large groups, it can also be quite 'fuzzy' who is 'in' and who is 'out' of the network, producing instability (Everingham, Warburton, Cuthill, & Bartlett, 2012; Nahon, 2011) Greater inclusion may also increase the number of potentially uncooperative participants (Nowell, 2010; Scott, Thomas, & Magallanes, 2019) or the number of potential veto points (Newig et al., 2018). Getting to 'yes' in inclusive forums may take more effort, time and risk as stakeholders often have varied commitments to collaboration, and social loafing and other forms of strategic behaviour are more likely to occur in larger group settings (Choi & Robertson, 2019; Feiock, 2009; Johnston, Hicks, Nan, & Auer, 2010). For these reasons, collaborative processes may be more successful if inclusion is more strategic and selective.

In this article, we step back from this wider debate about the relative merits and drawbacks of inclusion to investigate *how* inclusion occurs in collaborative processes. Although it is obviously of great importance to investigate whether inclusion affects collaborative effectiveness and legitimacy, we are better placed to answer questions about *who* should be included if we have a better understanding of *how* they will be included. Yet the dynamics of inclusion have only been investigated to a limited extent, and mostly through an examination of a single case or a small group of cases. Therefore, the central question addressed by this article is how do levels of inclusion in collaborative governance networks and processes vary both within and across cases, and what may contribute to these variations?

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we compile existing research attentive to the dynamics of inclusion in collaborative governance, and use that to construct a synthetic model of collaborative inclusion. Second, using the synthetic model to guide our empirical investigation, we draw on the Collaborative Governance Case Databank (CGSD), which is presented and discussed in detail in the introductory article to this Special Issue. We employ a mixed method approach that combines Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) with more traditional qualitative analysis of case studies to examine patterns and logics of inclusion. Thirty-nine cases of collaboration from the CGSD were examined for this paper. This exploratory sample of cases contains diversity across geographies (e.g. Australia, Canada, Germany, the United States of America and Vietnam), policy areas (from health or aquaculture to urban policy and drug trafficking), number of participants (fewer than 5 to over 20), timeframes (from months to decades) and in terms of the sectoral composition of participants. Finally, we revisit and refine the synthetic model in response to our empirical findings, and conclude by reflecting on the limitations of the study and on future directions for research.

How inclusion happens: past research

Though comparatively few collaborative governance scholars have focused directly on inclusion, existing literature from a range of subfields allows us to identify factors that potentially shape stakeholder inclusion. Analytically, we broadly distinguish between factors representing the desire or willingness of stakeholders to include themselves – *self-inclusion* – versus those factors related to the design or conduct of collaboration that shape opportunities or constraints for inclusion – the *opportunity structure*. While these factors are often difficult to clearly distinguish in practice, they provide a useful framework for organizing the existing literature.

Factors affecting self-inclusion

To the extent that participation is not mandatory, stakeholders will assess whether and how to take part in collaborative forums in terms of their own perceptions of the situation. One factor widely discussed in the literature is trust, which is commonly interpreted as the 'grease' that allows the gears of collaboration to turn (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Bolagh, 2012; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Thomson & Perry, 2006). Trust directly affects decisions about participation by affecting stakeholder understanding of their risk and vulnerability due to participation. Collaborative governance creates opportunities for stakeholder, but also poses risks that might stem from the potential loss of their time or resources, the pressure to commit to positions at odds with their own agenda, or the general unpleasantness of conflictual encounters. Trust is also related to stakeholder perceptions of their vulnerability, because stakeholders are only likely to participate if they believe the collaborative process will be managed in good faith and other stakeholders will not engage in opportunistic behavior (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007). A past history of conflict can leave a legacy of distrust that creates barriers for stepping into collaboration (Ran & Qi, 2018).

In addition to trust, a long line of research suggests that stakeholders are motivated to participate in collaborative governance because they are interdependent with other stakeholders (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Gray, 1989; Innes & Booher, 2018; Logsdon, 1991; Thomson & Perry, 2006). Logsdon (1991) argued that organization would be unlikely to participate in collaboration unless they perceived 'high stakes' and 'high interdependence.'

Stakeholders also weigh various incentives or disincentives to participate. Financial realities and considerations play an important role, as do competing demands by other issues and arenas (Fischer, 2012). Civil society actors, small jurisdictions and marginalised groups are more likely to experience greater resource constraints and thus have 'little interest in participating unless the costs of engagement are outweighed by the possibility of benefits from it' (Fischer, 2012). Other researchers have pointed to a range of factors that incentivize or affect collaborative commitment, from legislative mandates or the presence of legal proceedings to fears of boycotts and the desire to protect vested interests (Bentrup, 2001; Frame, Gunton, & Day, 2004; Hui & Cain, 2018; Margerum, 2002).

The requisite resources and capacities for effective participation in collaborative networks are rarely distributed equally among stakeholders (Scott & Thomas, 2017). Differences in education and resources makes it harder for some citizens or groups to undertake or sustain involvement in what can often be a time-consuming commitment.

This difference in power also exists between organisations–for example, between small voluntary organisations and large statutory authorities or private sector groups (Purdy, 2012; Huxham et al., 2000). Various studies demonstrate the difficulty some groups experience in entering or finding enabling environments for their participation. Networks may thus be captured by more resourceful interests (Fischer, 2012; Fung, 2003) and weaker stakeholders may be sceptical about participating because they fear co-optation or manipulation.

Factors affecting the opportunity structure for inclusion

Incentives to participate are often directly influenced by the purpose of the collaboration, but this discussion leads to a consideration of how the design and conduct of collaboration shapes inclusion (Bryson, Quick, Slotterback, & Crosby, 2013). Collaborative governance arrangements are often formed to deliver pre-established policy goals. The level of inclusivity and range of actors involved in these joined-up delivery approaches tend to reflect the design and evolving requirements of the policies and projects to be implemented. Individuals from different organizations might attend project meetings at different stages or there may be more regular and integrated cross-organizational interactions (Huxham et al. 2000). Some organizations may be heavily involved in delivery while others are consulted in earlier phases to provide sectoral viewpoints. Citizens and other stakeholders might engage at different stages of design and delivery processes in response to pre-defined project needs and tasks. Moreover, situational factors such as emergencies may trigger dramatic shifts in government prioritisation and resourcing of certain policy areas, and may lead to considerable inflow or outflow of participants (Nohrstedt et al. 2017). Government funding tends to influence the nature of collaborative structures and provisions for participation, representation or staff involvement, as do predetermined strategic goals and timeframes (Newman, Barnes, Sullivan, & Knops, 2004). Changes in government composition, administrative structures or personnel can create fluctuating policy environments that may increase or reduce the number of participating government actors. Some organisations may cease to exist, while new government bodies, priorities and jurisdictional boundaries might be created (Huxham et al. 2000).

In convening and facilitating collaborative forums, leaders will consider that broad-based inclusion may be valuable in some but not all collaborative settings. Leaders sometimes selectively include certain stakeholders with specific skills or perspectives who are expected to contribute significantly, but exclude others who might increase transaction costs without making important or unique contributions. In situations where conflict is high, leadership may want to selectively include participants in order to increase the probability of a successful mediation. Crosby et al. (2017) argue that if the purpose of a collaboration is to find innovative solutions to wicked problems, network conveners need to develop a pragmatic understanding of which government and non-government actors should be a part of the collaborative endeavour and when. Thus, collaborative forums can be designed to *in*clude as well as *ex*clude actors and voices. Since Scharpf (1978) coined the concept of 'selective activation', it has become widely understood to be a central tool of network managers (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Hudson,

Lowe, Oscroft, & Snell, 2007; Klijn, 2005; Klijn, Koppenjan, & Termeer, 1995; McGuire, 2002; McGuire & Silvia, 2009; Sandström, Crona, & Bodin, 2014).

Beyond selective activation, researchers have examined how on-going inclusion depends on process management and leadership of collaboration. Johnston et al.'s (2010) simulation analysis suggests that inclusion will be less successful if conveners and facilitators of collaborative processes do not take the time to build commitment and trust and if they are not strategic about including actors who are committed. Purposefully building up trust and commitment over time in what Johnston et al. call a 'deliberative planning' model allows participants to engage in consensus-oriented decision making, even if such deliberation slows progress toward the implementation stage. Alternatively, Johnston et al. define a 'thoughtful inclusion' approach as one that focuses on including new members gradually who are interdependent with the growing group of collaborators.

Sustaining inclusion thus becomes an object of deliberate design and purposeful convening strategies (Hudson et al., 2007; Sandström et al., 2014). For example, Feldman and Khademian (2007, p. 320) observe that 'creating an inclusive community of participation involves doing informational and relational work that brings people together from different perspectives in ways that allow them to appreciate one another's perspectives and potentially work together to address problems'. Building on this perspective, Quick and Feldman (2011, p. 274–5) argue that 'inclusion is oriented to making connections among people, across issues, and over time. It is an expansive and ongoing framework for interaction that uses the opportunities to take action on specific items in the public domain as a means of intentionally creating a community engaged in an ongoing stream of issues.'

Finally, *facilitative leadership* has become a key term for the purposeful management of collaborative processes. Facilitative leaders attract and retain collaborative commitment among stakeholders by working towards smartly composed networks, fostering shared motivation among participants, ensuring that authentic and constructive dialogue takes place, and building a capacity for joint action (Doberstein, 2016; Emerson et al., 2012; Page, 2010; Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Such leadership includes maintaining the integrity of the collaborative process by ensuring that stakeholders abide by the rules of the game and ensuring the ability of 'weaker stakeholders' to participate more fully, difficult as that may be to accomplish (Ottens & Edelenbos, 2019).

Towards a synthetic model of inclusion in collaborative governance

Drawing on the scholarship surveyed above, we propose a framework to shape the empirical analysis of what contributes to inclusion in collaborative processes. Although our literature review identifies many viable factors, our first expectation was that many of these factors essentially influence participants' motivation to participate. Stakeholder motivations to participate can in turn be broadly attributed to the *incentives* they have to participate and to perceived *mutual interdependence* between actors. The willingness of stakeholders to participate is also likely to depend on their level of *trust* in one another and in the integrity of the collaborative process itself. Even highly motivated stakeholders may balk at participating in collaborative processes if they believe they are not conducted in good faith, or if they fear manipulation or co-optation. Finally, the decision to participate will likely be influenced by the purpose of the collaboration, which will affect

whether stakeholders feel central or peripheral to the collaborative agenda. We collectively label incentives, interdependence, trust and the purpose of the collaboration as 'factors affecting motivation to participate.'

However, while we collate these factors under this categorical heading, we recognize that they may differentially link to inclusiveness. We hypothesize that three factors – relationship-building, trust and strategic inclusion – have a direct effect on inclusion. Drawing on Johnston et al. (2010) and on Feldman and Khademian's (2007) and Quick and Feldman's (2011) work on 'inclusion management,' we suggest that *relationship-building* is a central factor in inclusive collaborations. Relationship-building may have many different aspects, but it generally includes constructive dialogue, attempts to align stakeholder perspectives and interests, and the facilitation of joint problem-solving. The overwhelming salience of trust in relation to various collaborative outcomes in extant scholarship also leads us to posit that it will directly associate with inclusiveness. Finally, we also expect strategic inclusion (or exclusion) to have a direct effect on collaborative.

We expect two other factors that affect motivation to participate – incentives and mutual interdependence–to be mediated through relationship-building. While perceiving a need for collaboration with others may be necessary to propel initial participation in a collaborative process, we would expect that interdependence can only be fully internalized once one is actually engaged in these activities. With respect to incentives, our assumption is that while the initial perception of the costs and benefits of collaboration (both material and non-material) may bring actors to the table, these costs and benefits are not fully known or effective until one is engaged in the kinds of activities associated with relationship building highlighted here.

A final factor affecting motivation to participate is the purpose of a collaboration. We know from existing literature that the purpose of a collaboration may influence participation, and have sufficient conceptual clarity to enable valid operationalizations of this factor, but there is limited guidance to form the basis of propositions about how directly this factor links to inclusiveness. We therefore leave this relationship open to empirical testing. However, as discussed below, we do expect that strategic inclusion (or exclusion) is likely to be influenced by the purpose of a collaboration. Therefore, we operationalize strategic inclusion in terms of collaborative purpose.

Figure 1 shows our four factors affecting motivation to participate, indicating that we (i) expect trust links directly to inclusiveness; (ii) that mutual interdependence and incentives link to inclusiveness through relationship-building; and (iii) that we have no strong priors regarding the direct link between purpose of collaboration and inclusiveness. Figure 1 also represents relationship-building as sitting at the heart of inclusion management, directly associating with inclusiveness.

In addition to mutual interdependence and incentives, our synthetic model assumes that two other broad factors contribute to relationship-building. The first is *leadership*, which convenes collaborative meetings, maintains the integrity of collaborative processes and mediates conflicts among stakeholders. We suggest that it is important to distinguish, however, between how leaders contribute to inclusion through relationship-building versus how they contribute via 'strategic inclusion.' In the latter case, inclusion is shaped by purposeful 'selective activation' dependent upon the aims of the collaboration or on external factors such as the political context or the issue at stake.
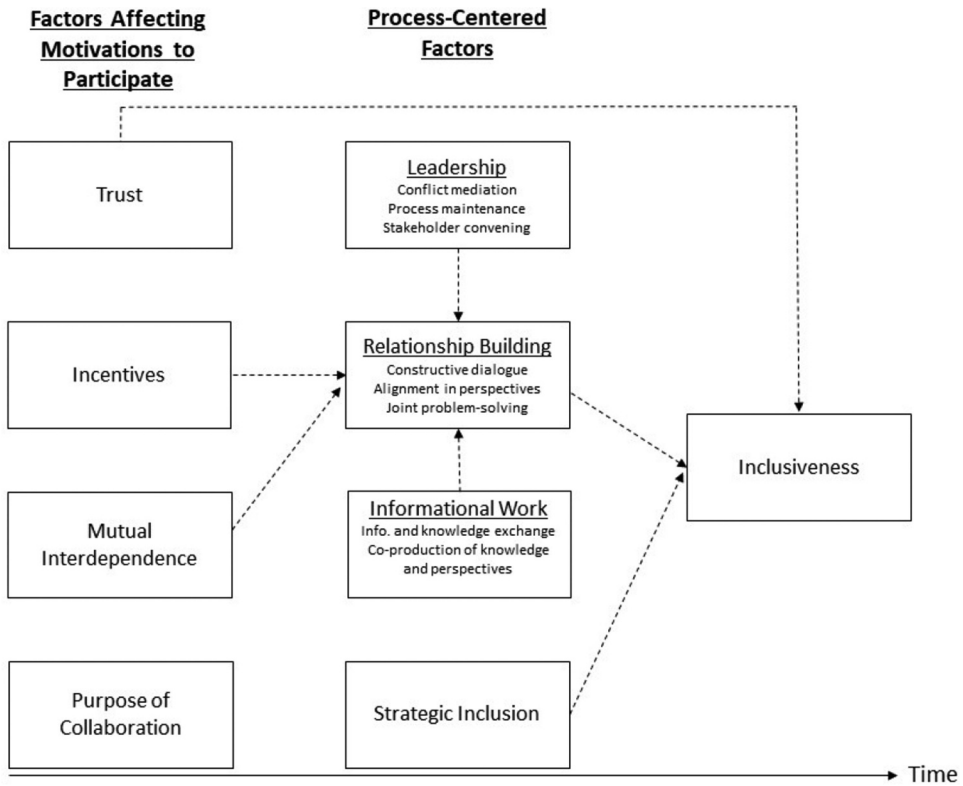
Figure 1. A synthetic model of collaborative inclusion.

A second broad factor that contributes to relationship-building is *informational work*, which includes knowledge sharing and joint fact-finding. We hypothesize that informational work contributes to relationship-building by enhancing mutual understanding among stakeholders, reducing conflict, and establishing common knowledge frameworks upon which collaborative groups can build joint commitment.

Finally, we surmise that *time* matters. Relationship-building takes time and is often path-dependent. Negative feedback from conflict or failure to achieve progress can reduce commitment and lead to subsequent defections. Positive feedback from more constructive conflict or positive cooperation can reinforce stakeholder commitment to the collaboration and reduce defections over time. Stakeholders may even come to perceive the incentives to participate or their interdependence with other stakeholders in more positive or negative ways over time.

Evaluating the model

The model presented in Figure 1 represents our initial expectations about the factors that affect inclusiveness based on hypotheses derived from our review of the literature. As noted, data for this analysis are drawn from the CGCD. Since this databank contains both standardized coded data across its current n = 39 span of cases as well open-ended, thick descriptive data for each case (supported by full-length case studies), we have chosen

a two-step approach to evaluate the synthetic model. We first apply Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to examine the contributions that various combinations of factors captured in the model make to variations in levels of inclusion across the set of cases. We then present a more traditional qualitative data analysis to further explore these combinations in the context of within-case narratives selected from the dataset. The results of these analyses are presented sequentially below, as are the resulting modifications to the synthetic model.

Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA)

Since the model in Figure 1 identifies various categories of factors that may shape levels of inclusion in collaborative networks, QCA allows us to parse the possible pathways or combinations of factors that are simultaneously associated with the outcome of interest in medium-N samples (Rihoux & Ragin, 2008; Schneider & Wageman, 2010). QCA is a set-theoretic method structured to handle causal complexity by identifying how conditions combine to produce an outcome and the multiple pathways to it, including the absence of conditions in certain calibrations (Ragin, 2008).

The synthetic model provides guidance on which sets of variables to test using QCA to reveal combinations of variables most associated with highly inclusive collaborations. Nearly all the relevant variables in the synthetic model are represented in the dataset and since CGCD contains measurements about the state of a variable at the beginning, middle and end of a collaborative process, it enabled us to test the temporal dimension of the model as well.

To support the QCA, we first had to transform the 1–5 response scale used in relation to CGCD survey measures to a dichotomous one. The transformation rule, applied across cases and survey measures, was to code values of 4–5 for each survey measure as 1 s and values of 1–3 as 0 s.[1] For example, the question from which we derive our dependent variable measure of 'inclusion' asks: To what extent was the collaboration inclusive? (1 = Very few of the relevant and affected actors included, 5 = Almost all of the relevant and affected actors included). The cases that received 4 or 5 on this question were characterized as inclusive (1) and those with 1–3 were characterized as not inclusive (0). There are missing data in various cases due to incomplete surveys or due to 'Don't know' responses. In 18 cases, missing data led to exclusion of the case, as missing values in QCA are particularly problematic and can distort the analysis in significant ways (Ragin, 2008), which resulted in an N of 21 cases. While these cases were excluded in the QCA, they were considered in the QDA to the extent that case narratives offered explanatory value for common themes identified, such as the impact of administration change or the role of leadership. Table 1 shows the survey items used to measure each factor or set of factors reflected in the synthetic model.

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[1]This transformation rule is both logic-based–given that the analytical strategy is focused on identifying factors that contribute to highly inclusive collaborations – and consistent with the methodological analysis of ordinal transformations conducted by Jeong and Lee (2016). We did, however, perform sensitivity analysis with the data when the transformation rule was modified for all variables to ensure that the rule itself was not driving the findings. The basic problem with alternative transformation rules is that both a looser and stricter definition of 'inclusive' artificially eliminates meaningful variation in the data and renders the analysis much less coherent compared to the original transformation rule.

QCA does not permit us to test a fully integrated model that simultaneously incorporates all the factors that we have identified. It requires testing multiple smaller configurations of variables. Our initial analysis tested the association between relationship-building, strategic inclusion, and trust with inclusiveness. In conducting this initial analysis, we were guided by the synthetic model set out in Figure 1, which hypothesizes that only these three factors have a direct effect on inclusion. As indicated in Table 1, relationship-building is operationalized by three variables: face-to-face dialogue (F2F), alignment of interests and values (ALIGN), and a problem-solving focus (PROB). Strategic inclusion is operationalized according to whether the purpose of the collaboration is designated as expansive as opposed to restrictive (EXPAN).[2] The TRUST question asks whether there is trust between the core participants at the start of the collaboration.

Three paths lead to unique solutions, as illustrated in Table 2. Black dots refer to the presence of a condition and hollow white dots refer to the absence of that condition. The overall solution coverage is 1.00, showing that these three paths explain 100% of all the cases that fit the threshold established as being an 'inclusive' collaboration. The solution consistency is 0.93, meaning that 93% of the cases with the three configurations are inclusive. Other measures that assist with interpretation of each configuration are *raw*

Table 1. Survey measures corresponding to factors in synthetic model.

Categories	Conditions	Item from databank: To what extent …	Label in QCA
Factors affecting motivation to participate			
	Incentives	Q18: … were there incentives to collaborate?	INCENT
	Inter-dependence	Q19: … did the participants feel mutually dependent on each other for fulfilling their ambitions?	DEPEND
	Trust	Q15: … was there trust between the core participants at the start of the collaboration?	TRUST
	Purposes of Inclusion	Q10: … was the collaboration driven by any of the following ambitions? (transformed into restrictive vs. expansive inclusion purposes)	EXPAN
Process-centered factors			
Facilitative leadership	Convener	Q32: … was the leadership effective in convening … the relevant actors?	CONVENE
	Steward	Q33: … was the leadership effective in guarding the focus and integrity of the collaborative process?	STEWARD
	Mediator	Q34: … was the leadership effective in resolving or mitigating conflicts between actors?	MEDIATOR
	Catalyst	Q35: … was the leadership effective in creating and realizing concrete opportunities for creative problem-solving resolving?	CATALYST
Relationship building	Face-to-face dialogue	Q38: To what extent did the participants engage in face-to-face dialogue through holding regular meetings with good attendance?	F2 F
	Alignment of interests	Q42: To what extent did the collaborative process focus on the alignment of interests and values among all actors?	ALIGN
	Problem-solving	Q43: To what extent did the collaborative process focus on joint problem-solving?	PROB
Informational work	Joint fact finding	Q40: To what extent did the participants … invest in joint fact finding?	FACTFIND
	Knowledge sharing	Q41: To what extent did the participants … invest in knowledge sharing?	KNOW

[2]We reasoned that if the purpose of the collaboration is to increase effectiveness, to increase legitimacy and support or to contain conflict, selective activation will be more inclusive (e.g., expansive), while if the purpose of the collaboration is to develop regulatory frameworks, foster creative innovative solutions or increase efficiency, selective activation will be more selective (e.g., restrictive).

Table 2. Configurations contributing to inclusiveness in collaborations.

	1	2	3
TRUST		○	●
F2 F	●		○
ALIGN	●	●	○
PROB	●	●	○
EXPAN	●	○	●
Raw coverage	0.538462	0.307692	0.153846
Unique coverage	0.538462	0.307692	0.153846
Consistency	0.875000	1.000000	1.000000
Solution coverage	1.000000	Solution consistency	0.928571
Frequency cut-off	1	Consistency cut-off	0.8

coverage (the proportion of instances of the outcome that exhibit that combination of conditions) and *raw consistency* (the portion of cases consistent with expected outcome). Urueña and Hidalgo (2016) suggest that raw consistency ought to be above 0.80 and raw coverage higher than 0.25 for a solution path to be informative. Two of our solutions meet these thresholds, as explained in detail below.

The first solution shows that relationship-building variables (F2F, ALIGN, PROB) + expansive inclusion (EXPAN) – all at the END PERIOD – are associated with high inclusion at the END PERIOD in 54% of cases. The second solution finds that the alignment of values/interests (ALIGN) and problem-solving (PROB) are associated with high inclusion in 31% of the cases, even in the absence of trust (TRUST) or an expansive inclusion strategy (EXPAN). The third solution does not meet the unique coverage threshold of 0.25, though it makes logical sense in that it mirrors the finding of the second solution: alignment and problem-solving may be less important when building on a base of trust and when pursuing a strategy of wide inclusion. Overall, these solutions stress that two variables–the alignment of values/interests (ALIGN) and problem-solving (PROB)–are consistently associated with inclusive collaborations. However, strategic inclusion (EXPAN) is also an important factor in explaining inclusion.

These findings reinforce the importance of Feldman and Khademian's (2007) and Quick and Feldman's (2011) conception of inclusion management as relationship-building, while also supporting research about the strategic nature of inclusion (e.g., Klijn et al., 1995). These findings also generally support the viewpoint advanced in much of the collaborative governance literature that the interactive engagement of stakeholders to jointly define problems and solutions is crucial to collaborative success (Bryson et al., 2013; Emerson et al., 2012; Nowell, 2010). The association of alignment and problem-solving with inclusion suggests that the inclusion of stakeholders depends on whether the collaborative process effectively brings them together to engage in joint problem-solving.

If relationship-building factors matter so much for inclusive collaborations, what factors are associated with relationship-building? Our model theorizes that incentives, interdependence, leadership and information work will be important. We examined the association of these factors by treating the relationship-building variables (F2F, ALIGN, and PROB) as the dependent variables in subsequent analyses. We examined each of the relevant combinations of factors on each of the variables within the relationship-building category and were generally unable to identify clear pathways for the F2F dialogue components of relationship-building. We did, however, identify solutions that contribute

to the alignment of values and interests (ALIGN) and problem-solving (PROB) components of relationship-building.

The solution with respect to the alignment of interests and values (ALIGN) produced a number of pathways, as presented in Table 3. Only solutions 2 and 3 pass the threshold of > 0.25 raw coverage and thus will be interpreted. Solution 2 informs us that interdependence (DEPEND) is associated with the high alignment of values and interest (ALIGN) in collaborative governance. Solution 3 tells us that when interdependence is absent, convening leadership and joint fact-finding are important. Knowledge-sharing (KNOW) and Incentives (INCENT) each appear in one solution, but these solution do not pass the coverage threshold. Overall, the analysis in Table 3 indicates that interdependence is an important factor in the alignment of interests and perspectives; where it does not exist or is less visible, convening leadership and joint fact-finding can substitute for this interdependence. The fact that convening leadership and joint fact-finding can partially compensate for mutual interdependence suggests that there are different leverage points within the collaborative process for achieving effective stakeholder alignment and problem-solving.

The equivalent solutions with respect to problem-solving (PROB) are presented in Table 4. Only solution 3 of the configurations passes the threshold of > 0.25 raw coverage and merits interpretation. The solution tells us that when interdependence is absent, mediating leadership, knowledge sharing and joint fact-finding are associated with a focus on problem-solving in the collaboration. This finding is similar to the one for the alignment of interests and values (ALIGN): leadership and information work can compensate for the absence of interdependence. Whereas alignment requires leadership that brings actors together (convening leadership), problem-solving requires leadership that mediates conflicts and differences (mediating leadership). Information work, including both knowledge sharing and joint fact-finding, is also needed.

These findings complement Johnston et al.'s (2010) notions of deliberative planning and thoughtful inclusion in the sense that they emphasize that purposeful facilitative leadership is an important shaper of inclusion. They are also close in spirit to Gray's (1989) classic statement about collaboration, which emphasized the importance of both establishing common problem definitions based on stakeholder interdependence and on the value of convening leadership to bring stakeholders together. The joint fact-finding and knowledge-sharing results support Feldman and Khademian (2007) notion of the

Table 3. Configurations contributing to alignment of values and interests in collaborations.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
INCENT		○		○		●
DEPEND	●	●	○			
KNOW	●			●		
FACTFIND			●	●	○	
CONVENE			●	●	○	○
Raw coverage	0.153846	0.307692	0.307692	0.230769	0.153846	0.076923
Unique coverage	0.076923	0.076923	0.230769	0.076923	0	0
Consistency	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
Solution coverage		1.000000		Solution consistency		0.846154
Frequency cut-off		1		Consistency cut-off		1.0

This is the parsimonious solution for data in the middle period of all cases.

Table 4. Configurations contributing to problem-solving focus in collaboration.

	1	2	3	4	5
INCENT	○	○		○	●
DEPEND	○	●	○	○	●
KNOW	●		●	○	○
FACTFIND		●	●	○	○
MEDIATOR	●	●	●	○	●
Raw coverage	0.153846	0.230769	0.307692	0.153846	0.076923
Unique coverage	0.076923	0.230769	0.230769	0.153846	0.076923
Consistency	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
Solution coverage		1.000000		Solution consistency	0.846154
Frequency cut-off		1		Consistency cut-off	1.0

This is the intermediate solution for the data in the middle period of all cases.

importance of 'informational work' and can be interpreted as mechanisms for facilitating stakeholder problem-solving (Buuren, 2009; Karl, Susskind, & Wallace, 2007).

Our synthetic model (Figure 1) hypothesizes that time is an important factor in understanding collaborative inclusion. To evaluate this hypothesis, we tested all combinations in time-consistent and time-lagged manners. Somewhat surprisingly, however, we do not find any compelling patterns of evidence of time-effects in this QCA. All reported findings for relationship building variables as dependent variables above are in the MIDDLE PERIOD of the collaboration. Given that relationship-building is important and that relationship-building takes time, we considered this as a possible limitation of the analysis. The result could be attributed either to (i) there being no time effect, or (ii) the data inputs into the QCA do not capture the nuanced effects of time and thus an alternative data analytical method is required.

In summary, the QCA points to important patterns in the factors that contribute to inclusion across cases: both relationship-building and strategic inclusion were found to be important factors directly associated with inclusion. We also discovered that in the absence of trust and an expansive inclusion strategy, an alignment of interests and values and a problem-solving approach are associated with highly inclusive collaborations. Treating alignment of interests and problem-solving themselves as the dependent variables, we find that leadership and information work are particularly important. Finally, our expectation that time would be an important dimension of building inclusive collaborations was not supported by the QCA analysis. We now turn to a more qualitative analysis to examine these factors further.

Qualitative data analysis (QDA)

The CGCD contains open-ended questions that allow elaboration on a series of collaborative themes, allowing us to investigate inclusion dynamics though traditional qualitative data analysis (QDA). Building upon the QCA findings and taking into account the dominant themes in literature, we used QDA as an interpretive tool to further probe key components of the model. We specifically sought to consider the element of time given the discrepancy between the hypothesised role of time in the synthetic model and the QCA results. This iterative approach proved useful in uncovering links between context and the associated (pre-) conditions for collaborative inclusion.

The QDA was framed to focus on the dimension of time that we surmised would be an important factor for inclusion, though it did not emerge in the logical conclusions from the QCA. We returned to the larger pool of 39 cases and divided them into groups of stable, decreasing, and increasing inclusiveness over time, which contained 17, 8 and 9 cases respectively. Five cases were excluded due to fluctuating patterns that reflected rather particular local dynamics or because the case study author responded 'don't know' regarding the level of inclusivity. The QDA then sought to build on the findings of the QCA by explaining the nature of specific case contexts and links between variables, focusing on the preconditions affecting inclusion and the process-centred factors that relate to inclusion over time. The QDA findings are presented below, followed by a selection of case vignettes to illuminate how some of these cases relate to measurement strategies explored in the QCA (we note the relevant variables in parentheses). All quotations in the text were taken from the case's CGCD open-ended items and each case is referenced in the title of the vignettes.

QDA findings

The QDA broadly supports the synthetic model, but also adds insights that partially amend our interpretation of the QCA results and the synthetic model. The first critical finding from the QDA is the high relevance of factors motivating participation. We originally conceived of the factors as preconditions, but the QDA finds that they continue to be relevant beyond the initiation of collaboration: in terms of maintaining or enhancing inclusiveness, it is important for participants to have a sense of their interdependence, growing trust and for incentives to remain present throughout a collaborative process. Indeed, the importance of these factors may strengthen over time as participants' awareness about the issue or possible benefits associated with a project or its collaborative process become clearer.

The second critical finding from the QDA is the powerful role of context for collaborative inclusion. In cases where inclusion decreases or collaborations cease, it is very often attributable to a change in government administration, institutional arrangements or policy direction and associated funding commitments (e.g. the homelessness case), just as it may be a product of some failed aspect of the collaborative process (e.g. the neighbourhood renewal and aquaculture cases). Some cases suggest that very strong relationship-building processes can help collaborations survive these challenges or to reinitiate collaboration under more favorable conditions (e,g, the Blackfoot case described below). A change in context during the collaborative process (e.g. emergence of a new threat to population health or national security) can precipitate lower inclusion or strengthen inclusiveness at different stages.

The third critical finding from the QDA reveals that facilitative leadership can play an equally important role in both providing the conditions to initiate a collaboration and, confirming the synthetic model, to support collaborative processes over time (e.g. the domestic violence case below). Consistent with the synthetic model, some cases demonstrated a key role for facilitators in relationship-building and informational work, to the extent that their success can support inclusive collaboration over time even between adversarial participants. In terms of relationship-building, the QDA highlights both formal and informal relational work in terms of relationship-building.

Finally, one aspect of incentives for commencing and sustaining collaborative inclusion is the connection participants have to a particular place and their shared concern for it to thrive (e.g. the Blackfoot case). In this regard, although financial or political incentives are important, community-building may also be an important driver. The QDA highlights that financial and political incentives can also act as pull factors, drawing participants out of collaborations when they feel they will gain more by acting independently rather than investing in a collaborative process. These factors are highlighted in different ways in the following vignettes.

Stable inclusion: the statewide steering committee to reduce family violence

Preconditions affecting inclusion

In response to the problem of family violence in the State of Victoria, Australia, a Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence was established. The police commissioner's leadership was crucial in initiating the process, gaining the support of relevant government departments and bringing non-government organisations on board (CONVENE). At the outset there was friction and low trust (~TRUST) between the government departments and NGOs. While direct financial incentives were not provided for participation at the start (~INCENT), the initiative was later funded and the NGOs had a stronger incentive to participate and influence the committee's work (INCENT). The main precondition that limited the extent of inclusion, or led to the strategic inclusion of some stakeholders, was workability as defined by the government: only peak bodies in the family violence NGO space were selected (~EXPAN). While this presented some challenges, it benefited the efficiency of the collaboration.

Process-centered factors affecting inclusion over time

The early stage of the process focused on building relationships because service providers distrusted the police and because there was a lack of policy ambition and funding from other government departments. Relationship-building occurred through shared processes including the co-development and co-production of policy. The openness of communication between the participants (F2F) established a ground rule around information sharing (KNOW), which helped to build trust over time. Political stability contributed to ongoing inclusiveness, as did the continued presence and commitment of the police commissioner.

A key finding of this case is that trust (TRUST), interdependence (DEPEND) and incentives (INCENT) to collaborate grew over time from low to high. This finding suggests that we should understand the early phase of a collaborative process as producing feedback effects that reshape the preconditions for inclusion. The value of facilitative leadership, adequate funding and the importance of a stable context to sustaining and strengthening collaborations cannot be overstated.

Increasing inclusion: the blackfoot challenge, U.S.A

Preconditions affecting inclusion

This case shows how growing interdependence (DEPEND) between two stakeholders with no pre-history of mutual engagement or trust (~TRUST) led to an increasingly

inclusive collaborative process encompassing more than 20 people over the period of a decade. The pre-collaboration environment was described as highly conflictual, with low trust between agricultural/ranching, environmental advocates and government regulators, and growing pressure from outdoor recreation and development interests.

The initiators, a rancher and an environmental regulator, started out with entirely different yet mutually dependent goals (DEPEND): The regulator was interested in endangered species recovery and the rancher in maintaining his livelihood. Although they mistrusted each other, they were both frustrated by the status quo approach to management of the area. Neither could achieve their goals without the other.

Another important factor was their personal commitment and interest in protecting the area. There was a hands-on board of directors for the collaboration process:

> [They are] the heart and soul of the [Blackfoot Challenge], they live it every day …, fully rooted. They live on the land, rely on the land, manage the land whether because they own it or, as government employees, they have a responsibility for it. They do not see their place as an intellectual position; instead they live and breathe the land. They love the place [INCENT].

Process-centered factors affecting inclusion over time

The sense of interdependence in addressing wicked problems, the growing reputation of the collaborative process (including a high degree of joint fact-finding (FACTFIND), problem-solving (PROB) and knowledge sharing (KNOW) and purposeful leadership led to growing inclusiveness, strengthening a sense of interdependence (DEPEND). The role of entrepreneurial leaders grew stronger over time: 'These entrepreneurial leaders clearly helped to establish the initial collaborative efforts [CONVENE] (and) were instrumental in cajoling and persuading self-interested, rational stakeholders to stick with the collaboration long enough [MEDIATOR, CATALYST] to reap better individual as well as collective benefits through the 1990 s and into the 2000 s.'

As in the previous case vignette, this case further reinforces the point that the preconditions for inclusion (DEPEND] are likely to change over time as positive relationships are built. It also introduces the variable of connection and commitment to a place as an incentive, expressed through the description of the board of directors' approach.

Declining inclusion: the aquaculture partnership

Preconditions affecting inclusion

The aquaculture partnership was created by legislation to bring together a range of affected and interested parties in various coastal states in the U.S.A, from academia and environmental agencies to industry and government, to develop aquaculture development plans and official policies to manage the practices and development of the aquaculture industry. Participants felt a sense of interdependence [DEPEND] given their shared involvement or concern for the aquaculture industry and they thus felt incentivised to participate [INCENT]: ' … [P]artnership participants appeared to rely on each other for different types of resources. Regulatory officials relied on industry, and researchers, for topical expertise. Industry relied on government agencies for political support and authority resources.'

Process-centered factors affecting inclusion over time

Many of the participants commented that the leadership style was conducive to the partnership's generation of policy outputs [CATALYST]. They also indicated that decisions were often reached by consensus and that shared informational work [KNOW] supported some degree of inclusion. While there was a high degree of shared work, for example through problem-solving [PROB], there was little focus on aligning interests [~ALIGN] and face-to-face dialogue [F2F] declined over time. The collaborative process produced some 'positive relational outcomes' and both formal and informal coordination around the partnership were cited as relevant, but inclusion still declined over time. This decline was attributed to an imbalance in representativeness and high turnover among the public officials who participated.

Analysis: understanding inclusion revisited

Overall, the results of the QCA and QDA provide broad support for the synthetic model of collaborative inclusion, but also highlight possibilities for refinement of the framework. The QCA demonstrated that both relationship-building and strategic inclusion are associated with more inclusive collaborative processes. It also supports our expectation that leadership and informational work are associated with inclusion, albeit indirectly via their association with relationship-building. However, in a secondary analysis, we examined the factors that are associated with three key relationship-building variables – face-to-face dialogue, alignment of interests and values, and problem-solving. We found no particular configuration of variables associated with face-to-face dialogue, but we found that leadership and informational work are associated with alignment and problem-solving. In the case of the alignment of interests and values, interdependence, convening leadership and joint-fact-finding were important factors. In the case of problem-solving, mediating leadership, knowledge-sharing and joint fact-finding were important factors. Contrary to our expectations, the QCA analysis fails to show that time is a critical factor in inclusion, although our view is that time is inherent to the process of building relationships.

The QDA findings provide some support for the QCA, but also lead to somewhat different conclusions. The QDA largely supports the conclusion from the QCA that relationship-building is key to successful inclusion. Although the QDA also suggests the importance of strategic choices about 'selective activation' (who to include or exclude and when), the evidence was less overwhelming than in the case of relationship-building. Finally, the QDA reinforces the QCA's findings that facilitative leadership and knowledge-sharing are important factors in managing inclusion.

The QDA also adds an important new consideration to our model – the wider context or environment in which collaboration occurs. Echoing a part of the literature review that did not find its way into the model, the QDA found that collaborations are disrupted or redirected as political and institutional conditions change. Shifts in government composition or programmatic goals can abruptly or gradually change the conditions for inclusion. These shifts in context may partly work through their impact on trust, interdependence, collaborative purpose, and particularly, incentives. The QDA suggests that it is important to call attention to the political and institutional context of

collaboration: we should not expect that this context will necessarily remain stable throughout a collaborative process and this can deeply affect inclusion.

An important difference between the findings of the QDA and the QCA is that that the former found much evidence pointing to the importance of trust, interdependence and incentives. Originally, we conceived of these factors as 'preconditions' of collaboration, with trust linking directly to inclusiveness. However, the QDA supports the view that these factors should not be just thought of as preconditions, because they continue to have an important influence on inclusion throughout the collaborative process via their contribution to relationship building. They may also lead to the strengthening or demise of a collaboration. Moreover, they may be modified – positively or negatively – by the collaborative process through feedback loops.

Figure 2 draws together our empirical findings from the QCA and the QDA and shows how they relate to the synthetic theoretical model set out in Figure 1. In general, the empirical analysis provides general support for our theoretical expectations, but also provides more fine-grained analysis by drawing direct connections between specific variables used in the QCA. The QDA findings did not provide an evaluation of specific variable-to-variable relationships. Therefore, Figure 2 only adds relationships from the QDA where it provides support for relationships that the QCA did not establish – notably, the influence of trust and incentives on relationship-building. Another contribution of the QDA is to suggest the ongoing importance of trust, incentives and interdependence. We represent this by showing a feedback loop between the factors affecting motivation to participate and the process-centered factors. Finally, the QDA suggests the importance of the political and institutional context, which we represent as a box around all the factors.

Unfortunately, the CGCD database lends itself better to testing the relationship-building argument than it does to evaluating the strategic inclusion aspect of the
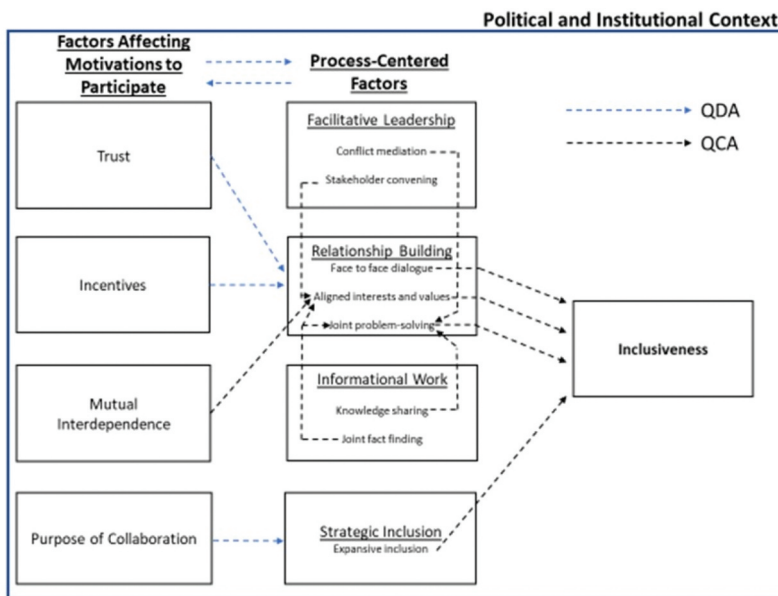

Figure 2. Findings from QCA and QDA.

model. As hypothesized earlier, we expect strategic decisions about inclusion during a collaboration to depend on the overall purposes of collaboration and, as was more clearly seen in the QDA, the context. For example, in cases where broad-based legitimacy is important, we would expect more expansive inclusion. Where the goal is innovation, however, we might expect collaboration to narrow participation to the stakeholders most likely to contribute to the innovation.

There were at least two limitations of our QCA analysis of strategic inclusion. The first is that, in our operationalization, there is really no separation between 'purposes of collaboration' and 'strategic inclusion.' We simply operationalize strategic inclusion in terms of different purposes of collaboration. Second, operationalization rested on what we regard as relatively crude judgements between different kinds of purposes. For example, returning to the example of collaborative innovation, we can imagine a rationale for why collaborative innovation might want more restrictive participation (e.g., limit participation to actors who are most likely to contribute), but we can also imagine a contrary rationale for more expansive participation (e.g., greater diversity of perspectives can stimulate creativity). Although the QDA provides some support for the strategic inclusion argument, we think this aspect of our inclusion model needs more targeted scrutiny in future research.

Conclusion

This study developed, empirically evaluated and revised a theoretical framework for understanding inclusion in collaborative governance arrangements. Our analysis has made some headway into understanding the variability of inclusion. Our findings highlight the potential usefulness of developing a framework for distinguishing between the different motives and roles of both participants and non-participants.

Concerning non-participation, we surmise that there may be many reasons why stakeholders decide not to participate or are not invited to join. Specifically, our model suggests that stakeholders may not participate because: they lack incentives to do so; they do not feel a sense of interdependence with other stakeholders; or their involvement does not align with the stated strategic purpose or the efficiency of a collaborative network. These broad claims require more detailed scrutiny in future research.

Similarly, those who do participate may do so for different reasons. Some participants may wish to be included merely to monitor what is going on, or to protect their specific interests by acting as veto players. Others may participate out of a sense of civic duty or general interest in the proceedings rather than any strategic motives. Actors who participate out of a sense of civic duty may be committed and energetic, but may also be more likely to withdraw as the discussions within the network become more conflictual or the costs of participation (in time, energy, expertise, material resources) increase.

The relevance of the 'inclusion management' and 'selective activation' literatures is that while involvement of citizens and stakeholders is essential to make collaboration work, inclusion is not simply a case of 'the more the better.' Inclusion is an active and strategic process. While our findings support a 'relationship-building' perspective on inclusion, they do not perhaps capture what we might call its 'political' perspective in which certain 'difficult actors' need to be persuaded to remain at the table and become more constructive participants, while others may need to be sidelined or excluded altogether.

Thus, we need a more nuanced account of motivations and roles of participants to develop a deeper sense of the processes and strategies of inclusion. The same goes for the nature of the relationship between inclusion and diversity of stakeholders, and their possible interaction effects on collaborative processes and outcomes. The most important next steps are therefore (1) to continue the work of testing and refining the synthetic model of inclusion; and (2) to begin investigating the impact that variations in inclusion have on collaborative effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (Dickinson & Sullivan, 2014; Provan & Milward, 2001).

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