

# Boundary Spanning in Local Governance: A Scoping Review

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## Abstract

Complex societal challenges require collaboration between organizations, often with conflicting priorities and ways of working. Connecting organizations has come to be referred to as boundary-spanning. There is a need to understand the features of boundary-spanning at the local level, since policy-makers and practitioners from different sectors need not only to work together but also to relate to the recipients of their interventions. Addressing this gap, a scoping review was conducted. The review highlights the need to carve out a contextualized conceptualization of boundary-spanning that accounts for the distinctive features of this work when embedded in local community context.

## Keywords

collaboration, community, local governance, boundary-spanning, wicked problems

## Background

While societal challenges are often rooted in complex, global, and interacting factors, many of these challenges find expression in and require a response at the local level. To consider just a few: poverty, (juvenile) offending, public

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health crises, and terrorism all can trace causes back to complex global and systemic issues; yet, a significant feature of responding involves practitioners and policy-makers tackling these issues in villages, neighborhoods and cities. Given the mismatch between the complex and convoluted nature of these challenges and the fragmentation and specialization in policy and practice, most professionals tasked with addressing such challenges find themselves called upon to collaborate, often through “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approaches (Christensen & Laegreid, 2007; Papademetriou & Benton, 2016). Although the need for holistic and complex responses to complex challenges can seem self-evident, it is widely acknowledged that the reality of collaborative governance is problematic.

For example, a significant proportion of offenders suffer from mental health problems; thus prevention and rehabilitation require, at the very least, collaboration between the justice and health sectors (van Dijk et al., 2021). Similarly, preventing radicalization to extremism calls for collaboration among youth workers, police, social care, and schools—actors operating within different institutional systems and with different responsibilities, for whom the prevention of radicalization typically is not their primary objective (Stephens & Sieckelink, 2019). The different internal logics and telos of these sectors means that collaboration has to overcome differences in goals, practices, priorities, and language. For those operating at the frontline, such as youth workers, district nurses and community police officers, the challenge extends not only to ensuring a smooth collaboration but also to ensuring that the fruits of that collaboration benefit the recipients of their interventions. That is to say, success cannot be viewed only from the vantage point of how well information and experience flow across sectoral boundaries, but also by the extent to which the exchanges actually connect with and respond to the challenges faced in a local community (Turrini et al., 2009).

This scoping review complements scholarship employing concepts like “intergovernmental relations,” “cross-sector collaborations,” and “governance networks” (e.g., Bryson et al., 2006; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Stoker, 1995). Although significant thought and attention have focused appropriately on the models, systems and structures that can facilitate such collaboration, there is a need to take seriously that in the end it is people who are doing the work of crossing sectoral and disciplinary boundaries (van Meerkerk & Edelenbos, 2018; Williams, 2002). This focus on the individual is useful to accentuate several dimensions of local governance, specifically boundary-spanning between and beyond formal organizations. Policy-makers and practitioners from different sectors (e.g., justice, health, education) need not only to work together but also to relate to people and families that are the recipients of their interventions.

## *Boundary-Spanners as Local “Fixers”*

The concept of boundary-spanning has its roots in organizational studies and business management, addressing the spanning of boundaries within and between companies (e.g., Marrone, 2010; Schotter et al., 2017). A rich and extensive literature has developed examining the characteristics of successful boundary-spanners, the challenges of boundary-spanning and the type of institutional context and leadership that enable boundary-spanning. More recent work has developed the concept outside of business settings, including examining its application in governance and public management (e.g., van Meerkerk & Edelenbos, 2018; Williams, 2012).

While much can be drawn from the business and organizational literature on boundary-spanning, it is clear from this more recent work that there are distinct features of boundary-spanning in the public context. For example, van Meerkerk and Edelenbos (2018) point to the likelihood of public boundary spanners having less autonomy than in the private sector, embedded in hierarchical and political environments, and needing to deal with a variety of constituencies, often with conflicting demands.

In their work, van Meerkerk and Edelenbos (2018) suggest that the various contexts give rise to a need for different profiles of boundary-spanners: no single form meets the varying needs and social realities of differing contexts. Of particular relevance to the work in bounded geographic settings such as neighborhoods is the notion of “Boundary Spanners as Fixers.” They describe the characteristics of these boundary spanners as being rooted in formal institutional organizations while aiming to fit with local communities and neighborhoods; viewing their role as more than just a job; and having strong personal relationships.

Such professionals present an interesting and important category. Not only are they embedded in hierarchical and political work contexts, but they also are embedded deeply in a local context and connected to local communities. Given the central role of this category of boundary spanners in the day-to-day work of local governance and the extent to which current challenges require “joined-up” responses at the grassroots, it is imperative to understand this role in more depth. That is to say, it is timely to develop a more comprehensive conceptualization of the particularities of boundary-spanning in local contexts. To this end, we aim to build on the work of van Meerkerk and Edelenbos (2018) by mapping the existing knowledge on what may be a nuanced set of elements to consider for boundary-spanning in local contexts. In order to do so, this scoping review addresses two questions: (a) How is boundary spanning conceptualized in relation to local governance? (b) What

are the particular characteristics of boundary spanning in local governance arrangements?

First, we outline the method we adopted for this scoping review and set out the process of study selection. The results of the review are then presented, organized around the two research questions. A discussion of the results is followed by a look at the implications for future research.

## Method

A scoping review is ideally suited to mapping and identifying gaps within an expansive body of literature. Scoping-reviews are marked by their systematic and transparent approach, with each stage clearly documented, aiming for a replicable review process (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). They differ from systematic reviews in that they do not distinguish studies by their quality and as such cannot assess the strength of evidence on a given topic. This allows, however, for including a broader range of literature, the mapping its conceptual as well as empirical contours, and identifying gaps. The term scoping review has been used rather loosely, in order to promote greater consistency in approach. Colquhoun et al. (2014) propose a common definition for such reviews: "a form of knowledge synthesis that addresses an exploratory research question aimed at mapping key concepts, types of evidence, and gaps in research related to a defined area or field by systematically searching, selecting, and synthesizing existing knowledge." In line with this aim for a consistent approach, our scoping review adopted the process outlined by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and further developed by Colquhoun et al. (2014). This involves (a) identifying the research question, (b) using this as a guide for identifying relevant literature, (c) following an iterative process of study selection, (d) extracting relevant variables from the papers (data charting), and (e) analyzing and reporting the results. Our scoping review was reported in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) statement (Tricco et al., 2018; prisma-statement.org). In this section we outline the search strategy and the approach to study selection and data charting.

### *Protocol and Registration*

Our protocol was drafted in March 2022, reporting the rationale, research question, search strategy, and eligibility criteria. It was retrospectively registered on the open science framework and can be accessed at: [https://osf.io/rkqam/?view\\_only=bc4b218d1b7b44d4aa43f296abbacc4d](https://osf.io/rkqam/?view_only=bc4b218d1b7b44d4aa43f296abbacc4d).

**Table 1.** Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

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**Inclusion criteria**

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Peer reviewed article (empirical, discussion, or review)

Written in English

Addresses boundary spanning within local contexts

Addresses the role of the boundary spanner between public bodies or public and private bodies

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**Exclusion criteria**

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Not peer-reviewed

Addresses boundary spanning within/between wholly private entities

Addresses boundary-spanning within organizations (intraorganizational boundary spanning)

Fields distant from local public governance including: management, business, sales, marketing, engineering, and sustainability

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**Eligibility Criteria**

A set of eligibility criteria were established in the protocol (Table 1). To be eligible for inclusion articles had to be peer-reviewed journal articles written in English; the peer-review criterion aimed to ensure a base-line quality for the papers while the English criterion reflected the capacity of the reviewers. No date limits were set on the eligibility as we were interested in all papers written on boundary spanning in local contexts. Further, to be eligible articles had to address boundary-spanning in a local context, between public bodies or between public and private bodies. Articles on boundary spanning within organizations or wholly between private bodies were excluded. This was a reflection of our aim to address boundary spanning in the context of public governance, meaning spanning within organizations and between private organizations did not have a direct bearing on crossing organizational boundaries in the context of local public governance. In line with this reasoning, articles were excluded when they were in fields far from public governance, including business, sales, marketing, engineering, and sustainability.

**Search Strategy**

A comprehensive search was performed in the bibliographic databases Scopus/Elsevier (coverage: 1823—14 March 2022), APA PsycInfo/Ebsco (coverage: 1800—present), the Web of Science Core Collection/Clarivate (coverage: 1900—present) and the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)/ProQuest (coverage: 1951—present) in collaboration with

a literature researcher (LS). Search terms included controlled terms as well as free text terms. Synonyms for “local governance” were combined with variants for “boundary spanning.” The search was performed without date or language restrictions. Duplicate articles were excluded by a medical information specialist (LS) using Endnote X20.0.1 (Clarivate™), following the Bramer-method (Bramer et al., 2016). The full search strategies for all databases can be found in the Supplementary Information. Synonyms for “boundary spanning” were not included in the search string. Our decision not to include synonyms for boundary-spanning had two main-drivers. First, we were interested in how the boundary-spanning concept itself was being utilized in this context; although there are close synonyms for boundary-spanning such as “knowledge broker” and “connector,” boundary-spanning as a concept has a rather clear and distinct set of features that have emerged through an extensive literature dating back to the 1970s. Second, the inclusion of “boundary-spanning” alone yielded a significant number of hits for an extensive review.

### *Study Selection*

Consistent with the methodology of a scoping review, study selection was an iterative process. One reviewer (WS) screened all potentially relevant titles and abstracts for eligibility using Rayyan (Ouzzani et al., 2016). Studies were excluded if they clearly were not relevant due to: (i) referring to boundaries in the contexts of physics or other hard science fields (ii) referring to boundary spanning within a single organization or (iii) referring to boundary spanning only within the context of private companies. Two reviewers (WS & RS) then independently screened the remaining 243 studies. Studies were included if they met the eligibility criteria in Table 1.

After both reviewers had blindly reviewed one hundred articles, a mid-review calibration was conducted using the comparison feature offered by Rayyan. During this calibration moment 16 papers were identified as differently categorized. The two reviewers discussed these differences in judgment and identified two ambiguities in the eligibility criteria: the definition of local context and the question of boundary spanning within the context of health organizations. Regarding the first, we developed a shared definition of local context as being within the limits of a city or municipality. The defining feature was that they fell within a layer of local governance rather than spanning cities or municipal areas. Regarding the second, we noted that a number of boundary-spanning articles addressed boundaries between different layers of

the healthcare system at a local level. As we discussed these examples, however, it was clear that many were examples of intra- rather than inter-organizational boundary spanning since the entities were lodged within an overarching body.

These discussions led to clarification of the definitions of the eligibility criteria. Thus, the criterion “local context” was expanded to include neighborhood, municipality, or city. The initial 100 articles were re-reviewed along with the remaining articles to ensure this more encompassing criterion was applied. After all articles had been through a round of exclusion/inclusion by both reviewers, discrepancies in judgment were resolved through a consensus procedure, discussing the differences until consensus was reached on all articles. Where it was ambiguous from the title and abstract as to whether the article met the eligibility criteria, the full text of the articles was reviewed.

### *Data Charting*

The data from the 38 eligible studies were charted using an extraction grid created with Microsoft Excel. The grid (Table 2) consisted of 15 columns, which can be divided between general data on the study (e.g., title, year, sample size) and data on findings relevant to the research questions. For general features of the study, we collected data on the authors, year of publication, title, journal, methodology, sample size and country of origin. For findings relevant to the research question, we abstracted (i) the definition of boundary spanning presented in the paper, (ii) the description of the actors whose boundaries were being spanned (for example, a health organization and a provider of social welfare services, a school and a local community), (iii) the individuals with the role of boundary spanner; these were the people the article identified as carrying out the work of boundary spanning.

We also abstracted data on specific local issues. This variable involved a level of interpretation by the reviewers given that the local context generally was not an explicit focus of the articles. In order to provide standards for this, we charted all references to locally specific issues as defined by (a) references to working in close physical proximity, (b) references to working within a bounded context (e.g., references to the influence of working within one municipality, one city, or one neighborhood), and (c) references to any relationship to a community or a neighborhood. The first author charted the data from the eligible studies, and the second author reviewed the data.

**Table 2. Review Charting Grid.**

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between what)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
A. Alvinus; B. W. Larsson; G. Larsson	2016	Manging boundaries in integrated care: A qualitative study of collaboration between municipalities and county councils in Sweden	International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior	Sweden	"Boundary spanning roles relate to individuals or groups of individuals with specific competence, knowledge, skills and approach that can act both to oil the wheels of collaboration and to act as a brake on it. Both planned and spontaneous boundary spanners exist."	Health—Social Welfare	Multiple: no clearly defined role	To gain a deeper understanding of boundary spanning roles and strategies involved in municipal and county council collaboration.	Interviews	15 [selected for wide variety of experience e.g. politician, director of care home, nurses, paramedics]	I. Existence of a legal requirement to collaborate. 2. Existence of boundary spanners in form of family links and off-duty professional links
L. K. Bradshaw	1999	Principals as boundary spanners: Working collaboratively to solve problems	NASSP Bulletin	USA	"Boundary spanners work in the area where these boundaries cross and overlap. They represent their own organizations, facilitate information sharing back and forth across the organizational boundaries, and help match needs and resources (Reed & Cefja 1987)."	Community—School—Parents	School Principal	To understand the role of the principal as a boundary spanner in full-service schools and provide insight on what makes this effective.	Literature Review/ Commentary	N/A	"The trend toward full-service schools, however, takes boundary spanning to a more challenging level and requires the principal to be able to navigate between education, health, and social service bureaucracies and between education and other professional disciplines."
P. R. Brown	2017	Attempting to Cultivate Mindsets for Boundary Spinning in Remote Indigenous Policy	Australian Journal of Public Administration	Australia	This paper includes a more extensive discussion on definition drawing on Paul Williams' (2002, 2010). Distinguishes between boundary spanning as an activity and as a role. States: "Most working definitions of boundary spanners encompass elements of working 'at the periphery', yet still 'performing organizational relevant tasks' with a focus on 'relating the organization with elements outside it'."	Government—Community	Government Business Managers	To understand the transition of policy actors to a new way of working that is more collaborative.	Single Case Study, Semi-structured elite interviews	19 Senior Public Servants	Context: emergence of boundary spanners from desire to have policies that target local needs. "The local-level governance, comprising senior officers in each community, generally called Government business managers (GBMs) and local Indigenous engagement officers (IEOs) was generally considered one of the most successful elements of the NPAKSD (PH&C 2014:22; CGRS 2013:6)"
M. Cailens; G. Bouckaert	2019	Trustworthiness and Information Disclosure Among Judicial Governmental Agencies	Public Performance and Management Review	Belgium	"Boundary spanners are individuals who act on behalf of their organization in an inter-organizational interaction, by linking their unit to external areas (Tushman & Scanlan, 1981)"	Multiple within context of youth justice: juvenile police, three social services, juvenile public prosecutors office, juvenile court	Multiple	To understand the link between perceived trustworthiness of boundary spanners and the willingness to exchange information between them.	Single Case Study, Semi-structured interviews	63 Professionals in youth justice (67 interviews total)	Not addressed directly

(continued)



**Table 2. (continued)**

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
H. Carissoon, R. Pipers	2020	Working towards health equity for ethnic minority elders: spanning the boundaries of neighbourhood governance	Journal of Health Organization and Management	Netherlands	"building alliances between people in different (sub-) systems"	Health—Social care—Community	Frontline workers	To understand how neighbourhood governance of social care affects the scope for frontline workers to address health inequities of older ethnic minorities.	Multiple Case Study (2); Semi-structured interviews & Participant Observation	44 managers/policy officers/frontline workers; 295 hours of participant observation	Context: Focus on neighborhood governance as a means of improving access to and delivery of public services. In NL, social care for elderly became responsibility of municipalities in 2015 in a process of localization. Localism has been coupled with austerity. Local-specific: 1. Due to locality, can be long-standing relationships that pre-date efforts at boundary spanning. 2. Geographic boundaries don't always make sense when spanning to communities—for example, spanning to a certain diaspora isn't confined to geographic setting.
A. Dudau, G. Favoto, G. Kominis	2018	Boundary-spanning leadership in hybrid networks: A case study of English local safeguarding children boards	Studies in Public and Non-Profit Governance	UK	"such individuals are inherently able to fill in the gaps in inter-organisational and inter-professional communication. This bridge the boundaries which are defining characteristics of organisations (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). ... Indeed, Williams (2002) implies that there is a large degree of infor- mality and flexibility about the boundary spanners' work in collaborations which relies essentially on their 'ability to engage with others and deploy effective relational and interpersonal competencies' (p. 110)."	Social Services—Education—Health—Justice	"Emergent Leaders" (researchers identified individuals within a partnership who demonstrated boundary-spanning practices)	To review the conditions leading to the emergence of hybrid network structures involved in public service delivery and analyze opportunities for boundary-spanning by network members and frames these against different manifestations of leadership in such collaborative contexts.	Case-study; Multiple-Lenses; Interviews; Meeting minutes; Observations	36 interviews with organization representatives	Not addressed directly

(continued)

**Table 2. (continued)**

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
A. Duda; D. Fischbacher-Smith, L. McAllister	2015	The Unsung Heroes of Welfare Complexities around individuals' contribution to effective inter-agency working in LSCBs	Public Management Review	UK	"Boundary spanners (horizontal rather than vertical)—see Guarnieros-Meza and Martin (2014) are inherently flexible information-processing agents (Tushman & Scanlan, 1981; Williams, 2002) who 'recode' closed semantics at the boundaries between cultures, be they organizational or professional, or indeed the composed culture of individual, professional and organizational 'wholes'..."	Social Services—Education—Health—Justice	"Emergent Leaders" (researchers identified individuals within a partnership who demonstrated boundary-spanning practices)	To address the problem of persistent service failure in welfare collaborations despite several government reforms directed at integrating services. Addressing our understanding of the key drivers of effectiveness in partnerships.	Case-study: Interviews, documentary analysis, participant and non participant observation, questionnaires	27 interviews with organization representatives; nine questionnaire respondents	Not addressed directly
J. Edelebos; I. van Meerk	2018	Finding common ground in urban networks: what are its facilitating factors?	Journal of Environmental Planning and Management	Netherlands	"Often during a collaboration, specific individuals may help collaborators better understand one another and work together more effectively (Etzkowitz, 2012; Maglaughlin & Sonnenwald, 2005; Young, 2010) . . . individuals who span boundaries by passing on relevant information (e.g. Etzkowitz, 2012; Tushman, 1977) and the role of agents who facilitate interaction and arbitrate conflict among team members (Sonnenwald, 1996). The boundary spanners may help to bring potential collaborators together, align problem definitions, and resolve differences between various groups and organizations, and language barriers among collaborators (Maglaughlin & Sonnenwald, 2005; Young, 2010)."	Multiple: local government, project developers, building companies, residents, societal stakeholder groups etc.	Multiple	To investigate the following main research question: what are the facilitating factors of common ground in governance networks?	Survey research	141 respondents	Not addressed directly

(continued)

**Table 2. (continued)**

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
R. S. Etz, D. J. Cohen; S. H. Woolf; J. S. Holroyd; K. E. Donathue; N. F. Isaacson; K. C. Stange; R. L. Ferrer; A. L. Olson	2008	Bridging Primary Care Practices and Communities to Promote Health Behaviors	American Journal of Preventive Medicine	USA	"Boundary spanning is a strategy for making connections across the gap created between practices and communities through the lack of previously existing infrastructure, and often relies on boundary spanners, or people with a foot in both worlds (eg, knowledge of both primary care and information technology)"	Health—Community	Individuals with a specific role in bridging health and community resources	To identify and understand strategies used for linking primary care practices with community resources.	Diary Data, Interviews; Document analysis	Eight projects were followed across 2 years, number of interview participants is not specified.	Making partners aware of local community resources required focused attention—geographic proximity did not equate with knowledge of local resources.
J. R. Gill-Garcia; T. A. Pardo; D. S. Snyego	2016	From bureaucratic machines to inter-organizational networks: Characterizing the response to the World Trade Center crisis	Transforming Government - People, Process and Policy	USA	"Boundary spanners are members of an organization who bridge the boundary of their organization to connect to the larger external environment (Burr, 1995; Williams, 2002)."	Emergency Services	Emergent Individuals (based on action taken rather than role title)	To argue that the structure of the World Trade Center (WTC) crisis can be characterized as an inter-organizational network and the majority of the activities can be identified as network management.	Interviews & Sociometric survey	29 First responder interviews, incorporating a sociometric survey, Command center video interview (unspecified number of participants)	Not addressed directly
V. Guarnoros; Maza, S. Martin	2016	Boundary Spanning in Local Public Service Partnerships: Coaches, advocates or enforcers?	Public Management Review	UK	"Boundary spanners (or collaborative managers) can be defined as individuals who work across different organizational cultures and exercise influence through formal and informal channels in order to strengthen the connections between actors (Ferlie et al., 2011; Klijn et al., 2010; Williams, 2002)."	Government—Public Service Partnerships	Civil Servants	To begin to fill the gap in knowledge about the role and impact of boundary spanners through an empirical analysis of the activities and perceived effectiveness of senior civil servants in the UK.	Case-Study; Document Analysis, Interviews; Structured Survey	Interviews: 1 Senior Civil service team; 7 Welsh Government representatives Survey: 119 Local service leaders; 24 WGRs	Differing local contexts gives rise to different qualities required of boundary-spanners; boundary spanning in this sector required horizontal BS at local level BS to national government, and horizontal BS in national government in order to address the local issues. BS at national level most challenging due to disconnection from the issues at local level.

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**Table 2. (continued)**

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
J. Haring, A. E. Kunst, A. Kwak, S. Stronks	2011	A 'health broker' role as a catalyst of change to promote health: An experiment in deprived Dutch neighbourhoods	Health Promotion International	Netherlands	"The concept of boundary spanner refers to the local coordinating role of a strategic broker, or 'anchoring point,' needed to foster the col- laboration between multiple entities (Craig, 2004). Boundary spanners are persons who have to interact with other people inside their own institute as well as negotiate system inter- changes with other organizations (Steadman, 1992)."	Health—Youth and Education	Health Broker (A specially created position)	To explore the possibilities of institutionalizing a role for a "health broker" in four Dutch municipalities as an additional investment to promote health in deprived neighborhoods.	Prospective, Collaborative Inquiry; Document Analysis; Minute Analysis.	Follows collaboration of a university research team and officials of four local governments.	Proved difficult to establish a comprehensive picture of the local health situation due to incomplete and scattered information. Health brokers found it difficult to get a hold on the local situation, fragmented policies, misalignment between neighbourhood and municipal policy, myriad of local programs and projects. "Developing the content of the role was difficult and tempered by the complexity of health issues and the local situation."
J. Hasiak; J. Grit; W. Hulink	2015	New Practices of Farm-Based Community-Oriented Social Care Services in The Netherlands	Journal of Social Service Research	Netherlands	"Boundary spanners" are key individuals who create linkages to overcome difficulties (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Dobbe & Richards- Schuster, 2008; Williams, 2002). Boundary spanners link two or more organizations whose goals and expectations are likely to be, at least partially, conflicting (Miles, 1980). They inter- act with other people inside their organization and negotiate system interchanges with another organization (Steadman, 1992)."	Farming—Health/Social Care	Two forms: 1. Initiator of project. 2. Managers	To increase understanding of the collaboration between care organizations and farmers.	Multiple case-study; Interviews; Document analysis.	4 Cases; 10 Interviews with a wide range of stakeholders.	Not addressed directly
N. Hermens; L. de Langen; K. T. Verkooyen; M. A. Koelen	2017	Co-ordinated action between youth-care and sports: facilitators and barriers	Health and Social Community	Netherlands	"The CSCs can be seen as boundary spanners who can contribute to co-ordinated action if they are able to bridge diverse cultures, share resources and power, are trustworthy and credible, and can com- municate (Lasker et al., 2001; Mizrahi & Rosenthal 2001; Williams 2013)."	Care Organizations & Community Sports clubs	Care Sport Connectors' (a specifically created position)	To generate insight into facilitators of and barriers to successful coordinated action between professional care organizations and community sports clubs	Cross-sectional study; semi-structured interviews	23 Interviews	The existence of existing informal, face-to-face relationships which facilitates boundary spanning

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**Table 2. (continued)**

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
D. H. Helt, G. Carey, M. H. Rod	2018	Time to dismiss the idea of a structural fix within government? An analysis of intersectoral action for health in Danish municipalities	Scandinavian Journal of Public Health	Denmark	"Boundary spanning is the art of collaborative work-ing across departmental and sectoral boundaries. The concept highlights the abilities to manage inter-organizational and multi-sectoral collaborative relations in networked forms of governance."	Health - Non-health sectors	Proposed: Public Health Officials	To examine the role of organizational structure within government(s) in attempts to implement intersectoral action for health in Danish municipalities.	Interviews	49	Highlights the unique setting afforded by local focus when thinking about partnerships: "Municipal services are delivered where peo-ple learn, work, play and live, which means municipal governments are uniquely positioned to establish healthy settings."
M. I. Hong	2008	Street-level bureaucracy revisited: Frontline district central-office administrators as boundary spanners in education policy implementation	Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis	USA	Individuals who: "work among the central office and schools and their community partners to broker new support rela- tionships and otherwise enable implementation."	Schools—Community Agencies	Central Office Administrators	To address the gap in research about central-office boundary spanners in practice with findings from an embedded, comparative case study of boundary spanners in the implementation of collaborative education policy.	Multiple case-study; interviews; document analysis; observation	Interviews: 33 participants (49 total interviews), with a wide range of stakeholders; Unstructured Discussions: 17; Observation of formal meetings: 160 hours	Centralizes role of local knowledge in addressing social issues; notion that working in this setting means working with whole neighborhood, not just another organization.
J. Kistan	2000	School-based mental health program: A case study of interorganizational collaboration	Journal of Health Politics Policy and Law	USA	"Boundary spanners are individuals who help bridge the gap between organizations by finding and articulating common ground, whether in the early planning stages or later, during local program implementation."	Education - Health	Middle Managers	To explore the difficult and attenuated process of interorganizational collaboration — including attention to the organizational, political, and interprofessional context within which such ventures are implemented—to examine how such cooperative program development can be successfully accomplished in today's competitive and complex health care arena.	Commentary/ Case-Study	N/A	"The planners had realized all along that local implementation of the program would represent a shift, but they had been so preoccupied with getting the program approved that they had given local implementation relatively little thought." "In some instances, there already was a local history of collaboration between specific community mental health agencies and schools. Sometimes a guidance counselor or assistant principal had a strong link to a service provider that had been responsive to school needs. And sometimes a pri-ncipal or superintendent with a communitywide vision had established connections with a local mental health agency. These ties helped staff envision the positive aspects of a program that might otherwise have been viewed less favorably."

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**Table 2. (continued)**

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
Z. Kovács	2020	From exemplary practitioners to urban chameleons? The role of the citizen in the redistribution of tasks in local governance	Critical Policy Studies	Netherlands	"Creates bridges and multiactor networks across distinct domains; Matches initiatives; Builds trust; Facilitates communication; 'Translates' and mediates between distinct parties; Troubleshoots when conflicts arise"	Multiple actors and organizations and government at neighborhood level	A 'Citizen Practitioner'	To understand the functioning of an 'exemplary practitioner' through the framework of a typology of roles: frontline worker, everyday fiber, social entrepreneur and boundary spanner.	Actor-focused approach; shadowing; interviews	1 practitioner	"Bespides social engagement and an entrepreneurial approach; these actors' main characteristic is their extensive knowledge of local conditions and 'holistic problem orientation', which allows them to prioritize the complex and interrelated neighborhood problems (Van Hulst et al., 2012; Van der Peneen & van Borrel 2016). They do so by operating and transcending the organizational and domain boundaries characterized by relational tensions"
J. Koyama, J. Kasper	2021	Pushing the Boundaries: Education Leaders, Mentors, and Refugee Students	Educational Administration Quarterly	USA	"Boundary spanners are a subset of those who cross boundaries or borders, who aim specifically not only to traverse the contexts on either side of the boundary, but also to—in some way—to link them."	School—Organizations—Families	Refugee student-family Mentors created (A specifically position)	To address two research questions: In what ways do the mentors, as district actors, work with school leaders, teachers, and staff to integrate refugee students into particular schools? How do the mentors cross home-school-community boundaries, and what are the consequences to them, the school district, and the refugee students and families when the mentors cross those boundaries?	Ethnography: observation, document analysis, survey	survey, observation and interviews: 10 mentors; interviews: 10 education staff and 22 refugee parents	The refugee parents interacted with the mentors in their communities and at their homes, as well as in the schools. Unlike the district administrators and education leaders in schools, the parents saw the mentors working in different contexts and repeatedly navigating, and helping them navigate, the boundaries between home-school-community.

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**Table 2. (continued)**

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
C. Lindsay; M. Dutton	2012	Promoting Healthy Routes Back to Work: Boundary Spanning Health Professionals and Employability Programmes in Great Britain	Social Policy and Administration	UK	"The boundary spanner has been defined as delivering a range of functions, including: providing local coordination as an 'anchor point' between collabo- rating agencies; linking stakeholder groups within and beyond the boundary spanner's own organization; managing tensions and conflicts between part- ners; building trust and shared values; demonstrating leadership in pursuing the partnership's goals; promoting innovation in policy solutions that reflect inter-disciplinary approaches; and (crucially) networking to share information and practice (Haring et al., 2011; Williams, 2010)."	Health—Welfare	Health Care Staff: To provide new insights into the role and practice of health professionals working within Job-center Plus-NHS partnerships. The article deploys the concept of 'boundary spanning' to explore how NHS staff re-engineered established professional roles, developed innovative practice and facilitated partnership-working with Job-center Plus	Semi-structured interviews	52 practitioners	"Sometimes practitioners had direct experience of living in communities char- acterized by high levels of poverty, ill health and worklessness, and were motivated by the prospect of contributing to a programme that seemed to target these problems. Many more had experience of working in disadvan- tagged communities. The manner in which 'connecting with communities' was a key motivator for CMP practitioners, and an important activity and skill-set that defined their work, as boundary spanners, providing a bridge between mainstream public services and potentially excluded groups."	
C. Lindsay; S. Pearson; E. Batty; A.T.M. Cullen; W. Eadon	2021	Collaborative Innovation in Labor Market Inclusion	Public Administration Review	UK	"The boundary spanner role has been defined as delivering a range of functions, including: providing coordination as an anchor point between organizations; managing tensions and conflicts; building trust and shared values; promoting interdisciplinary approaches; and networking to facilitate shared learning."	Multiple	Street-level Key Workers	To address the questions: Did "Making it Work" (a local labor inclusion program) embody collaborative innovations? If there was evidence of effective collaborative innovation, what were the facilitators in terms of governance, leadership, and the roles of street-level program workers?	Semi-structured interviews	102 service users; 117 key stakeholders	Emphasis on the importance of "deep community knowledge" being held by boundary-spanners

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**Table 2. (continued)**

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
L. K. Møller; C. D. Hochheim	2019	Spanning boundaries and balancing tensions: A systems perspective on community school coordinators	The School Community Journal	USA	"Much of the literature on boundary-spanning individuals has relied on a model that envisions the organization as struggling to maintain its integrity while being buffeted by environmental pressures (e.g., Honig, 2006; Honig & Hatch, 2004; Leifer & Huber, 1977). In this conception, individuals tasked with boundary spanning operate on the edges of a system that is clearly separate from its environment, facilitating information transfer and politically representing the organization to outsiders. Although useful for explaining many contexts, the informational and political models of boundary spanning insufficiently explain organizations such as community schools that address their challenges by building relationships with outsiders around shared goals, blurring the lines between the organization and the environment."	School—Community	Community School Coordinators	To address the questions: 1. How do Community School Coordinators enact their work within the context of a lead-partner model in a community school coalition? 2. To what extent do Community School Coordinators experience tensions that are related to how their positions are structured?	Comparative case study; interviews, document analysis	Time study & interviews: 11 community school leaders	Not addressed directly
L. McCaig; T. Rossi; E. Enright; K. Shelley	2019	Schools, student health and family welfare: Exploring teachers' work as boundary spanners	British Educational Research Journal	Australia	"Boundary spanning has been defined as 'reaching across borders to build relationships, interconnections, and interdependencies in order to manage complex problems' (Strange, 2011, p. 516)."	Health - Education	Teachers	To examine how four Australian teachers negotiate the network of partnerships within and beyond the school when attempting to solve their students' particular health and welfare needs.	Multi - Method: Survey, semi-structured interviews; systematic observation; time-use diaries	Survey: 385 teachers; Interviews: 48 teachers and other school-based professionals	Embeddedness in local community is central to this article and situation - complexity of bridging gap between institutions and community/families

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**Table 2. (continued)**

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
P. M. Miller	2008	Examining the work of boundary spanning leaders in community contexts	International Journal of Leadership in Education	USA	"Broadly conceived, then boundary spanning leadership of USC partnerships is that which, strategically permeating diverse organizational and cultural boundaries, transcends this ineffective, dispersed leadership to effectively guide joint action (Miller 2006)";	Community - School - University	Directors of USC (university-school-community) Partnerships	To address the questions: (1) what are the core leadership characteristics of boundary spanning leaders; (2) how do boundary spanners practise leadership in collaborative contexts; (3) how is boundary spanning related to contemporary scholarship on leadership and community-based collaborative action?	Semi-structured Interviews; Observations; Document analysis	Interviews: 2 boundary spanning leaders and 37 partnership participants; Observations: >30 programme and planning meetings.	"Their primary loyalties were to their community-based constituents and they both possessed inherent desires to learn from and advocate for those who have traditionally been oppressed."; Role of trusting and loving relationships; "Very clearly, their exceptional utility as leaders here is tied to their skill, expertise and their perceived permanence in their communities. They are in and of their communities (Miller, 2007, emphasis added), consequently they know, respect and believe in the 'rituals and cultures' (McLaren, 1986) of the people. But not only do they know, respect and believe in their neighbours, their neighbours know, respect and believe in them—and they trust that the boundary spanners will continue to work on their behalf."
P. M. Miller	2009	Boundary spanning in homeless children's education: Notes from an emergent faculty role in Pittsburgh	Educational Administration Quarterly	USA	"Roles and characteristics of boundary spanners have been conceptualized in a diversity of ways, but from a macro perspective, they have been depicted as having 'special potential' (Firestone & Fisher, 2002, p. 45) to navigate the 'hybrid and sometimes unspoken concerns about trust and coequal participation' (Walsh et al., 2000, p. 22) in contexts where individuals and/or organizations with wide-ranging backgrounds and interests are called to work together."	Schools - Homeless Shelters	"Syeems Advocate" (A specifically created position)	To examine some potential roles that can be played by boundary spanners in facilitating more efficient action in the homeless education situation	reflections on field experience	N/A	Context Matters: "a community agency director who can skillfully span boundaries that separate the individuals and groups in his or her neighborhood domain of practice might be altogether unable to forge bonds with local schools, universities, and government agencies because he or she is unfamiliar with the ways these organizations operate and lacks the time to learn about them. The point here is that being an effective boundary spanner in one context does not ensure that one will similarly thrive in other contexts."

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Table 2. (continued)

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
J. V. Bekkers; W. Voorberg	2016	Self-Organization and the Role of Government: How and why does self-organization evolve in the shadow of hierarchy?	Public Management Review	Netherlands	"These activities refer to the mutual exchange of information between the focal organization and other actors in this environment. It also involves the provision of a communication channel, commitment, support and protection, and the assurance of legitimacy" (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; van Buuren & Loorbach 2009)."	Community—Municipality	Multiple: community manager, alderman, 'district level participation brokers'	To understand how and why the interplay between self-organizing communities of citizens and governments shapes the emergence of new public services and in particular welfare services. In order to gain a better empirical and theoretical understanding of the complex nature of self-organization processes in the public sector.	Case-study (2 cases); semi-structured interviews; document analysis	31 Interviews (15 Citizens, 12 Policy-makers, 4 Professionals)	Centrality of community and citizen engagement with local concerns leading to initiatives. "In Amersfoort, the initiators and the community manager I shared a history of community activities. The initiators knew each other (establishing social capital), and had experience with how local politics worked in terms of political/institutional capital, which helped set the wheels in motion..."; "What we see here is that boundary spanners had an important leadership role in mobilizing social capital by being part of both worlds; the neighborhood and the municipality. Both cases show that frontline civil servants (those working at the interface of the community and the municipality) are especially important in granting access to vital resources (people). In sharing information and knowledge as well as in acting as ambassadors for the initiators."

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Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
J. Nederhand; M. Van Der Steen; M. Van Twiet	2019	Boundary-spanning strategies for aligning institutional logics: a typology	Local Government Studies	Netherlands	"Due to their strategic positioning in-between policy officials and local communities (Van Meerkerk, 2014), boundary spanners are able to play a key role in enabling a productive interplay between 'incompatible prescriptions' of different institutional logics (Williams 2002; Meyer & Hamerschmid, 2006). By linking organisations with their environments, boundary spanners are engaged in building and maintaining sustainable networks (Tushman & Scanlan 1981)".	Municipality—Community	District Managers	To critically examine boundary spanners to align the institutional logics of bureaucracy, management and networks in citizen-state interactions	Interviews	16 District Managers	Spanning between municipalities and citizens where the imbalance of power is much greater and complex than between two organizations
C. Needham; S. Mastracci; C. Mangan	2017	The emotional labour of boundary spanning	Journal of Integrated Care	UK/USA	Offers an extensive definition of boundary spanning, highlighting differences depending on context: "Boundary spanners undertake the collaborative work that is the basis for shared purpose and identity across organisations (Dickinson & Sullivan, 2014, p. 170). The nature of boundary spanning relationships is shaped by the relative size and influence of the organisations involved (Callister & Wall, 2001; Mills & Modavi, 1999), job design (Crawford & Nonis, 1996), and the network structure and placement of the boundary spanner in a network (Shrum, 1990)".	Multiple (spanning to citizens)	Multiple	To explicate the emotional labor within the interactions that boundary spanners have with citizens, requiring adherence to display rules and building trust.	Conceptual (with N/A illustrative examples)	N/A	Spanning into citizenry brings a different kind of emotional labor—people's personal lives and issues - again distinct from org-org spanning.

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Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
L. B. Nilsen	2010	Boundary spanners revisited: A qualitative inquiry into cross-system reform through the experience of youth service professionals	Qualitative Social Work	USA	"This term—widely cited in justice system reform literature—describes a new generation of change agents who make an improved treatment system possible. Paraphrasing Steadman, a boundary spanner works between systems whose goals, though superficially complementary, may carry inherent conflicts requiring mediation, negotiation, and strategy."	Health—Justice	Project Directors	To most effectively advance enhanced programming [for adolescent substance abuse], more needs to be known about the experiences and interpretations of 'systems change' agents themselves. This article focuses on the 'boundary spanner,' who coordinates joint community efforts to implement improved services in a living laboratory of social networks and social movements.	Participatory Action Research: semi-structured interviews; focus groups; document analysis	Interviews: nine Project Directors	"Other tensions included those between players with formal authority (agency representatives, including large agency directors, their agents and judges) and those with informal authority (local community members and/or families and youth), among whom there may have been no precedent for trusting and productive alliances. Their ability to adapt to local circumstances allowed them to gain power and access across diverse groups. Failure to do this risked alienating one of these groups, impeding progress toward the vision."
C. A. Pectus; M. Severson	2006	Paving the Way for Effective Reentry Practice: The Critical Role and Function of the Boundary Spanner	The Prison Journal	USA	"Boundary spanners, those who attempt to understand human behavior in the context of the systemic structures, operations, and barriers that exist within and between communities and prisons, seek to bridge communication, understanding, and service gaps and translate the workings of one entity into the language of another."	Justice (prisons)—Local Agencies (health, social)—Communities	University personnel	To explore the role of the boundary spanner in confronting the 21st-century challenges facing corrections and communities. A look at how boundary spanning in one community is helping to pave the way to achieving optimal systemic change will illustrate its usefulness.	Case-Study	Not specified	"Boundary spanning is pursued in an effort to reduce the tendency for community partnerships to move toward cooperation where the culture of the dominant partner (which Departments of Corrections are always at risk of becoming) is imposed on more subordinate members."

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Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between what)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
V. Roussy, T. Riley, C. Livingstone	2020	Together stronger: Boundary work within an Australian systems-based prevention initiative	Health Promotion International	Australia	"Boundary spanners' have been defined as positions that link two or more systems whose goals and expectations are at least partially conflicting (Miles, 1980). Individuals or whole organizations can play a boundary spanning role (Steadman, 1992), which has been further conceptualized in terms of spanning 'across and up-wards', or 'downwards' (Rugdasa et al., 2007)."	Municipality—Community Health	Leaders: Health Promotion Officers	To examine boundary interactions between local government and community health organizations during the operationalization of a systems-based initiative to prevent obesity and chronic diseases (Healthy Together Communities—HTCs) in Victoria, Australia.	Semi-structured interviews	20 participants [5 managers, 15 practitioners/coordinators]	"HTC's three dually-managed practitioners had an extra advantage in understanding their boundary spanner roles, by virtue of being employed and based within the community health service. Indeed, they could build upon pre-existing relationships that community health's clinical and health promotion staff had with local settings"; "In HTC, spanning downwards was a mechanism used by the community health organization to apply an equity lens to HTC, and adapt its programs to local population needs. For example, they removed financial and literacy barriers to enable disadvantaged groups to participate in some HTC initiatives and be included within the boundaries of the intervention"; "For example, HTC informants felt a perception within community settings that local government had no business in spreading health-related messages. In other words, some community members struggled to conceptualize local government as being within the boundaries of prevention and health; 'why is council telling me what to eat?' 'Yeah, and they don't like that' (practitioner, community health, HTC). Conversely, informants felt that community members saw community health organizations as legitimate and valid bearers of the prevention message, because health is their core business. On a relational level, the boundaries of schools and early childhood services also appeared more welcoming and permeable to community health organizations than to local government in the two sites we studied."

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Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
J. Rugglass, N. K. Shortz, L. Boydell	2007	The right tool for the Health and Social Care in the Community task: 'boundary spanners' in a partnership approach to tackle fuel poverty in rural Northern Ireland	Health and Social Care in the Community	Ireland	"The term, which has been used in the organisational literature for more than 30 years, is defined as 'positions that link two or more systems whose goals and expectations are at least partially conflicting' (Stedman, 1992, p. 1)"	Statutory—Voluntary—Private—Energy—[Health—Energy—Community]	Health Action Manager; 'Community Energy Advisor' [specifically created positions]	To some of the mechanisms that secured the perceived success of the fuel poverty initiative, focusing on the role of key individuals who acted as 'boundary spanners'.	Focus groups and interviews	4 focus groups with a total of 27 members of community associations partnerships, interviews: 12 partners	"For example, little attention has been paid to how the role relates to other boundaries that need to be spanned for a partnership to effect change: the linking 'downwards' Partnerships talked with making changes must equally overcome the distance between their initiatives or projects, and the communities that they serve. For the 'spanning across and upwards' to be meaningful, attention must also be given to practical project implementation on the ground, including the ways in which members of the community (i.e., project recipients as opposed to community representatives) are approached"; Likewise, what is described throughout this article as 'downwards' boundary spanning has much similarity with community development practices. The argument is that this piece is missing from the concept of boundary spanners as it is currently applied in the literature on partnerships. For example, Ranade and Hudson (2004) recognized that boundary spanners (managing across or upward) need support from workers on the ground, but this role is not described as part of the concept of boundary spanner in itself. Since this dimension is crucial for a partnership's ability to implement policy or projects the concept of boundary spanner, and research applying it, should be extended to include this dimension."

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Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
H. J. Steadman	1992	Boundary spanners: A key component for the effective interactions of the justice and mental health systems	Law and Human Behavior	USA	<p>"Boundary spanners are positions that link two or more systems whose goals and expectations are likely to be at least partially conflicting" (Miles, 1980, p. 62). At each organizational boundary there is a person whose role it is both to interact with the other people inside their own organization and to negotiate system interchanges with another organization. The interchanges may be raw materials, information, or products. "This definition is itself cited by a number of other papers.</p>	Justice—mental health	Multiple	To define the concept of boundary spanners, highlighting some key examples of how these positions have emerged for distinct purposes in three U.S. jurisdictions, how these positions can be developed and financed, and why more research needs to be done on these positions to maximize their use in solving the problems of the mental health and justice systems interactions.	Case-study (anecdotal)	Three illustrative models	<p>"In her approach, the CEA was very conscious of being non-intrusive, and the assessments usually happened over cups of tea, and involved chats about many issues other than energy efficiency or health. Being a farmer's wife herself, the CEAs' background, as well as her personality, was described as making her able to bond easily with local people."</p>

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Table 2. (continued)

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
Van Hult, M., de Graaf, L. & van den Brink, G.	2012	The work of exemplary practitioners in neighborhood governance	Critical Policy Studies	Netherlands	"Boundary spanners work in positions between two or more systems (e.g. the juridical system and the health system, different organizations). They deal with people on both sides of the boundary and specialize in negotiating the interactions between systems. Boundary spanners are characterized by their ability to engage with others and deploy effective relational and interpersonal competencies" (Williams, 2002, p. 110)."	Multiple	Exemplary Practitioners	To understand how practitioners in disadvantaged neighborhoods proceed when engaging in controversial, politically sensitive policy processes that might develop in unintended and surprising ways. To know what contribution they might make in the important task of mediating and at times redesigning the multidimensional interface between (groups of) people, (formal and informal) policies and (sub-)systems.	shadowing; interviews;	49 practitioners (2 <sup>th</sup> used as basis of this article)	"In his view, speaking the local language draws people closer together. This intense way of relating to others has two sides to it, or so it would seem. On the one hand, our first practitioner is genuinely interested in the people he works with and wants to know them well. On the other hand, he knows that any knowledge thus gained might also prove instrumental at a later point in time."; "The civil servant knows the people and the projects in the neighborhood and is able to see their overlap and counterparts. He connects people if he thinks they can help each other with their initiatives."; "His willingness to help and his central position in the local network made him a popular figure with the active members of the neighborhood community. One of them characterized him in half a sentence as 'always helping, knowing everything, knowing everybody'. According to this contact, our civil servant demonstrates a degree of engagement that is rather rare. Like many others we met, he would contact his network partners in the neighborhood frequently, most of the time preferring face-to-face contact to other forms of connection.";

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**Table 2. (continued)**

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
I. van Meerterik, J. Edelembos	2014	The effects of boundary spanners on trust and performance of urban governance networks: Findings from survey research on urban development projects in the Netherlands	Policy Sciences	Netherlands	"Competent boundary spanners are organisational members who are able to link the organization they represent with its environment (Tushman & Scanlan, 1981). They are considered to be important for building trust within governance networks and to help improve coordination around decision making and implementation in governance networks around complex public issue"	Within a "governance network."	Various: identified by action rather than position	To investigate the relationships between the presence of competent boundary spanners and network performance and trust. Building on the literature, it is assumed that boundary spanners have a positive influence on network performance, and that trust has a mediating role in this relationship.	Survey	141 Project Managers	"But, our exemplary urban practitioners do not just translate the local knowledge about the neighborhood in order for policies to better fit with people, as the literature would have us expect (Durose, 2009; Engbom et al., 2007). They also let the knowledge flow through the system (Wagemar, 2007) in the other direction, when they explain to residents, for instance, the way local government works or help members of civil society present themselves favorably to a public manager. They can, as Healey (1992, p. 17) said of skilled planners, operate across knowledge forms in their daily work."
											Not addressed directly

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Table 2. (continued)

Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who?)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
I. van Meerkerk, J. Edelenbos	2018	Facilitating conditions for boundary-spanning behaviour in governance networks	Public Management Review	Netherlands	“Competent boundary spanners play a key role in these governance networks, as they are organizational members who are able to link the organization or constituency they represent with its environment (Steadman, 1992; Tushman & Scaplan, 1981). They are engaged in building sustainable relationships between relevant organizations in their environment, information transfer across their organizational boundary, translocation across boundaries and mobilizing support within the environment, and their home organization for developments in the network.”	Within a ‘governance network’: ‘local government, project developers, building companies, residents, societal stakeholder groups, etc.’	Project Managers	To explore facilitating conditions in relation to boundary-spanning behavior in an integral model, testing their (indirect) effects on trust and network performance.	Survey	141 Project Managers	Not addressed directly
B. R. Weiss	2021	“When you’re here, you’re not a militant feminist”: volunteer professionalization in a rape crisis center	Theory and Society USA	USA	“People with formal membership in one organization but frequent contact with other organizations.”	Police—Voluntary Organization—Victims	Volunteers	To address organizational complexity as dealt with by those lower down in organizational hierarchy.	Case Study ethnographic research - observation and interviews	Interviews: 10 Staff: 10 Volunteers: 700hours	“I argue that, because these decentralized organizations expect low-level workers to interface with their organizational partners, attention only to organizational elites in the neoinstitutional literature fails to capture the totality of important institutional management strategies. In this article, I show how street-level workers manage institutional complexity in a rape crisis center, demonstrating the importance of institutional competence across all levels of the hierarchy in diffuse organizations.”

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Authors	Year	Title	Journal title	Country of origin	Boundary spanner definition	Boundaries spanned (between who)	Boundary spanner role holder	Aim of paper/study	Methodology	Population/sample size	Local-specific issues
P. Williams	2013	We are all boundary spanners now?	International Journal of Public Sector Management	UK	"In this paper, boundary spanners are considered to be individuals who have a dedicated job role or responsibility to work in collaborative environments such as, partnership co-ordinators, crime and community safety officers, anti-poverty co-ordinators and health promotion managers who co-ordinate, facilitate and service the processes of collaboration between a diverse set of interests/ agencies."	Multiple	Multiple	To examine the extent to which boundary spanning roles and competencies are similar to, or different from, those used to manage in traditional public organizations; whether there are material differences between dedicated boundary spanners and a wider cadre of leaders, managers and practitioners involved in designing and delivering modern public services; and whether there is a case for considering the majority of public servants as boundary spanners now?	Exploratory, drawing on review of literature and contemporary research by author.	N/A	Argues that spanning happens at all levels - at level of street level bureaucrat. Likewise, Ruggkää et al. (2007) in the context of partnerships tackling fuel poverty emphasize the "downward" spanning focus of some boundary spanners and their engagement with citizens and communities. They suggest that much of the work of the boundary spanners working at this level has much in common with community development practice, but the tasks, traits and skills, and strategies resonate considerably with those outlined above. As might be expected from the context, this type of boundary spanner is particularly interested in delivery and policy implementation.

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## *Synthesis and Reporting of Results*

First, we summarized the general characteristics of articles, providing a descriptive account of the research methodologies, sample size and country of origin of the studies. In order to understand how the concept of boundary spanning is currently being drawn upon in relation to collaboration in local contexts we examined a number of features of the papers: (1) how boundary-spanning was defined, (2) what kinds of boundaries were identified as being spanned, (3) the features of the boundary-spanning role, and (4) issues specific to boundary-spanning in a local context. In practice this involved reading through each item in the data charting table and grouping those with the same or conceptually similar content. A descriptive account then was then written of common elements that emerged in multiple studies, with additional notes of outliers from these common descriptions. The process could be likened to a thematic content analysis. The results are presented as a narrative account in the following section.

## **Results**

### *Source Selection*

The literature search generated a total of 2,607 references: 1,131 in Scopus, 905 in Web of Science, 277 in PsycInfo and 294 in IBSS. After removing duplicates of references that were selected from more than one database, 1,439 references remained. The initial review of the titles and abstracts led to the removal of 1184 articles that clearly were not relevant, leaving 255 for retrieval. After searching the resources available to the reviewers, including emailing authors of papers, 12 articles could not be retrieved and thus had to be excluded from the review. This left 243 articles to be assessed for eligibility. After resolving all differences in judgment between the reviewers, 48 articles were included. During the course of data charting, all the articles were fully read. During the reading of full texts it became clear that an additional 10 articles only referred to boundary spanning in a tangential manner and did not address the role of a boundary spanner, leaving 38 papers to include in the final review. The flow chart of the search and selection process is presented in Figure 1. (Page et al., 2021; prisma-statement.org)

### *Study Characteristics*

The majority of the studies are case studies of boundary-spanning in a specific context. In addition, there also were a literature review, a survey, and

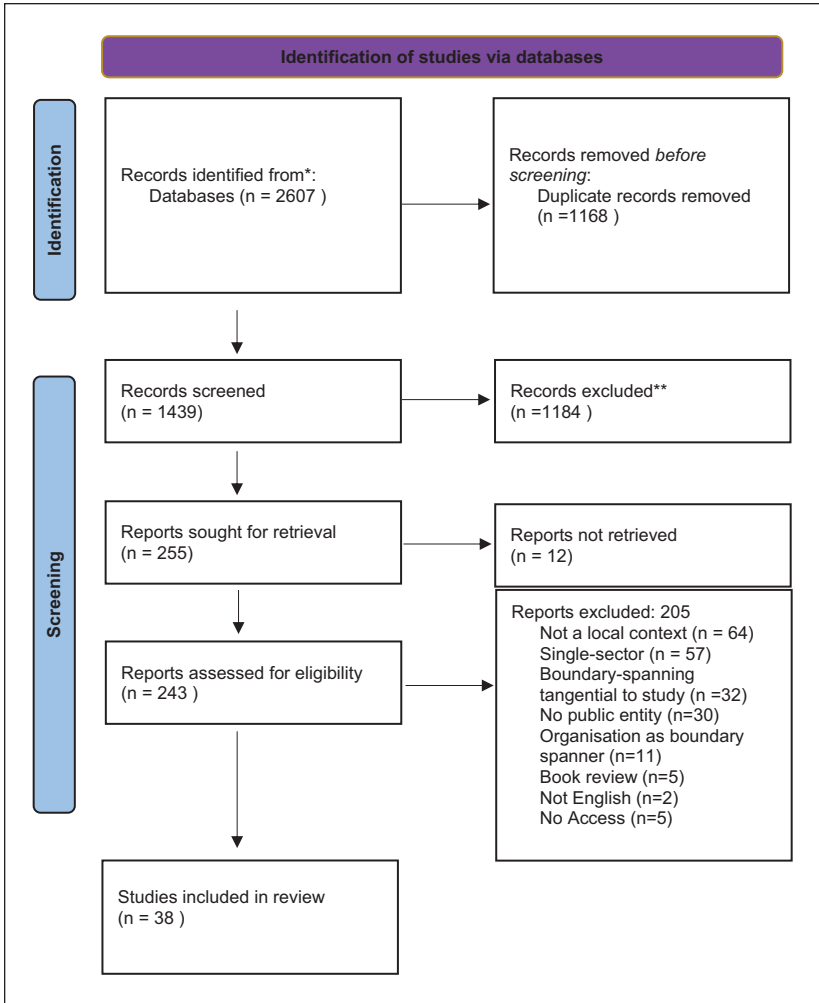


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart: Identification and Screening Process.

three conceptual and commentary papers. Twenty-eight of the studies used interviews, often in combination with document analysis (13) and observation (12). Seven studies drew on surveys and two on focus groups. The studies included a wide range in sample size, from an in-depth ethnographic study of one practitioner (Kovács, 2020), to interviews of over 200 participants

(Lindsay et al., 2021), to a survey with 385 participants (McCuaig et al., 2019). The median sample size across the studies is 37.5 (excluding non-empirical papers). By virtue of the selection criteria, a defining feature of all the papers is that they deal with boundary spanning within a locally-bounded geographic context—a city, neighborhood, municipality, village or town. The majority of the studies were based in three countries: the USA (13), the Netherlands (13) and the UK (9).

### *Conceptualization of Boundary Spanning in Local Contexts*

In this section we present the synthesis of the data abstracted from the articles on the definition of boundary spanning, the boundaries identified as being spanned, and the features of the boundary-spanning role.

*Defining Boundary-Spanning.* The studies varied greatly in the extent to which they paid attention to defining boundary spanning, ranging from no explicit definition to extensive discussions of definitions. Across the definitions, however, a clear core notion of boundary spanning emerged that involved bridging the gap between two or more organizations; most definitions pointed to a key role in translating between the different priorities, logics or languages of the different organizations. This core definition is encapsulated in Miles's (1980, p. 62) widely cited definition that boundary-spanning refers to "positions that link two or more systems whose goals and expectations are at least partially conflicting." Around this common core, though, are differences over the scope and position of the role.

At one end of the spectrum, the scope of the role is primarily one of facilitating the flow of information between organizations: "[they] facilitate information sharing back and forth across the organizational boundaries, and help match needs and resources" (L. K. Bradshaw, 1999, p. 39). Most go somewhat further and emphasize the role of translating between cultures; for example: "Boundary spanners (or collaborative managers) can be defined as individuals who work across different organizational cultures and exercise influence through formal and informal channels in order to strengthen the connections between actors" (Guarneros-Meza & Martin, 2016, p. 240), and "They deal with people on both sides of the boundary and specialize in negotiating the interactions between systems" (Van Hulst et al., 2012, p. 438). Some, however, highlight a more extensive and complex scope of work: "The boundary spanner has been defined as delivering a range of functions, including: providing local coordination as an 'anchor point' between collaborating agencies; linking stakeholder groups within

and beyond the boundary spanner's own organization; managing tensions and conflicts between partners; building trust and shared values; demonstrating leadership in pursuing the partnership's goals; promoting innovation in policy solutions that reflect inter-disciplinary approaches; and (crucially) networking to share information and practice" (Lindsay & Dutton, 2012, p. 514).

Another key divergence between definitions concerns the positioning of boundary spanners. In some definitions, the role is clearly defined as one who is embedded within one organization and reaches out to others: for example: "Boundary spanners are individuals who act on behalf of their organization in an interorganizational interaction, by linking their unit to external areas" (Callens & Bouckaert, 2019, p. 1113). In other definitions, however, the rootedness in one organization is less apparent: "people with a foot in both worlds" (Etz et al., 2008, p. 396) and "Boundary spanners work in positions between two or more systems (e.g., the juridical system and the health system, different organizations). They deal with people on both sides of the boundary and specialize in negotiating the interactions between systems" (Van Hulst et al., 2012, p. 438).

*The Boundaries Being Spanned.* Across the studies, a plethora of organizations and sectors are identified as entities involved in some configuration of boundary-spanning. Here, we use the term entity to capture the range of actors involved in boundary-spanning relationships in these studies, including organizations, communities, and local governmental bodies.

These can be categorized broadly in the fields of health (11), social care/welfare (8), education (7), judicial (4), and local government (4). Other entities include emergency services (1), farming (1), and the private sector (1). In most studies, the boundaries being spanned are between two entities: however, 11 studies involved spanning boundaries among three or more entities.

Outside more clearly defined organizations, 11 studies identified "community" as an entity into which or from which boundaries were spanned.. "Community" often seemed to refer to a local population; for example, "boundary spanners who broker connections between the school district and the community" (Brown, 2017, p. 369) or "reaching beyond clinic walls to create community linkages" (Etz et al., 2008, p. 391). At other times, studies more explicitly referred to communities defined by ethnic or cultural connections (Carlsson & Pijpers, 2020).

**Table 3.** Conceptualisation of Boundary Spanning Role.

Nature of role	Number of studies	Positioning of role	Number of studies
Inherent to role	12	Leadership	12
Created role	14	Frontline	14
Emergent role	5	External	3

*Boundary Spanning Role Holder.* We also examined the nature and positioning of the boundary spanning role, looking at two dimensions (Table 3). The first relates to how the role came to be defined as “boundary-spanning.” Three categories were identified: (1) individuals who are boundary-spanners because working across boundaries is inherent to the role, while not necessarily serving as the defining feature of their work (e.g., school principals), (2) roles that were specifically created to bridge between organizations, and (3) individuals who were identified during the course of the research as carrying out boundary-spanning work. Examples of the first category include school principals (L. K. Bradshaw, 1999), central office administrators (Honig, 2006), and frontline workers (Lindsay et al., 2021). The second category – created roles – includes positions such as “health brokers” (Harting et al., 2011), “care sport connectors” (Hermens et al., 2017), and “refugee-student family mentors” (Koyama & Kasper, 2021). The final category contained leaders who demonstrated specific boundary-spanning qualities in carrying out their work (Dudau et al., 2018), and emergency service personnel or managers who demonstrated boundary spanning capabilities during the course of a crisis (Gil-Garcia et al., 2016).

The second perspective from which the boundary spanning role was considered was the positioning of the role within an organizational hierarchy. Again, three categories were identified: (1) boundary-spanners holding a leadership or management position, (2) boundary spanners working in a frontline role, and (3) boundary spanners positioned externally to the organizations.

In summary, in studies examining boundary-spanning within a local context, a clear core definition of the boundary-spanning role emerged, with a wide spectrum of what the scope of that work looks like. The entities involved in boundary-spanning cluster in the fields of health, social care/welfare, education, and, significantly, the “community.” Those holding these roles are in some cases called upon to span boundaries as a result of the nature of their work more generally, while in other cases the central mandate of their role is to span boundaries.



## *Characteristics of Boundary Spanning in Local Settings*

This section presents evidence about specific features of boundary-spanning in local contexts. Five key themes were identified in the articles: (1) the role of physical proximity, (2) the complexity of local conditions, (3) power imbalance, (4) frontline activities, and (5) the nature of relationships.

*Physical Proximity.* Across the papers, several key issues related to close physical proximity. First, some studies focus on individuals, due to their living in close proximity, interacting outside of formal settings, which can shape boundary-spanning possibilities. Alvinus et al. (2016) point to the spontaneous links created by family members or off-duty professionals embedded within the local context who end up taking on boundary spanning roles between health care and the community: “The municipality nurses running to the hospital to fetch medicines or going to the pharmacy to pick up patients’ prescriptions, which they do in their free time because they’re ‘nice’...” (p. 157). Embeddedness in a local context shaping the nature of boundary-spanning efforts is also identified by Koyama and Kasper (2021) who describe the importance of the informal interactions of the boundary spanner in community settings. In a somewhat similar vein, Miller (2008) and Van Hulst et al. (2012) refer to the deep relationships boundary spanners develop as a result of being embedded within their communities.

In some articles, however, physical proximity was not equated with greater ease of boundary crossing. Being physically proximate does not necessarily provide a clear picture of or relationships with other organizations (Etz et al., 2008; Harting et al., 2011). Further, Carlsson and Pijpers (2020) point out that when thinking about spanning into a community, thinking in terms of physical proximity can be a barrier. They note that while a boundary spanner’s role may be to connect to the local community of a neighborhood, the reality may be that the communities in which people interact are not geographically bounded, but rather span a wide area bringing together those with shared culture or interests.

*Complex Local Contexts.* Among the challenges authors identified that boundary spanners faced in local settings were the complexity and uniqueness of such contexts. One expression of this complexity was identifying appropriate partners given the plethora of organizations working within a neighborhood, for example, to address overlapping issues. For example, Harting et al. (2011, p. 66) describe the challenges for local health brokers faced by myriad

fragmented projects operating in one setting: “Developing the content of the role was difficult and hampered by the complexity of health issues and the local situation.” In the context of education, successful boundary spanning required working with a whole neighborhood and not just specific organizations (Honig, 2006).

A number of studies identified individuals who were able to successfully cross boundaries in local contexts and pointed to their understanding of the local conditions. Nissen (2010, p. 379), examining successful youth work professionals, reported that: “Their ability to adapt to local circumstances allowed them to gain power and access across diverse groups. Failure to do this risked alienating one of these groups, impeding progress toward the vision.” Similarly, Kovács (2020, p. 140) pointed to effective boundary spanners’ “extensive knowledge of local conditions and ‘holistic problem orientation’, which allows them to prioritize the complex and interrelated neighbourhood problems.” Further, in a boundary-spanning role aimed at addressing labor market inclusion, Lindsay et al. (2021, p. 932) emphasize the importance of “deep community knowledge.” This seems to refer to an in-depth understanding of the various issues and concerns at play in a community as well as to its sources of strength.

This centrality of deep understanding of local conditions also evidently extends to the articulation of a rather different kind of relationship and orientation on the part of the boundary-spanner. Honig (2006) describes the effective boundary spanner as one who works with the whole neighborhood in a “servant or service capacity” (p. 365). Miller (2008) emphasizes the role of trusting and loving relationships in successful boundary-spanning leaders: “. . . not only do they know, respect and believe in their neighbours, their neighbours know, respect and believe in them” (p. 370). Van Hulst et al. (2012) highlight the value of “speaking the local language” and an “intense way of relating” (p. 442). In these particular studies, the role of boundary spanner comes across as a vocation rather than a job, with deep sincerity about and commitment to the local area, requiring the ability to develop respect from a wide range of constituencies. It is perhaps in light of this embedded role that a number of studies report on the emotional labor involved in such roles (McCuaig et al., 2019; Needham et al., 2017; Rugkåsa et al., 2007). Boundary spanning roles can require significant emotional labor in building and sustaining trusting relationships; in those settings dealing with challenging personal situations the emotional labor is likely to be higher (Needham et al., 2017).

*The Question of Power.* Where “the community” is identified of as one of the entities in a boundary spanning effort, a number of studies point to the power

imbalance that exists, with formal institutions having sway over financial resources and access to information (Nederhand et al., 2016, 2019). Two studies explicitly refer to the notion of “spanning downwards”; a conceptualization of boundary spanning that includes this hierarchical relationship cannot be treated as the same as boundary spanning relationships between two organizations in which the imbalance of power is less central (Roussy et al., 2020; Rugkåsa et al., 2007).

This imbalance of power is addressed in two different ways. In some studies, the role of the boundary-spanner takes on that of an advocate, championing the voice of the less powerful entity. For example, “their primary loyalties were to their community-based constituents, and they both possessed inherent desires to learn from and advocate for those who have traditionally been oppressed” (Miller, 2008, p. 362). Guarneros-Meza and Martin (2016) also explicitly frame the boundary-spanning role in terms of advocacy. Other studies, however, reported that this power imbalance was handled by having an external boundary spanner who sits outside of the power imbalance and can play a role in negotiating the boundaries and issues at play. For example, Miller (2009) describes the creation of the role of “systems advocate” who stood outside of school and homeless shelter institutions, but had enough understanding of both contexts to bridge the gap between them.

## **Discussion: Theorizing Boundary-Spanning beyond Formal Organizations**

The local context is distinguished by the fact that the spanning of boundaries does not happen between organizations alone, but often involves spanning the boundary from organizations into communities and neighborhoods. This is rather a different prospect than can be found in the roots of boundary-spanning scholarship based on examinations of spanning boundaries within or between businesses or other formal organizations. It also occurs in a context in which there is an expectation of inter-sectoral collaborative functioning at the “frontline” in the face of “wicked” problems, such as preventing radicalization, addressing poverty, and dealing with the intersection of crime and mental health. These are challenges that not only require multi-sectoral responses, but also typically are not amenable to simple solutions. Given such circumstances, this scoping review aimed to map how boundary spanning is currently conceptualized and the evident gaps in the current literature.

It is apparent from the number of studies identified both that boundary-spanning is drawn upon as a concept to understand and frame what is happening in local settings and that it is applied to collaborations involving a host of

different organizations and sectors. Notably, despite one paper's reference to the "lack of definitional clarity" around boundary spanning (Brown, 2017), a relatively solid core definition surfaced in the research examined, centered on boundary spanning as facilitating some collaboration between systems that often have different languages and priorities. The divergences center mostly on the scope of what this involves. This is not trivial, given the challenging journey other concepts have faced in moving across fields. Indeed, many social scientific concepts by their very nature are contested and the subject of ongoing definitional discussion; one needs only think of the debates surrounding key concepts such as democracy. Given this, boundary-spanning seems rather stable.

This relative stability of the boundary spanning concept enables much of the research to focus on application. It is in its broad and varied application that the divergences in the concept emerge. This suggests that perhaps more nuanced and contextualized understandings of boundary spanning are required. Indeed, this is demonstrated in van Meerkerk and Edelenbos's (2018) profiles of different kinds of boundary-spanners: the fixer, the bridger, the broker, and the innovative entrepreneur. It is notable, however, that within the literature reviewed, a generalized notion and definition of boundary-spanning is called upon, and there is not yet an evident body of scholarship is grounded and developing contextualized notions of boundary spanning that addresses the distinctive features of the work in local and community contexts. That is to say, there seems to be a space for developing a more refined conceptualization of boundary-spanning in the context of its being embedded in local community settings.

Such embeddedness, not just in organizational and political contexts but also in local and community contexts, evidently suggests a more laden role than that of spanning the boundary between a business and government or between two departments in local government. Echoing van Meerkerk and Edelenbos (2018), this review highlighted the significance of the relationships built by those working in particular local contexts. These relationships can be marked by a deep commitment to the local setting, which at least in some cases highlights the role of boundary spanner as being more than doing a job, with deeper motivational roots. Although all forms of boundary-spanning require understanding the different cultures, languages and priorities of the systems involved, a local community seems to stand rather apart from organizations. Although organizations often are heterogeneous and complex, they usually are bound together by overarching organizational priorities and purposes. There are formal statements of organizational aims and missions, and individual participants become acculturated to the language and norms of the system: indeed major streams of human resource work are aimed at

helping employees understand and take on the organizational culture (Bellot, 2011).

This rarely is the case with community, and particularly communities of place. Communities of shared interest or shared interaction may be more cohesive (T. K. Bradshaw, 2008); however, much of the frontline work takes place within communities of place, connected by virtue of geographic proximity, and not necessarily much more. A community of place is likely to be quite diverse in composition, priorities, language, and expectations. It is hard to view this through the same lens as an organization. A similar distinction emerges when we consider communities and local contexts as places where everyday living is taking place. The impact of boundary spanning is directly on the lived experience of individuals, rather than on the functioning of an organization. Further, and as highlighted in the studies reviewed, the question of power comes to the fore, with rather intractable imbalances in power between organizations, particularly governmental bodies and the communities with which they are seeking to span boundaries

If we consider again the cases of the teachers, police officers, and youth workers required to collaborate in the prevention of extremism in an urban neighborhood, the challenge before them is not only to align their own sometimes conflicting roles, responsibilities and priorities (Stephens & Sieckelink, 2019), but also to build and maintain strong relationships with young people and families living within the neighborhood. The challenges are not insignificant: the very act of spanning the boundary between youth workers and police may work against efforts to span the boundary between youth workers and communities, if community members perceive the relations of youth workers with police as undermining trust in the confidentiality of the youth worker. The priorities of the police to ensure public safety do not necessarily easily cohere with the priority of the pedagogical perspective of the youth worker. The concerns and priorities of the local community include both the fears of some elderly residents and the discontent of some youth, the resolution of which do not necessarily seem immediately compatible.

Taken as a whole, these features highlight a distinctive and complex context in which boundary-spanning local governance is occurring. Indeed, the core definition of boundary-spanning appears to be critical, with individuals required to translate between systems with conflicting priorities and differing languages and cultures. As such, fuller understanding of what can be learned about those individuals charged with crossing numerous and varied boundaries in myriad contexts is likely to be of value. Yet, given the existing expansive base of research on boundary-spanning generally, carving out a clearer

conceptualization and literature on boundary-spanning efforts embedded in local community contexts may provide a valuable basis for those policy-makers and practitioners faced with the day-to-day demanding task of collaborating amongst themselves and spanning into local communities around pressing challenges. The foundations of such a conceptualization already exist, for example, with the distinction drawn between vertical and horizontal spanning and the recognition that boundary spanners often have to cross boundaries into other organizations (horizontal) and into systems with a different power status (vertical) (Guarneros-Meza & Martin, 2016). Further developing contextualized conceptualizations of boundary-spanning, while keeping them embedded in the broader literature on boundary-spanning as whole, offer a promising avenue for assisting those charged with navigating this complex yet essential work.

### *Limitations*

There are a number of limitations to this study. First, only English-language studies were included, meaning that it is conceivable that important scholarship on this topic in other languages has been missed. Going further into the question of boundary-spanning in local communities would benefit from a scan of the non-English literature. Second, our literature search did not include synonyms for boundary-spanning. A number of terms such as “broker” and “connector” have connotations similar to boundary spanning. However, for the purpose of this study, we were specifically interested to uncover how the specific term boundary-spanning is being conceptualized in relation to collaborations based in local contexts. Third, by selecting a scoping review rather than a systematic review we explicitly do not assess the quality of the evidence. This, however, allowed for the inclusion of a wider range of studies and is more suitable for mapping the conceptualization of boundary-spanning. Finally, only one reviewer (WS) screened titles and abstracts, while the standard is for two reviewers at each level of the scoping review process. Although two reviewers would have been preferable, it is worth noting that at this stage of the review, articles were excluded only when they were unambiguously not relevant because they dealt with very different concepts of boundary spanning such as those found in the natural sciences.

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Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

## Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

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