ABSTRACT


Despite the proliferation of collaboratives in research and practice, components of these arrangements remain unexamined (Milward, 2017; Koka et al., 2006). A collaborative represents three or more autonomous entities that meet regularly and work jointly to solve a common problem within a given problem domain (Gray, 1989; Nowell et al., 2016). This dissertation addressed a gap related to understanding how organizations’ collaborative portfolios evolve over time and why. An organization’s collaborative portfolio, as defined by this study, is the collection of collaboratives an organization participates in at a given time.

The dissertation sought to systematically examine a yet to be explored component of collaboration, the collaborative portfolio, and to establish propositions related to portfolio evolution and management. A mixed-method approach allowed the dissertation to examine the evolution of a population of organizations’ collaborative portfolios in a given health and wellness collaborative domain. Using secondary data from a longitudinal, network study, the dissertation constructed and assessed the change patterns of 227 portfolios quantitatively, which led to the generation of a purposeful sample of organizations with which the study conducted in-depth interviews. Twenty-three interviews generated information-rich, qualitative data that the study analyzed inductively using grounded theory methods. Propositions emerged that start new conversations about collaborative portfolios while adding to existing literature.

The study found portfolio change varied by sector, creating change and stability in the collaborative domain. The Mapping Project, which provided the secondary data for this study’s portfolios, first identified dynamic stasis in the domain, but this study expanded that finding by identifying some of the mechanisms achieving the stable but changing environment. For-profit
entities primarily exited and decreased their collaborative presence while government entities entered and expanded their collaborative presence. Non-profit portfolio change varied consistently, expanding, contracting, and maintaining at similar rates. Therefore even though individual organizations adjusted participation in collaboratives, an interaction between organizational type and the collaborative domain created an environment that attracted and supported some sectors while repelling others. This finding furthers the conversation about the various actors and interactions in collaborative domains (Ahuja et. al, 2012), as well as sector difference literature.

The study also discovered individuals assume the role of collaborative architects in organizations and in doing so manage collaborative portfolios. This position is not institutionalized and varies based on architects’ position in the organization and their approach to portfolio management. The study produced a typology, identifying factors that can begin the conversation around architects and the effects of their emergent nature on organizations and collaboratives. These findings expand the collaborative public manager literature to examine the influence architects have on organizational and collaborative outcomes. Future research could further examine how and why they emerge and the consequences, if any, that emerge due to their lack of institutionalization.

Finally, the study found that portfolios change incrementally – one collaborative at a time – or holistically based on architects’ strategic orientations. When organizations’ dyadic fit with collaboratives shift due to changes in mission alignment, expectation alignment, organizational capacity, or access to resources, architects adjust the dyadic relationships. Oppositely, when large, internal organizational changes occur, architects orient themselves to their portfolio holistically. Merging the fit literature with collaborative partner selection literature would enable
future research to examine architects using a psychological perspectives as well as assessing rational and social influences.

Ultimately, all findings emphasize the various dynamics present in collaboratives from individuals to collaborative domains. Due to the use of rigorous but flexible grounded theory methods, this study was able to assess multiple levels of analysis and influences and start conversations around the presence of organizations’ collaborative portfolios and the architects that manage them in collaborative domains.
A Mixed-Methods Investigation of How Organizations’ Collaborative Portfolios Evolve and Why

by

Emily Bieda McCartha

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my younger self who wanted to be a writer and to my husband, family, and community that helped me realize that dream in a way I never imagined.
BIOGRAPHY

Emily B. McCartha received her Master of Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin in 2011 after receiving an undergraduate degree in Urban Studies from the same institution in 2009. Her research focuses on collaborative interactions and the relational, structural, and managerial components associated with those connections. She currently works as a program evaluator for the North Carolina General Assembly and plans to continue a career that melds the academic with the practice-based to maximize the strengths of both.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like most things in life, completing this dissertation took a village, many villages actually. I hope to honor some of the main actors involved in this process, but many people and pets have helped me along the way and I am grateful to them all.

My dissertation journey began on a walk one day in Austin, Texas when I mentioned pursuing a doctorate degree to my husband, Jeremy. He immediately expressed his support even though it meant completely changing our lives. This dissertation exists because of his love, encouragement, and support, which never wavered during this seven-year journey. It would be impossible to explain what he has enabled me to achieve and how much I appreciate him for it.

The dissertation also exists because of my chair, committee members, and fellow students at NC State University. During my first year in the program, my fellow student, Casey Fleming informed me of wildfire response research Dr. Nowell was conducting. I immediately contacted her and begged to be on the team. She welcomed me eagerly. Being a member of the team afforded me the chance to conduct qualitative and quantitative research as well as field work. I learned a great deal from my fellow students on those projects and other scholars in the field. However, I learned the most from Dr. Nowell. Her enthusiasm for research, attention to rigor, and sharp but humorous mind made me excited to conduct high-quality research. I am so grateful to her for providing me with these opportunities and for her support as my chair throughout the dissertation process, which is an intellectual marathon made better by her wit and intellect.

It is fitting that collaboration and networking led me to Dr. Nowell, various research opportunities, and people that made this research possible. Participating in the monthly meetings with Dr. Nowell’s other advisees over the last year inched me over the finish line. I particularly want to thank Kate Albrecht and Kathy Coleville for your insights on my research and your
honesty about your own journeys through the process. These gifts helped me feel more confident in myself and my ability to navigate the end of this process with a full-time job and a family.

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In addition to my academic communities, I am extremely grateful to my literal friend and neighborhood communities as well as my professional community at the Program Evaluation Division. My friends, neighbors, and co-workers have supported Jeremy and me through this process in too many ways to count, particularly after we became parents.

The prospect of completing a dissertation would not be fathomable without my family. My parents’ emphasis on learning taught me the importance of education from an early age. They also modeled the values of hard work and perseverance, both of which were required to complete this dissertation. I am extremely aware of the sacrifices made and support provided by my husband, my parents, my in-laws, my step-parents, my sister, and my dearest friend Kristi that afforded me the privilege of pursuing this advanced degree while building a career, life, and
a family. I hope to provide my daughter, Clare, with the same opportunities and examples of love and determination.

Finally, to my daughter Clare, becoming your mother made me realize I could do anything. You are my greatest joy, my greatest love, and my greatest accomplishment.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Multi-organizational, multi-sector collaboratives emerge to address complex issues that one entity cannot attempt to solve alone (O’Toole, 1997; Castells, 2000; Raab & Kenis, 2009; Lecy et al., 2014). These groups form for various reasons, adopt differing structures, and contain diverse members such as organizations and individuals from the public, for-profit, and non-profit sectors. Known by many names such as networks, collaboratives, strategic alliances, and interorganizational arrangements, these groups are as diverse in purpose as they are in names. This dissertation refers to collaboratives as a group of three or more autonomous entities that meet regularly and work jointly towards a shared goal within a given problem domain (Gray, 1989; Kouzes & Mico, 1979; Huxam, 1996; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Nowell et al., 2016).

This dissertation seeks to address a gap in the literature related to how organizations’ collaborative portfolios evolve and why. Koka et al. (2006) provided a framework to assess the evolution of collaboratives and discussed an organization’s portfolio of ties to other entities as part of that framework (726). This dissertation adjusted and specified the concept of the portfolio to represent the collection of collaboratives an organization participates in at a given time.

Figure 1. Example of an Organization’s Collaborative Portfolio
Ultimately, the dissertation sought to understand how collaborative portfolios change and the influences that cause those changes with specific interest given to portfolio management.

The recent proliferation of collaboratives in practice and scholarship is profound and multifaceted (Berry et al., 2004; Isett et al., 2011). In practice, collaboratives are increasingly used to deliver goods and services, often on behalf of the government (de Leon & Pettijohn, 2013; Milward & Provan, 2000), and frequently from within a given problem domain (Trist, 1983; Kouzes & Mico, 1979). Reflective of practice, scholarship related to collaboratives gained traction in the 1980s and remains a growing topic in various fields including: Public Administration, Organizational Theory, Political Science, Sociology, Business Studies, Public Management, and Economics as well as others (O’Toole, 1997; Robinson, 2006; Wachhaus, 2009; Powell, 2003; Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Lecy et al., 2014).

Despite the growth and study of collaboratives, gaps remain related to the evolution of collaborative participation and an understanding of the factors that influence those changes from the organizational perspective (Milward, 2017; Koka et al., 2006). Most collaborative research takes place at one of three levels - the collaborative level, the organization level, or the individual level. Although contemporary research is also focusing on the collaborative domain level or the environment that contains all collaboratives within a given problem area (Albrecht, 2019; Nowell et al., in press). The gap this study addressed included examining influences potentially from all levels. This type of multi-level research is complex and may be one of the reasons the gap persists.

Another reason the gap related to organizations’ collaborative portfolios remains is due to the practice of academic disciplines operating in silos (Klijn, 2008), according to various epistemological and ontological traditions (O’Leary & Vij, 2012). Each discipline uses their own
terms and vocabulary, their own theoretical lenses, and preferred research methods, which produces fragmented research with gaps (Borzel, 1998; Wachhaus, 2009; O’Leary & Vij, 2012; Lecy et al., 2014). Subsequently, even though scholars discover or confirm phenomenon related to the topic of collaboratives, they may miss the opportunity to address unanswered questions such as those related to collaborative portfolio management and evolution. Additionally, scholars may miss opportunities to connect findings across disciplines due to the differing language used.

Also problematic is the tendency of positivist-leaning disciplines to structure studies and analyze results against predetermined patterns that reflect the dominant theories in various fields in an effort to confirm ‘grand’ social science theories (Suddaby, 2006). Studies testing theories incrementally build on previous work, which help refine specific pieces of prominent theories. Although theory testing plays an important role in academic research, overreliance on preexisting theories and overemphasis on replicability, reliability, and validity causes researchers to narrow investigations and data interpretation (Bernard, 2012). When this occurs, the data lose complexities and new phenomenon remain undiscovered. (Brower et al., 2000).

Research examining collaboratives from the organizational perspective exists and explores various components and outcomes of organizational involvement in collaboratives. Some literature focuses on interorganizational partner choices (Oliver, 1990), or the factors that create dyadic relationships between organizations (Doz & Hamel, 1998; Burt, 1992; Gulati, 2007; Manning, 2010). Other research examines the structural position of an organization in a collaborative (Burt, 2000), looking at concepts like network centrality or how connected one organization is to other organizations (Ibarra, 1993), and the subsequent outcomes of collaborative participation for organizations (Nohria, 1992) as well as the outcomes of the influence macrodynamics have collaboratives and the evolution of organizational fields (Powell
et. al, 2005). But these studies are typically cross-sectional (Salancik, 1995; McPerson et al., 2001; Burt, 2000), missing a longitudinal perspective and an assessment of how organizations approach participating in multiple collaboratives simultaneously.

Literature exists at the level of the collaborative also (Berthod et al., 2017; Ahuja et al., 2012; Nohria, 1992; Takahashi & Smutny, 2002), but is attempting to expand the understanding of rational and social pressures on collaboratives as well as how collaboratives evolve as distinct entities (Albrecht, 2019; Nowell et al., in press). Some of this literature struggles in that examination of collaborative evolution uses organizational or individual actions and movements as the base or moderating factors of change but selects which levels or variables to consider. In general, it is challenging to separate levels of analysis in relation to collaboratives but many confirmatory methods require this.

In summary, academic traditions, confirmatory research, time and levels of analysis constrain current literature in terms of addressing the identified research gap. The identified gap in this study required an examination of the evolution of organizations’ relationships to collaboratives, which may or may not be influenced by dyadic relationships within collaboratives, among a multitude of other factors undetermined prior to the study. Given the state of the current literature related to the topic and the need for understanding dynamics at multiple levels (organization to collaborative, organization to organization, organization to multiple collaboratives simultaneously, individuals nested within organizations and collaboratives, all actors nested within a collaborative domain), an inductive investigation of how organizations manage their collaborative portfolios over time and subsequent theory building efforts enabled this study to examine the gap and contribute to the field.
Specifically, the study used a mixed-method approach. Using network data from the Mapping Project study led by Dr. Branda Nowell and executed by a research team based out of North Carolina State University in 2012 and 2017, this study transformed the study’s secondary, collaborative-centric data to organization-centric data and assessed 227 quantitative organization collaborative portfolios. This analysis assessed change or stasis patterns over the five-year time period. Based on the quantitative data analysis and patterns that emerged, a purposive sample strategy followed and 23 in-depth interviews took place with individuals in organizations.

The study then employed grounded theory analysis throughout the interview process to generate patterns and propositions through constant comparison to answer the study’s research questions. Propositions and a typology emerged from the data that enabled the study to do justice to social reality and understand the ‘why’ behind the changes. The study generated general propositions from specific examples (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 28; Eaves, 2001) with the goal of developing explanatory, not merely descriptive or conceptual theories within the given context of study. A second or iterative wave of interviews tested and refined the propositions developed during the first round of interviews. This approach allowed for an iterative process of proposition and theory development where new data was continually compared to previously collected information until saturation occurred in the study’s context.

Mixed-methods research combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the methodology of a study to maximize each methods’ strengths while answering the research questions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Riccucci, 2010). All data were systematically obtained and analyzed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) through the quantitative and qualitative phases. The lack of current literature in relation to the research questions and the complexity of the actors involved in terms of the level of analysis constituted the use of a mixed-methods approach. If the
study instead employed one or even two theories instead of grounded theory, answers related to
the research questions may have emerged as “any given set of data can be explained by many
theories” (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994, 88). But the study sought to answer the questions at hand.

As mentioned, an inductive approach was needed for a large portion of this study due to
the unique and somewhat complex level of analyses present – an organization’s staff experiences
within one or more collaboratives over time, which may contain multiple interactions and
different levels of analysis. Although exploratory, inductive research often takes place during the
initial emergence of a topic, this dissertation contributes to the study of collaboratives by peeling
back expectations, removing underlying assumptions, and taking away the practice of comparing
results against pre-existing theory that related confirmatory research has produced over the last
ten years. Brower et al. (2000) noted the need for exploratory research to allow the data to
speak for itself by stating “exercise caution to allow the regularities and anomalies in the data to
suggest possible theories, rather than force data into theories in ways that obtain a premature

closure of meaning” (389).

The remainder of this chapter examines the growth of collaboratives in practice and
scholarship – particularly those related to improving health and wellness – and the need for
greater understanding around how these pieces move over time. Then a discussion of related
literature follows along with a discussion regarding the utility of taking an inductive approach to
fully explore the research questions. Finally, the chapter details the purpose of this dissertation.

The Growth of Collaboratives

Isett et al. (2011) suggested the recent rise in collaboratives correlated with the increased
prominence of conservative politics in the U.S. and U.K., which began in the 1970s and 1980s.
The executive offices in both countries at this time, the Reagan and Thatcher administrations,
promoted less government and increased privatization. One of the main intentions behind
increasing privatization or contracting out services is to increase efficiency (Johnston & Romzeck, 2010) with the thought that businesses inherently function better than the government entities. These are some of the main concepts behind the New Public Management movement that took place in the 1990s (Hood, 1991). Collaborative arrangements therefore appear purposefully under this approach (via contracts) and as a response to government entities providing fewer services.

Other historical events that supported this transition was the shift from the Industrial Age, which likened government to the modern machines of the time, to the Information Age, where technology enables different, innovative forms of government to emerge. Collaboratives offer a structure to link public, for-profit and nonprofit groups in various structures, offering an alternative to markets or bureaucracies (Powell, 1990; Frederickson, 1999; Rhodes, 1996). Although some argue that collaboratives or networks are replacing bureaucratic organizations (Milward & Provan, 2000), others suggest they add a level of structural complexity while remaining a distinct part of the system (Rhodes, 1996; O’Toole, 2015). Regardless of the impetus, there has been a sizeable rise in the delivery of public goods and services by third parties in the U.S., creating numerous, diverse collaborative structures (Salamon & Elliot, 2002).

The problem domain dedicated to improving health and wellness represents a large system in which collaboratives emerge and scholars study. A portion of that problem domain is the health-care system in the U.S., which represents a trillion-dollar industry that is wrought with issues and ranks poorly among developed countries in terms of care (Steiner et al., 2008). In part, this is due to the structure of the American system of health-care, which is built to treat acute, episodic, health problems instead of providing continuous health care paired with preventative treatment. Additionally, the U.S. health and wellness domain represents a dynamic system with
continual change related to both guiding policies and structure of service provision. Therefore, while health-care service providers, citizens, and the government try to supplement the current health-care system, collaboratives offer alternative structures to bridge the more reactive and proactive approaches in a dynamic environment.

The total cost of healthcare services reached $3.5 trillion in 2017 in the US of which, the federal government paid 28% and state and local governments paid 17% (CMS, 2017). Despite the enormous amount of money spent on health care, many people are left wanting for better care. Subsequently, collaboratives also emerge in the problem domain with the goal of improving care often through increased coordination.

Some collaborative efforts address increasingly complex health issues with specific strategies related to medical treatment (Njeru et al., 2016). Other efforts attempt to mend or address fragmented systems (Wells & Winer, 2007), improve the structure of service provision between organizations (Patru et al., 2015), or build community capacity (Proven et al., 2003; Goodman et al., 1998; Chaskin et al., 2001; Veazie et al., 2001). Some efforts occur outside of the government while others are encouraged, catalyzed, or managed by the government.

Government agencies and foundations in the U.S. spend millions of dollars promoting collaboration around health issues (Butterfoss et al., 1996). The Affordable Care Act (ACA) in the U.S. contained language that requests assessments of “communities” of health, a process which requires nonprofit hospitals to examine needs in the community and to build a community health plan to address these needs accordingly (IRS, 2016). This encourages collaboration among service providers. Despite the need and proliferation of health-related collaboratives, only about half of the groups that form continue to exist after their first year of operation (Kreuter et al., 2000) while others exist for years. This may be in part due to how organizations navigate the
management of their collaborative portfolios, which leads organizations to join, stay or leave groups. It may also be due to the dynamic nature of the health-related problem domain.

Given how large the field of health and wellness is and how the current structure of health-care requires the presence of collaboratives to fill gaps and improve care whether through legislation, supplied funding, or volunteer efforts, the way organizations approach participating in this system by managing their collaborative portfolio over time is important for organizations, communities, and the government to understand.

**Collaboratives – Known by Many Names**

The rise of collaboratives in research and practice has yielded numerous definitions of these entities. Early scholarship in the fields of organizational behavior and theory as well as public administration and public management defined these groups in terms of the action or practice of collaboration. Gray (1989) described interorganizational collaboration as an ongoing process between interdependent actors who jointly search for the answers to shared concerns. Gray and Wood (1991) stated groups that collaborate do so in a “process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible” (4). Huxam (1996) described collaboration as “working in association with others for some form of mutual benefit” (1). Recent scholarship continued to use collaboration as a verb. Agranoff and McGuire (2003) described collaboration as the process of facilitating and functioning in multi-organizational arrangements to address problems that cannot be solved by any single organization.

Within these veins of research, collaboration is not the only action discussed. Alternatively, some scholarship focused on distinguishing between cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and service integration (Selden et al., 2002; Feiock, 2009; Feiock & Scholz, 2010). This discussion includes other activities similar to but distinguished from collaboration. They
exist on a spectrum and vary based on the degree to which organizations remain autonomous and their level of participation in joint efforts. The spectrum begins with cooperation, representing the most autonomous and least participatory action and goes to full service integration, which removes a great deal of autonomy and includes near complete participation.

More recent scholarship describes collaboration in terms of the structure of the group. Isett et al. (2011) suggested that collaboration occurs within different structures such as alliances, partnerships, networks or other arrangement that may be formal or informal, mandated or emergent. Huang and Provan (2007) and Agranoff and McGuire (2003) suggested collaboratives represent multi-organizational structures that provide public services through partnering with organizations in and outside of the government. Nowell et al. (2016) described collaboratives as “community-based groups comprised of representatives from organizations and agencies who meet regularly to improve community-level response to a given problem domain” (6).

Instead of focusing solely on structure, some researchers organize their work related to collaboratives by attaching some type of qualifier to the word network or collaborative (Rethemeyer & Hatmaker, 2008). Common categories include policy, governance, and collaboration (Isett et al., 2011). In these definitions, groups are defined based on the work they undertake and the makeup of their members. These subcategories also sometimes correlate to differing academic disciplines. For example, policy network research is rooted in the political science tradition and the streams of research that examine policy innovation, policy change and agenda setting, and economic theory (Berry et al., 2004).

Other tracks of research define collaboratives based on the relationships or type of relations within the structure. Social network analysis research, looks at personal motivators for participating in groups and examines network positions, antecedents of action, attitudes and
outcomes (Berry et al., 2004). The network-focused research places a great deal of emphasis on structure and relationships. Brass et al. (2004) defined a network as “a set of nodes and the set of ties representing some relationship, or lack of relationship between nodes.” Phillips et al. (2000) discussed the structure of collaboratives as hinging on communicative processes that sustain relationships in the absence of signals and controls present in markets or hierarchies.

The business literature refers to collaboratives as strategic alliances, interfirm networks (Miles et al., 1999; Curran et al., 1993), or formal arrangements like joint ventures or mergers (Kogut, 1988). Joint ventures describe collaborations between firms that exist as separate, autonomous and legally recognized arrangements (Dacin et al., 2007). Typically, all partners of a joint venture contribute equally at relatively the same rates to support its existence (Beamish & Banks, 1987). If equity is not present, then the business arrangement is more likely to be an alliance. Alliances are defined as arrangements in which firms enter into a cooperative agreement to combine resources and capabilities in the pursuit of a common goal like co-development of a product or provision of a service (Gulati, 1998). Alliances usually exist between firms that are (and will continue to be) competitors (Mitchell et al., 2002; Luo et al., 2007).

In the business strand of literature, the focus is on gaining competitive advantage and furthering the survival of a private entity. Early research examining interfirm business relationships did so at the dyadic level, while primarily looking at joint ventures. However, due to an increase in the competitive landscape of firms and the changing structure of relationships between firms, recent research shifted to examine multilateral relationships (Dacin et al., 2007).

Despite the wide range of definitions, which the above paragraphs merely begin to explore, most definitions contain the following basic premise: collaborative entities contain three or more participants that work together in order to respond to complex issues that are not
solvable by one entity alone (Kettl, 2006). Unfortunately, beyond that commonality, the definitions and names vary in terms of the problem domain, sector, purpose, the actors, the discipline of origin, the degree of involvement, and other factors. Therefore, this dissertation referred to collaboratives in a more general sense as any group with three or more entities that meets regularly and works towards a joint goal that no one group can address independently (Gray 1989; Kouzes & Mico, 1979; Huxam, 1996; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Nowell, 2016).

**Collaborative Participation Literature**

The dissertation aims to understand how the collection of collaboratives an organization participates in at a given time changes over time and why. Therefore it examined why organizations join, stay or leave collaboratives, how those decisions are made, and who is making them. Ample suggestions from different fields exist to posit why organizations or entities may join collaboratives. Most of them converge on the underlying goal of survival. Joining a collaborative may support this goal. The same theories suggest organizations would remain or leave collaboratives when doing so would increase the chance of surviving.

Although organizations must survive, many of the relevant theories are simplistic and limited due to their associated assumptions based on the principles of rationality. Rational actors are assumed to possess perfect information and make all decisions to maximize their resources. Additionally, processes are assumed to be linear or cyclical. Participation in collaboratives may follow some of the principles of rationality, but other factors are typically at work as well.

Due to the inherent complexities in collaboratives, some authors offer structure to describe or predict the complex mechanisms that drive organizational choices regarding collaboratives by offering frameworks (Feiock, 2013; Ahuja et al., 2012; Klijn, 1996; Klijn et al., 1995), conducting extensive literature reviews (Berry et al., 2004; Isett et al., 2011; Provan et al.,
2007; Robinson, 2006 as cited in Lecy et al., 2014), or providing a taxonomy or typology (Lecy et al., 2014; Borgatti & Foster, 2003). These approaches often combine several existing theories and are all valid efforts to contribute to the field. But none of these structures or frameworks addressed or include an examination of collaborative portfolios.

This section below provides a brief review of the major theories from different fields to illustrate why an inductive, open-ended examination of organizational participation in collaboratives was needed. Table 1 includes the justification or motivator that describes how or why organizations join collaboratives, the accompanying theory (if present), the main authors related, and the field from which the concept emerged or is most often used.

Table 1: Summary of Drivers of Organizational Action Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizations join collaboratives to…</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survive</strong> turbulent and complex environments. Joining collaboratives is a way of coping with these environments.</td>
<td>Gray &amp; Wood, 1991</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Organization-Based Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solve complex societal problems</strong> that cannot be solved by a singular organization.</td>
<td>Trist, 1983; Kouzes &amp; Mico, 1979; Gray &amp; Wood, 1991</td>
<td>Domain Theory</td>
<td>Organization-Based Research, Social Ecology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survive</strong> by accessing resources and information, which in turn improves chances of survival.</td>
<td>Pfeffer &amp; Salancik, 1978</td>
<td>Resource Dependency Theory</td>
<td>Organization-Based Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survive</strong> by adopting certain structural configurations and gaining legitimacy within a given field.</td>
<td>DiMaggio &amp; Powell, 1983; Meyer &amp; Rowan, 1977; Meyer &amp; Scott, 1992</td>
<td>Institutional Theory</td>
<td>Organization-Based Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survive</strong> by maximizing efficiency through the decision to ‘make or buy’ a product and through the careful structuring of contracts.</td>
<td>Coase, 1960; Williamson, 1979</td>
<td>Transaction Cost Economics</td>
<td>Micro-Economics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the theories posit that organizations act based on a desire to survive. But other research suggests other drivers are present such as relationships or social interactions as well as a desire to address complex social issues (see Domain Theory above). Furthermore, some evolutionary, empirical research suggests humans act altruistically, helping one another without expectation of returned aid (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003), which would counter some of these resource-driven perspectives. Contemporary collaborative research suggests examining voluntary collaboratives with rational-based theories only may fall short of capturing all the dynamics present (Nowell et al., in press).

Therefore, in summary, literature related to collaboratives varies by academic field in terms how groups are defined, what actions of a collaborative are studied and at what level of
analysis research occurs. Much of the organization-based research is cross-sectional, and focused on the dyadic relationship between an organization and an organizations in a collaborative. Survival, and in particular accessing resources to survive, is seen as the driver of a great deal of organizational action. Although these theories may be true in some contexts, an overarching theory or framework does not yet exist that explains how organizations’ collaborative portfolios change over time and why.

**Research Questions and Methods Overview**

This study used a mixed-methods approach to observe patterns of changes in portfolios over time at the collaborative domain level and examine why and how those changes occurred through grounded theory analysis. Assessing the portfolio change patterns provided the information needed to sample organizations in the domain of interest for in-depth interviews. Grounded theory differs from deductive research in that the questions guiding the research can be broad as they are not tested against hypothesis and confirmed or denied.

One major research question guided this study, which was operationalized into five sub-questions. The main question that guided the dissertation was as follows: How do organizations’ collaborative portfolios evolve over time and why? The first two sub questions addressed the nature of collaborative portfolio change patterns present in the quantitative data. They stated:

- **RQ1a**: What are the most common and least common types of organization-level collaborative portfolio change seen over time in a given domain of health care collaboratives?
- **RQ1b**: Specifically, what are the most and least common types of change patterns seen related to an organization’s collaborative portfolio size and strength of participation?

Research question 1a allowed for broad analysis of trends while question 1b specified components of change to guide the inquiry. In order to explore change patterns, two components of collaborative portfolios were identified initially and examined including portfolio size or the
number of collaboratives an organization participated in during each study year and the strength of participation present in each year. Strength of participation was measured by the highest level of meeting attendance and leadership roles assumed per collaborative. The measurement strategies for the two components are detailed in Chapter 3.

Without any parameters, determining whether any change occurred would have been challenging. However the study also explored changes outside of the two components when possible during in-depth interviews. Addressing the first question supplied the needed information to sample the community to answer the second set of research questions.

The second set of sub questions sought to understand how and why portfolios change occurred and importantly who helped manage those changes. The overarching study question, which is broad, as well as those below guided the qualitative grounded theory process.

RQ2a: Who (if anyone) manages an organization’s collaborative portfolio and what common characteristics do these actors share?

RQ2b: How do organizational architects manage their collaborative portfolio?

RQ2b: What factors influence an organizational leader’s decisions regarding the management of their collaborative portfolio, meaning what factors influence an organization’s decision to change or maintain the size and intensity of participation of their collaborative portfolio over time?

It is important to note that while the research questions exist at the organization-level of analysis, the inductive, grounded theory approach enabled the study to examine any and all influences that drive organization collaborative portfolio change, including relationships between organizations and individuals, other organizations, and collaboratives as well as influences from various sources. Collaborative research relates to individuals nested in organizations, participating in collaboratives. Therefore, the examination needed a flexible method to follow information related to the research questions during the grounded theory process. Grounded theory provided this study with a systematic yet flexible design (Charmaz, 2014, 1).
Addressing the main research question required several methods, including network data transformation, comparative and descriptive analysis of population data at the domain level and grounded theory. The research took place in phases outlined in Chapter 3 but summarized here:

1) creation and transformation of a longitudinal data set from network or collaborative-centric data to organization-centric data and generation of organization-level collaborative portfolio profiles by observing change in specified categories; use of change patterns to develop a sample frame for in-depth interviews;
2) creation of interview protocols based on organization collaborative portfolio analysis; execution of the first phase of in-depth interviews with identified organizations from sample frame; use of grounded theory methods to generate and refine initial propositions; and
3) confirmatory re-sampling, in-depth interviewing and further refinement of propositions.

A team of graduate students under the guidance of Dr. Branda Nowell at North Carolina State University collected data for the community of interest in 2012 and 2017. Data for these studies contains information for collaboratives in a given county related to public health and wellness. For each collaborative, all organizational members were identified, and each individual representing an organization within a collaborative was identified. Therefore, transforming and comparing the detailed network data in Excel enabled this research to observe the evolution of organizational membership in collaboratives, which was crucial to generate the sample of organizations examined in the qualitative, grounded theory portion of this research.

**Summary and Preview of Upcoming Chapters**

Chapter 1 emphasized the significance of collaboratives in practice and research and how more research is needed to understand what factors influence changes in the composition of
collaborative portfolios at the organizational level over time. The chapter also identified specific gaps that this dissertation aimed to address.

The first gap pertains to the limitations of the plethora of research related to why organizations join a collaborative. As discussed, these theories come from their respective fields, with given assumptions, and are used to conduct confirmatory research that tests and refines theories instead of exploring or expanding into new territory. Without overwhelming consensus and with more recent efforts to bridge theories or provide explanatory frameworks, it is evident that there is room for explanatory research on the topic. Additionally, there is still room for growth of research that examines change over time in collaboratives at the organizational level. This dissertation sought to address these gaps. Finally, the chapter discussed the importance of the study, the research questions, and their measurement.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the evolution of collaboratives and why might adjust participation in them. The remainder of the chapter provides an explanation for using an inductive approach while employing grounded theory methods. It also provides a discussion regarding the emergence and use of grounded theory in public administration research. Chapter 3 discusses the methods employed in the dissertation. Specifically, it discusses the research design, sampling frame, the instruments employed to collect data, the process of data collection, and the process for data analysis. Chapter 4 provides the major findings of the study and Chapter 5 discusses these findings in the context of current and future research.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter 2 reviews both theoretical and empirical literature related to the study’s research questions first. Then it examines the history of grounded theory research and contemporary examples in public administration that helped guide and ground the dissertation’s outcomes within the field. Although much of the research reviewed relates to the research questions, no one theory or framework offered a way to test or fully answer the study’s research questions.

Review of Collaborative Evolution Literature

Research question one asks what the most and least common types of organization-level collaborative portfolio change occur in a collaborative domain over time. A body of literature does not exist to specifically speak to this. So the dissertation initially examined some organization-based theories, discussed in Chapter 1 and Table 1. But these appeared to fall short of understanding portfolio change and evolution. So the dissertation also looked to the collaborative evolution literature to discern whether it shed light on the research questions. Therefore, a review of the collaborative evolution follows below.

One complexity related to the study of collaboratives is the inter-related levels of actors or entities and the corresponding challenges this presents when selecting a level of analysis in research. In general, a great deal of collaborative literature examines the role of organizations in collaboratives, as they are often the building blocks (Milward, 2017) or moderating factors (Koka et al., 2006) of collaborative evolution. But some literature does not specify what a collaborative member represents in terms of if it is an organization, an individual, or something else. The summary below attempted to detail the actors involved and levels of analysis per body of research or given study examined, but sometimes these factors were not clear.
How do collaboratives evolve? Lomi et al. (2008) provided a general definition regarding the evolution of collaboratives by stating it is a “process of cumulative change involving organizations that are somehow related” (313). Cumulative change in a collaborative domain occurs due to external and internal action, both of which are explored more below.

**External Influences on Collaborative Evolution**

In terms of external and internal influences of collaborative change, the two typically interact and result in evolution of collaboratives. External influences that result in collaborative change can include items such as state intervention (Dobbin, 1994), market changes (Gillespie & Teegen, 1996), the presence of new funding streams, privatization, devolution, the formation of public-private partnerships (Koliba et al., 2016), or any type of contingency that shifts the environment and fit between collaborative members and the collaborative (Drazin & Van de Ven, 1985). Most of these items influence a collaborative’s access to resources and the level of uncertainty present in the environment (Koka et al., 2006). Literature posits that when resources are scarce and the environment uncertain, members of a collaborative are more likely to leave while new members are unlikely to join. This situation leads to a decrease in the size and range of organization types in the collaborative (Koka et al., 2006). Oppositely, this literature suggests when access to resources increase and uncertainty is less prevalent, organizations remain in collaboratives and new members join, causing the collaborative to grow in size and diversity of members (Koka et al., 2006).

Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), which originated from the field of organizational research, helps explain why organizations respond to external changes. Because organizations operate within a shared, uncertain, environment in which all entities seek access to scarce resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), they make choices to access resources. One way to access
resources may be through collaborative participation. However, partnering with other organizations, whether in a collaborative or another arrangement, also leads to increased uncertainty because the partnering entities cannot be fully controlled. Therefore, organizations seek to negotiate the level of autonomy they retain while in a collaborative arrangement.

Although this theory may shed light on how external factors cause organizations to make decisions about collaborative participation, the assumptions of the theory are problematic and the context within which it was developed may not translate fully to a collaborative context. The theory assumes actors are rational, meaning they seek to maximize their utility (resources or profit). It also assumes that actors possess perfect or nearly perfect information with which to make utility maximizing decisions. As other research and theories suggest, organizations may join or leave collaboratives due to factors other than resources. For example, domain theory suggests that organizations join collaboratives to work in tandem with other entities that share the same goals in the same problem area (Trist, 1983; Kouzes & Mico, 1979), which may or may not align with the organization’s resource needs and its ability to engage in collaborative work while keeping the desired level of autonomy.

External influences and internal responses to those influences undoubtedly change collaboratives and likely also influence an organization’s collaborative portfolio. However, the current literature either examines the evolution of collaboratives themselves (not organization-level collaborative portfolios) or how organizations make decisions in response to external factors regarding their collaborative participation. Neither directly addresses collaborative portfolio evolution. Additionally, even though RDT may be more readily applicable to understanding how organizations shift participation and thus change their portfolio, the
assumptions related to organizational action are rigid and may not be relevant in the health and wellness collaborative domain.

Other literature examines how internal factors influence the evolution of collaboratives including shifts in membership, changes in governance structures (Provan & Kenis, 2008), the emergence of new technologies (Podolny & Stuart, 1995), the appearance of new organizational forms (Stark, 1996; Padgett & McLean, 2006), changing levels of trust, and shifts in the identification of shared goals or the group’s shared identity. Like external changes, literature examining internal change can occur at the collaborative level or at the organizational level. Internal changes may cause some organizations to leave a given collaborative or change their level of participation. But the literature examines how these changes influence a collaborative’s evolution, not an organization’s evolution among all its collaborative participation.

The current literature also discusses stasis, which is often referred to as network maintenance. For the purposes of this dissertation, this speaks to what may occur when organizations remain in a given collaboration over a long period of time. Maintenance occurs due to factors such as organizational inertia, member retention, process routinization, or the formation of a followed repertoire of actions by collaboration members (Cyert & March, 1963; Nelson & Winter, 1982). Learning and adaption aid in retaining members and maintaining a structure, even if some changes occur (Levinthal, 1991; Hannan & Freeman, 1977).

The items discussed above capture some of the drivers of collaborative change or stasis due to external or internal changes. They also review how organization-level literature may explain organization-level decisions that cause collaboratives to change. While both of these bodies of literature are somewhat related to the research questions, neither completely points to what the most common and least common types of organization-level collaborative portfolio...
change may occur in a given community over time. Both are limited by their level of analysis because one occurs at the collaborative level and the other at the organizational level. This research question needed the flexibility to examine how an organization’s participation in given collaboratives involving various types of relationships – organization to collaborative, organization to organization, individual to collaborative, individuals to organizations, and so forth - changed over time, which requires access to understanding how collaborative participation shifts according to external and internal changes at various levels.

**Evolution as a Process**

Instead of examining the drivers of change, some literature examines the process of change itself. Van de Ven (1976) described the process of collaborative evolution plainly: collaboratives emerge, adapt and then grow or dissolve. Other authors approach describing the phases and transitions of the evolution of collaboratives in different ways, but most approaches include a beginning, middle, and continued existence or end. The majority of evolution process literature fits within three approaches to understanding change patterns- cyclical, dialectic, or linear (Nowell et al., 2016).

Van de Ven and Walker (1984) and Ring and Van de Ven (1994) discussed the cyclical evolution of collaboratives. Within this process approach, collaboratives move through three phases – negotiation, commitment, and execution. During the negotiation phase, members construct joint expectations while building trust. The commitment phase occurs when members decide on what actions to take together in the future and assert their intention to execute those actions. Finally, the execution phase marks the activation of those actions. Evaluation takes place at the end of this cycle to inform whether the activities undertaken were efficient and effective in the outputs generated. This helps re-inform the negotiation phase and the process begins again.
Doz (1996) suggested a similar cyclical evolutionary model based on his research of a longitudinal case study. After replicating the case in different contexts, the author found that collaborations are highly evolutionary. Subsequently, Doz categorized the phases of this evolution into learning, re-evaluation and re-adjustment. Learning requires members partake in task definition and establish partner routines, interface structures, and expectations of performance. Through these parameters, behaviors and skills of members are established and utilized. Then these parameters are evaluated and adjusted. With each successive cycle, collaboratives improve the first phase while building and testing trust and allowing for greater learning. In turn, this leads to greater member commitment.

McGuire (1988) and others presented a dialect approach to the process of the evolution of collaborations (Crozier, 1964; Benson, 1977; Zeitz, 1980). This approach suggested that contradictory elements subsist within social paradigms, existing economic arrangements, and the self-interests present within a collaborative. The resulting tensions from these contradictions lead members to engage in a dialect that in turn creates order. When order manifests and is accepted as a social system within the collaboration, the system stabilizes. Future internal and external changes lead to further dialect and future change within the system.

The most commonly used approach to understanding collaborative evolution is a linear lens. Gray (1985), an early pioneer in the study of collaboration, suggested that the phases of evolution included the following: problem setting, direction setting, and structuring. The first phase involves the identification of stakeholders and the creation of a mutually accepted understanding of the group’s goal. The second phase occurs when the stakeholders articulate and conceptualize the goal. The final phase occurs when the collaboration is formalized and obtains stable structures. This is similar to the steps presented in the cyclical and dialectic approaches.
The different process approaches describe change in relatively similar ways even if through different mechanisms. Alternatively, some approaches account for processes outside of this general trend. The complex adaptive systems (CAS) approach accounts for change that is stochastic or unpredictable. In this approach, network evolution follows path dependency but allows for complexity friendly theories of network change to work together in describing the phenomenon (Scheinert et al., 2015). Additionally, several theories suggest that starting conditions of collaboratives lead to different evolutionary trajectories using the principals of path dependency theory (Sydow et al., 2009; Vergne & Durand, 2010). For example, Nowell and Steelman (2014) found that relational embeddedness before a disaster was a key predictor of communication network connections during an incident. This is somewhat similar to the linear process approach, but it suggests that some of the factors present in the beginning may influence the end without the ability to learn or reassess as the cyclical and dialectic approaches suggest.

Regardless of the process theory used, the literature strongly suggests that collaboratives become more formal over time in structure and governance configuration (Provan & Kenis, 2008; Saz-Carranza & Vernis, 2006; Herranz, 2009; Feiock, 2013). Provan and Kenis (2008) examined this shift and suggested that collaboratives tend to move from a shared governance model where all participating organizations aid in governance, to a lead organization model where one member of the collaboration leads, to a the most formal arrangement where a Network Administrative Organization (NAO) serves as an external administrative and governance unit. Other efforts to increase formalization of a collaborative may involve codifying group rules or norms, setting schedules for meeting times and activities, entering into formal agreements or contracts, or simply becoming an legal entity like a nonprofit or joint venture.
These bodies of research present different ways in which collaboratives move through the process of evolution. Although potentially relevant to how an organizations’ collaborative portfolio evolves, the perspectives of analyses viewed the actors from a different lens than this study. In the process literature discussed above, the collaborative is the entity evolving, not the organization’s collaborative portfolio. As such, the stages of a portfolio’s life may appear differently from a collaborative’s life. These approaches do not yield testable products that could be used to answer the question at hand, primarily because they explain how collaboratives evolve based on organizational actions and collaborative components.

The remainder of this section examines several specific studies related to collaborative evolution. They integrate this study in terms of the more specific conversations going on in the evolution literature in addition to the process theories discussed above, but are still not reflective of the level of analyses sought in this study.

**Empirical Evolution Research Review**

Human & Provan (2000) compared two business networks related to wood manufacturing using longitudinal data. The authors explored the role of legitimacy and legitimacy building by comparing the networks over time using data collected in 1994-95 and again in 1997-98. The findings suggested that legitimacy building occurred in three dimensions – form, entity, and interaction from the inside out or the outside in. Ultimately, the study recommended taking an inside-out approach to build legitimacy from the initial phases and a broad approach to building legitimacy both internally and externally. This mirrored the suggestions put forth in the process literature that stresses the importance of path dependency and how initial conditions influence later outcomes. Additionally, the study focused on legitimacy and its relation to a collaborative’s life span.
Provan et al. (2003) examined the effectiveness of a community collaboration in Arizona and their efforts to build community capacity as well as how the network evolved within a one-year time span. The study examined one partnership, focusing on health improvement, and surveying 24 partnership members in 2000 and 2001. The study revealed that in attempting to build out the capacity of a community to provide chronic disease education, prevention, and treatment, the structure of the collaborative and the attitudes within it changed over time. Also, over time ties increased in the network, as did the multiplexity of ties, meaning the members not only shared information but also connected through sending and receiving referrals and sharing resources. It seems possible that the increase in sharing led to the continued survival of the collaboration while it attracted new partners or interested parties.

Provan et al. (2009) compared whole networks of publically funded services at different evolutionary stages. Members of networks responded to surveys in 2000 and 2004. Of those, 22 of the 33 represented the same agencies surveyed originally, which enabled the study to make conclusions about the partnership. The study reported that relationships between network embeddedness and trustworthiness strengthened as networks matured. Also, provider organizations that were more structurally embedded in a network received higher reputation scores and had greater influence over decision-making processes and other members as the network matured. However, network centrality and organizational reputation did not strengthen as the network matured. And being structurally embedded in the network yielded mixed reviews in relation to receiving higher scores of trustworthiness from other members. The study emphasized that several factors improved with network maturity. This may be relevant in collaboratives in the community of interest for this dissertation that have been in existence for
longer periods of time. It may also be relevant to why organizations find a particular collaboration appealing to join or mimic in structure.

Milward et al. (2010) compared the evolution of two mental health networks and examined their governance structure, network density, relationships and dimensions of trust, and finally the sector and the performance of the networks. Data were collected directly after the initial formation of the two networks and then four years later. Of the two behavioral health services network, one was a nonprofit NAO and the other was a for-profit NAO. The study reported that the network with an NAO unfamiliar to members in the network was associated with lower levels of trust than one with an NAO with established ties and prior relationships. They also suggested that uncertainty in the network predicted density. If a network was decentralized in terms of its contractual ties, then other, more informal ties formed to spread information about the formal ties. Information sharing is critical in times of uncertainty but as time goes by and uncertainty decreases, there is less need for as much information sharing.

Finally, Ahuja et al. (2012) provided a framework for understanding the role of network dynamics and the drivers and key dimensions of network change as well as the role of time in this process. The framework is a cyclical graph with components in four sections, each influencing the next. They began the discussion by describing and defining the components of network primitives – nodes (actors or entities), ties (relationship between actors or entities), and the resulting structure of the ties connecting nodes. These items are then influenced by network microdynamics, which include homophily, heterophily, prominence attraction, brokerage and closure. These in turn influence the five components of network architecture – the distribution of nodes, the connectivity of the network, the pattern of clustering in the network, network density, and the degree of assortivity in the network. Network architecture influences microfoundations,
which include agency, opportunity, inertia, and random or exogenous factors. And those factors cycle around to influence the network primitives. The main takeaway from this study was that this cyclical framework attempted to include structural and behavioral components that lead to network evolution over time. It also accounted for external and internal actions. Finally, it illustrated the complex and multifaceted nature of collaborative evolution.

The above literature was useful in thinking through what types of data were appropriate to compare regarding network change and the conceptual understanding that change occurs due to different drivers and through different processes. However, even though research question one examines change over time, it does so from the perspective of patterns of an organization’s collaborative portfolio, not from a collaborative’s perspective. There may be drivers of change, patterns of collaborative portfolio change, or processes within those elements that have yet to be identified. It was the goal of this study to identify and fill those gaps; therefore the current literature fell short of enabling the study to use it in a confirmatory manner.

**Drivers of an Organization’s Collaborative Participation**

The second set of research questions also examines how and why collaborative portfolios change. But the relevant literature for this set of questions relates more to understanding the factors that drive decision-making around different changes. Stated differently, it looks at the drivers of organizational action in collaboratives typically examining it one collaborative at a time. This means most research looks at why organizations join, stay, or leave a particular collaborative. But, as stated previously, little if any research discussed the drivers of organizational membership in multiple collaboratives at the same time or how that membership changes over time. Nonetheless, the most relative literature is discussed below.

The literature related to why organizations join, stay, or leave collaboratives tends to fall into one of two categories but spans multiple academic disciplines. The first category assesses
the drivers of organizational action in relation to collaboratives, and the second examines partner selection, which is a more specific component of organizational actions within collaboratives.

Self-maximization often by way of profit maximization, both guaranteeing survival, is a commonly assumed driver of organizations’ actions and the individuals within them. This emerged in the theories discussing external influences on organizations and collaborative evolution as well. Theories under this umbrella assume organizations join collaboratives to access resources, increase the likelihood of survival, and leave group arrangements if those conditions change. However, as questioned previously, the principles of self-maximization according to the economic tradition may fail to capture the complexities in collaboratives.

The organization-based, business literature speaks directly to this issue as most studies suggest that self-gain or self-interest related to profit result in the formation of alliances or other joint arrangements. Gillespie and Teegen (1996) found that firms join alliances or joint ventures as a means to gain entry into new international markets. Their study examined the factors driving Mexican business managers dealing with market liberalization to join alliances or joint ventures. The study used surveys and 20 case studies to examine trends and explore why businesses join these types of collaboratives. Respondents to their survey noted accessing new technology and partnering with recognized brands as influential motivators in joining a collaborative because these items aided in entering and surviving in the changing market with new international competitors. This study reaffirmed the principles of self-interest and profit maximization but also hinted at the importance of perceptions as well.

Eisenhardt and Schoonhaven (1996) examined when and why alliances form. The authors challenged a commonly used theory - transaction cost economics - stating its focus on the transaction between firms, static efficiency, and routine situations narrowly excluded other social
and strategic factors that may also drive organizations to join alliances (136). Instead they suggested that firms join collaborative arrangements not only for organizational gain but also due to social ties. They examined a sample of semiconductor firms that engage in collaboratives over time in the 1980s. Using descriptive data on the firms, the study’s confidential interviews with the CEOs, founders, and other key executives of firms suggested that firms in new and developing uncertain environments seek membership in alliances or joint ventures. This finding runs contrary to the principles in transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1991), which predicts firms will avoid alliances in highly uncertain environments.

Instead, the study suggested firms join alliances for social reasons. Top managers used their well-established connections to gain entry into different alliances. These findings suggest that commonly used economic theories sometimes fail to fully describe the organizational motivators for joining a collaborative. They also suggest that more than one driver is present and some drivers may be social in nature.

Gimeno et al. (2005) found that firms in research and development alliances in the telecom industry mimicked each other, or more specifically ‘followed the leader,’ which runs counter to the resource-based view of the firm. The business literature, resource-based view suggests that firms seek a competitive advantage through a unique product-market position to use their distinctive capabilities while seeking to maximize profit (Peteraf, 1993; Porter, 1996). Therefore mimicking other organizations runs counter to establishing a unique market niche. Organizations succumbing to environmental pressures and following the principles of mimetic isomorphism is a well-established concept in the field of organizational studies (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Meyer & Scott, 1992). However, Gimeno et al. brought
this theoretical tension to light by emphasizing the inability of one theory alone to explain why firms join alliances.

Social Psychology research related to collaboratives also suggested that joining a collaborative may occur due to organizational or individual self-interest. Unlike previous theories, this interest included components beyond the maximization of profit alone. This strand of research suggested that decisions related to self-interest are also related to identity and a sense of belonging (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Ultimately, social psychology research suggested that cognitive factors are at play when individuals make decisions on behalf of themselves or their organizations. This is somewhat related to the field of social network perspectives, which suggested individual or organizational decisions are made within the context of relationships that exist in a system’s social structure (Wellman & Berkowitz, 1988; Freeman, 2004).

Kramer et al. (2013) examined several factors of embeddedness including centrality, identity, and the interaction between the two and how this influences individual actions within networks. Their findings suggested an individual or organization’s choice to join a collaborative may follow economic drivers of self-interest as well as cognitive or social drivers of identity and belonging. Working together, these components create a cyclical situation in which the actor or entity becomes embedded in a given situation even if that situation is not in the best interest of economic, social, or cognitive outcomes. In this context, an organization may join or remain in a collaborative even if it does not aid the interest of the organization.

Embeddedness is a term used frequently in the social network research as well as social psychology. Originated by Granovetter (1985), it suggests that economic exchanges are embedded in social networks. Different types of embeddedness exist such as relational, structural, and cognitive. The more embedded an actor is within any of these categories, the
stronger the tie between the actor and another actor in a network structure. Thus it is easier for an actor to reap the benefits or advantages of this position. For example, relational embeddedness leads to an advantage of accessing fine-grained information (Uzzi, 1996).

Referring again to Kramner et al. (2013), actor centrality is a measure of structural embeddedness and is supported by the assumption of actor rationality. In seeking a position of structural embeddedness within a network, actors look to maximize personal outcomes while accumulating power and influence in a network, which also leads to further commitment. Put differently, the more committed and connected an individual or organization is within a given network, the more central they become in a given network when looking at all actor ties.

Actor rationality in this study was also tied to identity, a concept the authors develop based on cognitive embeddedness, which is supported by social identity theory. Social identity theory describes the process of individuals perceiving themselves to be members of a group that shares their emotional beliefs and reinforces their self-definition (Schruijer, 2008). Identity in this study’s context built on that theory to suggest individuals derive some of their identity from the groups to which they belong and subsequently work to achieve collective goals, even at the price of their own goals. Greater identification of actors within a network leads to greater network commitment. When the two interact, identification reinforced by centrality lessened the likelihood of a central actors leaving, even if rationality would indicate the opposite when the collective goals run counter to the actor’s.

This study and the concepts and theories present in the social psychology research as well as social network research suggested that an actor or firm may seek to maximize self-interest. However, that self-interest may or may not be related to economic maximization, which is the assumption undergirding most of the prominent theories used to examine motivators that drive
organizations to participate in collaboratives. Additionally, the self-interests presented above may augment economic maximization, adding a layer of consideration and complication to the theories primarily used to examine drivers of collaborative membership.

The social network perspective literature stressed the important of an actor’s position in a network with some of the work examining the absence or presence of ties of an ego (actor of interest) to its alters (other actors tied to the actor of interest) within a whole network. The other work examined the ties between all actors or the whole network perspective. The first approach was primarily a result of the work done by Burt (1992) and referred to as the brokerage perspective. In this, an actor derives control and benefits by holding a position between two other organizations that were not previously linked. In this position, an actor controls the flow of information and other resources. The second perspective, examined by Coleman (1990) stressed the importance of interconnections among members in a whole network, and this research examined the absences or presence of ties. Third parties created social capital by improving information flow or stopping it as a form of punishment. Some argue these perspectives are complimentary and can work together (Burt, 2005). The importance of this research for the purposes of the dissertation is that social interactions lead to more or less access to resources and partners, which may cause an organization to join or leave a collaborative under different circumstances. These concepts also relate a great deal to decisions around partner selection, which is discussed in greater detail below.

**Partner Selection Literature**

Selecting partners within the context of collaborations can flow one of two ways. An organization or entity can assess the partners within a given collaborative that they may potentially join. Alternatively, organizations or entities within a collaborative may seek
particular partners for strategic reasons and attempt to recruit them to the collaborative. The majority of the literature below discusses partner selection from the point of view of an organization assessing the members of an existing or potentially forming collaborative.

Oliver (1990) integrated the interorganizational literature from the 1960s to 1990 and produced six generalizable determinants of relationship for interorganizational group formation that included the following items: necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity, efficiency, stability, and legitimacy. Each of these determinants present contingencies that lead to the selection of certain partners, or in the case of this dissertation, would lead an organization to join a given collaborative based on the characteristics of its members.

Necessity describes a situation in which an organization must partner with others for legal or regulatory purposes. Asymmetry occurs when an organization sees the opportunity to exercise power or control over other organizations. This may also occur whether a partner is resource rich or scarce. In the latter condition, an organization may try to partner with others that it can exert power over to access resources.

Reciprocity contrasts asymmetry as it describes cooperative arrangements between members, leading an organization to join a collaborative because it expects to both contribute and receive benefits. This idea is rooted in the principles of exchange theory (Emerson, 1972; Levine & White, 1961). Efficiency drives organizations to join or form collaboratives in an attempt to improve the internal input/output ratio of their organization. Like asymmetry, this relates more to exerting power and control over partners versus contributing to a joint output. Stability drives an organization to join a collaborative out of an attempt to decrease uncertainty generated by resource scarcity. Finally, legitimacy drives organizations to partner with other organizations meet external constituents’ views of what is legitimate or the norm.
Doz and Hamel (1998) suggested organizations or firms join alliances based one or a combination of three motivations: co-specialization, co-option, and co-learning. In each of these motivators, organizations are looking for either current alignment or future options for collaboration and learning. In sum, the drivers for partner selection, according to these authors, hinge on current and future business production.

In many cases, similarity drives partner selection. The literature suggested that organizations seek out and join collaboratives with partners that contain individuals with similar personalities (Burt, 1992), communication styles, similar work tasks, (Geringer, 1988; Geringer & Hebert, 1991) or are similar in age, sex, education, prestige, social class, tenure, and occupation (Carley, 1991; Ibarra, 1993; Laumann, 1966; Lazerfeld & Merton, 1954; McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987; McPherson et al., 2001, p. 796).

Context also plays an important role in partner selection as it potentially limits or structures the entities available for collaborative projects. Actors operating within the same environment are most likely to partner with one another (Danowski & Edison-Swift, 1985). Manning (2010) found that the process of partner selection entails reviewing past contacts and pooling potential partners. This compliments the embeddedness perspective that suggests partner selection occurs within an organization’s current context of operation and relational connectivity (Granovetter, 1985; Uzzi, 1997; Oliver, 1997). Social network perspective also supports this idea in that the partners available are likely accessed through current social contacts. Gulati (2007) suggested that networks play a role in guiding alliance formation because they provide information about the reliability and competency of potential partners. Some of the literature refers to this phenomenon as homophily. Although the literature supports the idea of homophily, it also suggests heterophily, or differences among partners, can drive partner selection as well.
Current Literature Conclusion

The tension discussed above represents the crux of the issue in all the literature present. It describes complex, contradictory, and inconclusive research that applies in some instances but not others. The abundance of literature related to collaboratives emphasizes the prevalence of these entities and our need to study them. However, it also points to their complexity. As such, a plethora of theories exist from different perspectives and in different combinations to describe and predict what is happening in a given context. None of the theories or studies definitively answered the question of how organizations’ collaborative portfolios – or involvement in more than one collaborative – evolve as time passes and why.

In addition to the tensions and in some instances contradictory components of the theories above, one of the largest challenges related to collaborative research is choosing a level of analysis. This dissertation primarily occurred at the organizational level, but needed knowledge of collaborative-level shifts as well as the involvement of individuals in this system to study the phenomenon fully. Grounded theory offers a flexible but structured approach to exploring complex phenomenon and allowed this study to shift levels of analysis when need be.

Grounded Theory

Glaser and Strauss introduced the grounded theory method in 1967 in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. The positivist tradition dominated the authors’ academic field, Sociology, as well as other social research disciplines throughout the twentieth century (Charmaz, 2014). Positivists view theory as a “statement of relationships between abstract concepts that cover a wide range of empirical observations” (Charmaz, 2014, 229). They place emphasis on parsimony and separating facts from values, which often creates a preference for quantified variables. This approach also requires the reduction of data and a failure to consider
cultural or emotional contexts. Thus, the majority of positivist research seeks to collect data and test it against pre-existing theories.

Concerned about researchers only verifying facts instead of also generating explanations, the two authors presented an alternative approach in their book that “discovered” theory from data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 4). The method remained rigorous and systematic in order to compete with positivist approaches. The inductive analysis process employs purposeful sampling to generate information-rich cases. Constant comparison, coding, and proposition generation emerges from the rich data.

Although Glaser and Strauss developed grounded theory together, they later diverged in their views about how to appropriately use the method, particularly regarding the use of theory. The original method explicitly forbade the use of any kind of theory to avoid biasing the researcher. They later diverged, as did other researchers, in terms of using or not using literature in grounded theory. Strauss strayed from the original partnership and wrote a book with Corbin in 1990 called *Basics of Qualitative Research*. This book introduced a new coding method that involved taking into consideration conditions, context and action, interactional strategies, and consequences. Basically, instead of allowing all of the theory to emerge from the data, Strauss allowed the existing literature to function as a framework for the analysis of data early in the research process.

Glaser strictly opposed the use of literature stating current literature should only be used later and in the role of potentially supplying comparative data. Some scholars view Glaser and Strauss’s divergent methods as entirely different (Cutcliffe, 2000; Glaser, 1992; Wilson & Hutchinson, 1996) while others view them as similar (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Walker & Myrick, 2006). Regardless of which side of the argument scholars land on, both approaches
share the same core idea – discovery of theory from data – and several components such as the use of constant comparison and open coding remain in both.

Indeed, different variations of the approach continue to emerge in practice. Strict grounded theory scholars do not allow comparing any data against theories or frameworks while more relaxed users of the approach may allow theories to be used during various stages of the process as justification of the research, as a framework for coding, or as actual data. Similarly, the process of using open coding, which requires scholars to not assign fixed codes in advance of analysis, diverge between strict practitioners of grounded theory and those practicing a more relaxed method. As Strauss suggested in his newer texts, pre-existing frameworks or theories may guide the research design process and may be used during the coding process in some cases.

Below is a discussion regarding the extent to which researchers use literature while employing a grounded theory approach.

Grounded Theory in Contemporary Research

Tummers and Karsten (2012) analyzed notable academic articles that used grounded theory and identified opportunities and pitfalls for using literature in grounded theory. The study assessed qualitative, public administration research that self-identified as grounded theory or contains components of the method. After conducting the analysis, the authors suggested that using pre-existing literature and/or theories is not problematic as long as the researcher specifies when and how the literature will be used. Additionally, they detailed three phases of the research process in which using literature is appropriate. These three phases include 1) the research design stage, 2) the data collection stage, and 3) the data analysis stage.

Using literature during the research design phase of the research process can be done in several ways detailed by Tummers and Karsten. First, literature helps identify knowledge gaps in
the field. This makes it possible to connect grounded theory research to other research in the field and demonstrate the theoretical relevance and integrate the evolved theory (Ackroyd et al., 2007). Second, using literature in grounded theory may help explain the importance of the study at hand (Bearfield & Eller, 2007). Finally, literature aids the research design phase of a project by helping to develop tentative questions and enhance conceptual clarity.

Additionally, Tummers and Karsten (2012) suggested literature can be used during the data collection phase of grounded theory. Glaser (2001) stated that “all is data.” Subsequently, researchers can collect and use existing literature and theory as data. Similarly, the authors suggested literature can be used during data analysis. Existing theory or frameworks present in the literature aids the researcher in ordering data and determining their meaning (77). Additionally, literature may help enhance the researcher’s sensitivity to latent relationships within the data (Health & Cowley, 2004; Strauss, 1987; Brower et al., 2000).

This dissertation used existing literature during the research design phase to demonstrate that a knowledge gap exists related to collaborative portfolios. It also used literature to communicate the importance of this study’s research. Research was not used during data collection and analysis. However, research appears again in this study in the conclusion to position the study’s findings within the current academic conversations.

Several scholars within the field of Public Administration stress the importance of using grounded theory or inductive reasoning as one of many research approaches available to PA scholars (Agranoff, 2007; Riccucci, 2010). It creates information rich data through “thick” description (Geertz, 1973) and examines the people and structures immersed in the area of interest (Agranoff, 2007). More than a description or reflection, grounded theory provides “a systematic way to probe structure and process at a real world level” (Agranoff, 2007, 35). It
helps provide an “abstract theoretical understanding of the studied experience” (Charmaz, 2014, 4). The goal is to discover “what is going on” (Glaser, 1978) by identifying processes at work within a given context (Baker et al., 1992).

As stated previously, grounded theory strives to create explanatory propositions that scholars refine in an effort to produce theory. This approach provides particular utility in fields where human behavior and decision-making is dynamic, resulting in the continual emergence of new phenomena that require documentation, categorization, and theorization. Although grounded theory originated in the fields of sociology, clinical psychology, and nursing, scholars in public administration, public management, nonprofit research, and other related topics have taken advantage of this method in recent scholarship (DeHart-Davis, 2009; De Korte & Van der Pijl, 2009; Durrant, 2007; Agranoff, 2007; Ackroyd et al., 2007; Agranoff, 2006; Foldy et al., 2010; Radin, 2000; Radin et al., 1996; Dart, 2004; Radin & Hawley, 1988).

It is important to note that a great deal of scholarship uses portions of the methods present in grounded theory while violating other principles set forth by Glaser and Strauss. For example, scholars may use pre-existing theory in a portion of the study. Additionally, some acknowledge the context of the researcher and their bias (Charmaz, 2014) while purist of the method attempt to avoid any bias, personal or academic.

In breaking some of the principles of the original approach, scholars often do not refer to the method they are using as grounded theory. This implies that even more PA studies exist that use the practices of inductive reasoning, constant comparison, and data-driven creation of propositions or theories (Tummers & Karsten, 2012). The reason some scholars do not refer to their methods as grounded theory may relate to the fact that qualitative research and grounded
theory are thought to be merely descriptive and not empirical, despite evidence to the contrary, some of which is presented in the next section.

**Examples of Grounded Theory in Public Administration Scholarship**

This section provides several specific examples of scholarly work within the field of public administration that uses grounded theory. The three studies below were published in three well-respected journals in PA that represent different but equally important subsectors of the discipline. In the order of the articles they include the following: The Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, Public Administration Review, and Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly. Each summary describes how the study uses grounded theory, paying specific attention to the role pre-existing literature and/or theory played and why an inductive approach was necessary.

DeHart-Davis (2009) used grounded theory to uncover the elements of effective organizational rules or as she later names the theory, “green tape.” Her study provided an alternative lens through which to view the relationship between employees and organizational rules as the former research focuses on “red tape” or ineffective organizational rules. Because of this, she provided an in-depth discussion around the literature of red tape, a practice with which some purist of grounded theory may disagree. However, as suggested by Tummers and Karsten (2012) this is not only appropriate in some instances in public administration research, but needed. In using theory to justify the need for her research, DeHart-Davis demonstrated the need for her study, as the existing research could not lead to the examination of effective rules.

For the grounded theory portion of her study she conducted 90 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with public employees representing four different cities. Using inductive reasoning and constant comparison of the data, five rules emerged that employees use to evaluate rules as
good or bad. The study then described the five rules and included information regarding tests used to assess the theory’s validity (bivariate correlations) and dimensionality (principal component analysis).

Agranoff (2006) used grounded theory to identify ten major themes or lessons related to working within collaboratives that emerged from field-based data. The author conducted extended interviews with 150 public officials, complimented by field observations and network documentation examination. Agranoff used inductive reasoning to glean “managerial lessons that…come from the managers themselves” (57). This study demonstrated the importance of letting the data speak for itself instead of imposing pre-existing theories of leadership or management, relationships, trust, organizational learning or culture, power, or conflict. All of the theories mentioned relate to the concepts discovered. However, if the author chose to use one or several of those, the study may have discounted other data present in the quest of “taking a deeper look into how public networks are organized and how they are managed” (56).

Dart (2004) used a grounded theory case study to examine the pressures placed on nonprofits to function in a more “business-like” manner, both in operations and attitudes and what that practice looks like. The author used literature to make the case that while this pressure is real and evident in previous research, the concept of “business-like” is not well defined and the practice of a nonprofit acting in such a way is also not well understood or studied. The study resulted in the creation of a typology to describe what business-like can mean in a nonprofit setting. Additionally, the in-depth examination helps communicate why being perceived as business-like is important for nonprofits. Grounded theory and inductive reasoning are important in this context because the author examines a broad question and undefined practices that required information-rich data to understand the mechanisms in place.
Summary

Chapter 2 demonstrated that the available literature could not be used to answer the questions put forth in this dissertation. This inability exists because the study’s research questions require the ability to assess multiple levels of analysis, over time, while taking into account a multitude of influential factors – internal, external, and all in between. More than anything, the current literature could not answer the questions because a full discussion about an organization’s collaborative portfolio did not exist prior to this study. A grounded theory, inductive approach was the only way to examine how collaborative portfolios evolve and why.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Chapter 3 begins with a description of the larger project from which this study stems, including descriptive information about the community the collaborative domain studied resides within, as well as information about the study that produced the collaborative data used in this dissertation. Then details of this dissertation’s mixed-methods approach comprise the remainder of the chapter. As discussed in Chapter 1 and 2, a mixed-method, inductive approach provided this study with the data and analysis methods capable of addressing this study’s research questions within a multi-phase design.

The phases of the dissertation included the following: 1) creation and transformation of a longitudinal data set from network or collaborative-centric data to organization-centric data and generation of organization-level collaborative portfolio profiles used for analysis and to develop a sample frame for in-depth interviews 2) creation of interview protocols based on organization collaborative portfolio change patterns analyses; execution of the first phase of in-depth interviews with identified organizations from sample frame; use of grounded theory methods to generate and refine initial propositions; 3) confirmatory re-sampling, in-depth interviewing and further refinement of propositions.

Study Context

This dissertation examined a specific subset of information available from a larger project based out North Carolina State University under the direction of Dr. Branda Nowell. The larger study, called the Collaborative Partnerships Mapping Project (Mapping Project), first collected data in 2012 and then again in 2017. During the first phase of the Mapping Project, data from surveys and interviews helped construct a comprehensive map of collaboratives and their members focused on advancing health and wellness in specified counties. The map illustrated
connections between collaboratives via organizational membership. The second phase of the Mapping Project collected data paralleling the first collection effort as well as collection additional data to assess change over time. The Mapping Project study used the term partnership in the same way this dissertation used the term collaborative, meaning a group of three or more organizations or entities that meets regularly to improve health and wellness.

The Mapping Project collected data on several counties; however this dissertation focused on one. Located in a southeast state in the U.S., the population of the county of interest is roughly 200,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Table 2 provides the demographic breakdown of its population.

**Table 2.** Demographic Breakdown of Collaborative Domain Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial or Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational services, health care, and social assistance account for the largest sector of employment in the community, making the presence of a collaborative domain around these services more robust. Other large employers include manufacturing, the arts, entertainment, recreation and food services sector, education, and the retail trade sector.

**2012 Mapping Project Methods and Descriptives**

During the first phase of data collection of the Collaborative Partnership Mapping Project (Mapping Project), the NC State University research team used a snowball sample to generate a comprehensive list of the collaboratives in the communities of interest to collect information on collaborative membership, structure, and decision-making. The Mapping Project identified and interviewed coordinators of collaboratives in order to collect details about the collaborative, its
structure, and its organizational members. The collaborative coordinators also provided information about additional partnerships until no new partnership names emerged.

The 2012 Mapping Project results identified 14 distinct health and wellness collaboratives in the county of interest. Across the 14 collaboratives, 163 organizations actively participated in these groups with 75 organizations participating in multiple collaboratives simultaneously. Of the active organizations, 29% represented for-profit entities, 41% were not-for-profit entities, and 29% were government entities. The majority of the collaboratives, 72%, reported serving a target population related to health or general wellness. Other target populations included youth, infants, the elderly, families, and other subsets of people and or health care needs or health related concerns.

2017 Mapping Project Methods and Descriptives

During second phase of data collection in 2017, the research team from North Carolina State University, again under the instruction of Dr. Branda Nowell, collected data for the same counties of interest as the first phase of this study. This data collection phase was named Mapping Public Health Collaborative Follow-Up Study and the goal of the study mirrored the first data collection effort with the added interest of understanding how a community of collaboratives evolved during a 5-year time period.

The 2017 study used the list of collaboratives from 2012 to interview coordinators and collect parallel data to 2012. Additionally, this phase collected information linked to the context of change in partnership membership, structure, and other factors related to changes experienced over time. Key informants checked the initial list of collaboratives in the community to provide insight on those that no longer exist or are new.
Each existing collaborative’s coordinator was interviewed using the same protocol as the 2012 study with several additional questions related to evolution or change. During these interviews, the coordinators verified the list of partnerships, similar to the practice undertaken in the first phase of research. All partnerships interviewed in 2012 were interviewed in 2017, even if the partnership no longer existed. For those discontinued partnerships, a different protocol helped illuminate the circumstances leading to the dissolution of the collaborative.

The 2017 study results revealed 15 distinct health and wellness collaboratives operated in the collaborative domain identified. The study identified 16 partnerships, but one partnership decline to participate in the study. In terms of collaborative-level changes since 2012, 2 collaboratives dissolved and 3 new collaboratives emerged. Across the 15 collaboratives that participated in the second Mapping Project study, 149 active organizations were identified with over 449 active individuals. Of the 149 active organizations, 45 served on multiple partnerships with 21% representing for-profit entities, 49% non-profit entities, and 30% government entities.

Over a third of the active organizations in the county of interest were new to the network since 2012. Therefore even though the active organizational count remained relatively stable (163 to 149) and the active collaborative count also remained stable (14 to 15), change took place within the community, which is explored in this dissertation through the shifts in organizations’ collaborative portfolios. The Mapping Project study found that collaboratives no longer in existence adjourned due to overlapping activities with other groups, limited capacity of members, and changes in leadership. New collaboratives emerged due to funding opportunities or from sub-committees of operating collaboratives. The table below summarizes the Mapping Project findings related to organizational and collaborative actors in the collaborative domain.
Table 3. Mapping Project Summary Descriptives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboratives</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-2, +3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-Profit</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not for Profit</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative Research: Collaborative Portfolios

As previously stated, this dissertation conceived of a collaborative portfolio as the collection of collaboratives an organization participates in at a given time. Extensive cleaning of both the 2012 and 2017 data from the NC State Mapping Public Health Collaborative (Mapping Project) research studies yielded the raw data needed to generate the organizational collaborative portfolios for this study. Each phase of the Mapping Project dataset contained approximately 950 individual entries (individuals associated with an organization and a partnership). The cleaning process of the Mapping Project team, of which this dissertation’s author participated in 2017, went through several iterations of data verification. Particular attention focused on checking the associations of individuals with organizations. Research team members verified data through internet searches and inquiries to participants in the study. Data checks occurred per team member and were cross-reference until no new information arose for the data.

Once the data from the two mapping phases were cleaned, this dissertation began constructing organization-level collaborative portfolios related to two measures of change: size and strength of participation. The two change measures used for this study originated from Koka et al. (2006), in which the authors based four categories of network change on the concepts of organization tie creation and deletion influenced by the environment and moderated by the strategic action of actors in a network (726). The Koka et al. study ultimately sought to hypothesize how environmental influences interacted with organizational actions and resulted in
network-level change. The framework Koka et al. provided started an important conversation that led to this study. However, it only operationalized external influences through the availability of resources and environmental certainty with both factors increasing or decreasing. Similarly, it only conceptualized strategic action of organizations as creating or deleting ties. These four actions led to changes in a collaboratives size and strength of participation with the inspection of different combinations of external and internal influences leading to network expansion, churning, strengthening or weakening. Therefore, as previously stated, this study used the ideas Koka et al. introduced for guidance but adjusted the concepts to examine action from the organizational perspective as well as defining what size and strength of participation look like in a collaborative, again from the organization’s perspective.

As such, the dissertation made decisions on which measures to select and how to operationalize them. The Koka et al. (2006) study discussed increases and decreases in networks at length through tie creation and deletion; therefore this study used portfolio size as a key measure of portfolio change. Also composition, or the specific collaboratives an organization participated in during each study, was considered as a sub factor of size when appropriate. Strength of participation was also included in this study as a component of organization collaborative portfolio change because it signaled when organizations made changes in collaborative participation but remained in a collaborative. Descriptions of the two main change measures, size and strength of participation, are discussed below in detail per change type.

**Portfolio Size Measurement**

An organization’s collaborative portfolio size represented the number of collaboratives it participated in during a given time in a given collaborative domain. To measure size, the study counted the number of collaboratives a given organization participated in as of 2012 and as of
2017. Comparing the cumulative numbers for the two years, each organization received a portfolio size designation of increase (1), maintain (0), or decrease (-1).

For example, an organization in the community of interest participated in 4 collaboratives during the first phase of research in 2012 and 5 collaboratives in the second in 2017. The original size of organization’s portfolio grew from 4 to 5 and according to this study’s change in size measurement, this organization’s portfolio size received a 1 to represent it increased.

But, the size measure of an organization’s portfolio may not have necessarily reflected its composition, meaning an organization could change the configuration of the collaboratives it participates in from year to year without changing size. This study flagged any portfolios that fit that description. Additionally, if the composition of a portfolio changed while the size remained constant or if the composition changed in a way that did not logically follow the size change pattern, the portfolio received a composition flag. The concept of “logically follows” was operationalized in the following way. If an organization participated in a given number of collaboratives in 2012 and increased or decreased to 2017 and those changed reflected an addition or subtraction of collaboratives to the already existing participation, these portfolios were not flagged as having a compositional churn. For example, an organization participated in Collaboratives A and B in 2012 and in 2017 increased participation by joining another group participation in Collaboratives A, B, and C, this would not receive a compositional flag because it increased by joining one collaborative. But instead, if the organization participated in A, B, and C in 2012 and, A and D in 2017 that would receive a compositional flag because only one of the original collaboratives from 2012 remained in 2017. Assuming the portfolio decreased in size and strength of participation, it would receive a portfolio designation of contraction, but be flagged for a composition shift.
The compositional flag served as a guide in identifying and analyzing portfolio change patterns. It also signaled the researcher to ask about these specific changes in in-depth interviews. However, it was not used as the base for sampling organizations to conduct in-depth interviews. Rather, it provided detail and context for the change patterns identified for sampling and again in the analysis of domain-level portfolio changes.

**Portfolio Strength of Participation Measurement**

The portfolio strength of participation measurement assessed increased, maintained, or decreased levels of participation in collaboratives. Both interview protocols for the Mapping Project contained a set of questions indicating an organization’s level of involvement, per individual participating on behalf of the organization, in a given collaborative as scored by the coordinator. Organizations’ members received a level of participation score based on their meeting attendance and level of leadership in a given collaborative. During the Mapping Project interviews with collaborative coordinators, the coordinator assigned each member one of the following designations based on the parameters provided:

1. **Leader** (attends most meetings and voluntarily assumes leadership positions on projects)
2. **Active member** (attends at least 1/3 of the meetings or actively engaged in a task force)
3. **Sporadic member** (attended less than 1/3 of the meetings in the past year)
4. **Non-active member** (remains affiliated but has not attended a meeting in the past year)

In this study, the results of an organization’s involvement for the two phases of the Mapping Project were compared by examining the highest participating member of an
organization. This means the measure did not take into account the level of participation of every person participating per collaborative, but rather assessed the highest participating individual.

Helping to counteract size bias that could occur if the study instead used an average of participation scores for all individuals, the dissertation’s strength measure instead focused on the highest level of human resources it dedicated per collaborative. When first examining the data, the majority of cases where more than one member of an organization participated in a given collaborative, typically only one person participated at a high level while the remaining members participated at the lowest level. However, this pattern varied a bit when looking at larger organizations where more than one person may participate at a high level. But these mega-bureaucracies may also represent more than one organization as operationalized by this study. So to safeguard against a size bias or organizational parameter challenge, the study used the highest level of participants per collaborative, not the breadth of staff that are tangentially related.

Post portfolio analysis, described in Chapter 4, the study explored changes in the number of people dedicated to collaboratives per organization and the level of leadership per number of individuals per organization. These measures mirrored the trends present in the portfolios, indicating that selecting the highest level participant reflects organizational effort choices. These outcomes are described in Chapter 5.

In calculating the summation of the strength of participation score, the number of strengthened, maintained, or weakened participation levels represented an overall participation score. This means the highest level of participation was compared between 2012 and 2017 per collaborative. Then, after each individual collaborative score was determined, the aggregate indicated an overall increase in participation, maintenance, or decrease. Again, using an
aggregated approach helped the study understand the level of effort an organization dedicated towards collaborative participation and how that varied during this five year time period.

Table 4 provides an example of the portfolio strength score calculation approach. It is important to note that 4 represents the lowest level of participation and 1 represents the highest.

**Table 4: Strength of Participation Portfolio Score Calculation Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative</th>
<th>T1 Participation Score of Highest Participating Individual for given Collaborative</th>
<th>T2 Participation Score of Highest Participating Individual for given Collaborative</th>
<th>Strength Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No longer a member of this collaborative</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>-1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When conducting portfolio analysis, the study also identified instances of churn where an organization shifted participation among collaboratives but the overall effort or level remained constant. For example, an organization could participate in Collaborative A at a level of 2 and B at a level of 4 in 2012 and in 2017 flip that participation to be a level 4 in Collaborative A and a level 2 in Collaborative B. The overall strength appears to have remained the same, but these portfolios were identified as churning during the quantitative analysis portion of the study.

**Calculating Overall Portfolio Scores**

The size and strength of participation scores were combined to generate an overall portfolio score, taking into consideration the composition measure when appropriate. Below is an example of what one collaborative portfolio could look like. The number of collaboratives this organization participated in grew from 2 to 4 and the overall level of effort dedicated towards
collaborative participation or strength of participation increased as well. This portfolio experienced an overall portfolio change of “expansion” because both change categories increased. It did not receive a compositional flag because the original two collaboratives remained in 2017 and two new collaboratives were added.

Table 5: Example of a Collaborative Portfolio Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Strength of Participation</th>
<th>Composition Flag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase (1)</td>
<td>Expand (1)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>Contract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In generating an overall portfolio designation, the size and strength measures were assessed in terms of if they increased, did not change, or decreased cumulatively. The composition flag, which is present any time the actual groups an organization participates in change, but this change is not reflected in the size measure.

Table 6: Possible Portfolio Change Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Strength of Participation</th>
<th>Composition Flag</th>
<th>Portfolio Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Contraction or Exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Contraction – Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Expansion or Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Expansion – Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Churn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase or Decrease</td>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Churn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These rules guided the construction of organization portfolios. However, the Mapping Project data experienced a transformation prior to portfolio construction, which is discussed below.

Generating Organization-Level Data for Portfolios

Using the cleaned data from the two phases of the Mapping Project, a combination of pivot tables in Excel and queries in Access supported the generation of collaborative portfolios.
for this study. Full participation lists for the 2012 and 2017 Mapping Project collaboratives existed individually and contained the following information per collaborative: organizations, the individuals that represented the organizations, and the level at which those individuals participated in the collaborative as scored by the collaborative coordinator. An example of the data structure from the 2012 and 2017 studies is displayed below.

**Table 7: Mapping Project Data Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative A</th>
<th>Org Y</th>
<th>Individual C from Org Y</th>
<th>Activity Level of Individual C</th>
<th>Individual D from Org Y</th>
<th>Activity Level of Individual D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Org Z</td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual F from Org Z</td>
<td>Activity Level of Individual F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Org X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual H from Org X</td>
<td>Activity Level of Individual H</td>
<td>Individual K from Org X</td>
<td>Activity Level of Individual K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual N from Org X</td>
<td>Activity Level of Individual N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pivot tables for each participation list 2012 and 2017 respectively sorted the information by organization. The table parameters identified each partnership in which a given organization participated as well as the highest participating person per collaborative. The latter was achieved by selecting the “minimum” value for the individual activity level per partnership as the lowest number, one, was actually the highest level of participation from the study data. An example of the data structure following the employment of pivots tables is shown below.

**Table 8: Dissertation Data Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Y</th>
<th>Partnership A</th>
<th>Highest level of participation by an individual from Org Y in Partnership A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partnership L</td>
<td>Highest level of participation by an individual from Org Y in Partnership L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partnership S</td>
<td>Highest level of participation by an individual from Org Y in Partnership S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coding began according to the specified parameters – size and strength of participation – according to the process described in the previous section. Then the study manually combined the two pivot tables to create a collaborative portfolio for every organization. In total, 227 organizational portfolios were generated. An example of the data structure ordering for what each portfolio looks like in excel is provided below.

**Table 9: Organization Collaborative Portfolio Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Org ID</th>
<th>Collab ID ‘12</th>
<th>Collab ID ‘17</th>
<th>Size ‘12</th>
<th>Size ‘17</th>
<th>Size Score</th>
<th>Strength of Participation ‘12</th>
<th>Strength of Participation ‘17</th>
<th>Changes in Participation</th>
<th>Participation Score</th>
<th>Composition Flag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>002_01</td>
<td>002_01</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>002_02</td>
<td>002_03</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>002_04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this example, the organization participated in 2 collaboratives in 2012 and added a third to the original composition in 2017. Therefore the size increased, but the composition followed a logical increase because the organization maintained participation in the original two collaboratives while adding a third. The highest level of participation present in the first two collaboratives was a level 4, the lowest level. Both levels increased to a 3 by 2017 and a third collaborative was joined at the highest level. Therefore the cumulative outcome was an increase in the original two with an additional collaborative result in a positive strength change outcome. This organization’s portfolio would be given the designation “expansion” because both measures increased and there was not a churning compositional shift.

**Criteria for Organization Collaborative Portfolio Profile Inclusion**

All organizations present in the Mapping Project phases were initially considered, an approach that differs slightly from the reporting done for the Mapping Project studies. In the
2012 and 2017 Mapping Project reports, organizations in which the highest level of participation only reached a level 4 (the least engaged) were excluded from the study analysis. For this study, three conditions removed an organization from the collaborative portfolio profile generation process. The conditions included:

1. An organization with a collaborative portfolio in 2012 with the highest level of participation existing at the level 4 and no portfolio existing in 2017
2. An organization with a collaborative portfolio in 2012 with the highest level of participation at a level 4 that remained at a level 4 in 2017
3. Finally, an organization ‘new’ to the study in 2017 with the highest level of participation at a level 4.

All other configurations of collaborative participation received portfolios.

A few instances emerged that required decisions in relation to characterizing organizations or their participants due to uncovering more detailed information in 2017 than was present in 2012. For example, in the 2012 data, a large medical provider received one organizational name and identification number. But in 2017, the collaborative coordinators provided more detailed information on their members from this medical provider varying from specific programs in the larger organization, its foundation, and hospice branch. This situation appeared in a few instances where organizations are large and complex. When possible, the Mapping Public Health Collaborative Follow-Up study attempted to provide more data (i.e. subdivide what was considered one organization into more than one) if the entity in question functioned as an organization in terms of having its own budget and management.

If confirmation of an organizational division or more newly specified subset of an organization provided in 2017 could not be verified as of 2012 for the purposes of the portfolios,
this dissertation defaulted to the 2012 classification of the data because examining change over time was a crucial component of the study. Therefore a few instances arose where this dissertation chose to reflect overarching organizations versus divisions within them that the Mapping Project study public reports regarding portfolios. By defaulting to the larger, parent organizations, this dissertation could correct for any nuances during the in-depth interview phase should they occur, but more easily identify an actor in each year.

**Collaborative Portfolios Descriptives**

In the 227 organizational portfolios generated, patterns of change emerged in all of the four primary change areas initially identified: contraction, expansion, maintenance, and churn. Portfolios that experienced complete contraction, expansion, or maintenance were identified first and then variations within those main categories were identified next. The analysis also looked for patterns within patterns to discern whether certain types of nuanced patterns meant anything or spoke to the research questions.

A breakdown of the analysis follows starting at the most broad category of change patterns that aggregated all types of contraction, expansion and maintenance types into one category each and then displays the breakdown within those larger categories.

**Table 10: Four Main Change Patterns Seen in Collaborative Portfolios**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Change Pattern</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contraction</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churn</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>227</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking into some nuance within the larger categories, exit occurred when an organization participated in collaboratives in 2012 but did not in 2017. Entrance occurred
when an organization did not appear in the 2012 data but participated in collaboratives as of 2017. Contraction occurred when the size and the strength of participation decreased between study years. A designation of “contraction strength” occurred when the size of the portfolio remained constant but the strength of participation in those collaboratives decreased. The opposite is true for expansion and expansion strength. Some instances of “churn” occurred when the size of a portfolio decreased, but the strength of participation in the remaining portfolio increased. Finally, maintenance occurred when no changes were made to size or strength nor was it flagged for a compositional churn.

**Table 11: Detailed Portfolio Change Patterns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detailed Change Pattern</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exit</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraction</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraction Strength</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion Strength</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churn</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An in-depth discussion of the findings related to the collaborative portfolio analysis and relation to the research questions exists in Chapter 4. This chapter now shifts to the qualitative portion of the research conducted after the generation and analysis of the quantitative organization collaborative portfolios occurred.

**Qualitative Research**

**Phase One**

Grounded theory requires the researcher to sample in a way that maximizes comparability while trying to control for as many factors as possible to ensure the variation present relates to the question at hand (Charmaz, 2014). In short, the sample should be similar enough to compare
but different in the areas of interest, which in this instance were factors that influence changes in portfolios.

Based on the change categories present and the need for a maximum variation sample with information-rich and highly distinctive categories, the dissertation selected the sample of portfolios that experienced the same change in each change category – contraction, expansion, or churn – for the first round of interviews. Exit and entrance were not considered for the sample because they represent death or birth of portfolios, which differs from evolution. Also, maintenance was not considered in this phase, as it may not reflect as much change.

Examining the portfolios in each category, selection criteria were applied to this subset in an attempt to hold as many other variables constant or similar as possible. The criteria included the following:

1. Only government and non-profit organizations were examined. The study felt the missions and underlying drivers of decisions for these organizations were more alike than for-profit entities that seek to maximize profit.

2. Only organizations with health, defined broadly, as a main component of their organizational mission were included.

3. Only organizations with portfolios that experienced change consistently in size and strength of participation categories of interest from 2012 to 2017 were included.

4. No mega-bureaucracies or those organizations that were so large and undecipherable in terms of which entities within the organization function independently or as a subunit of the larger organization were included.

These four criteria were verified by examining the status of an organization (government,
not-for-profit, for-profit), the description of the organization and wording of each organizations’ mission available online, and the collaborative portfolios.

A fifth selection criteria initially existed, but was less easily operationalized. This criterion related to the extent to which an organization serves the role of a collaborator in the community. The intent was to avoid including organizations that serve as network administrative organizations (NAO) or an entity that exists only as a means of coordinating collaboration (Provan & Kenis, 2008). However, within the field of public health and wellness, collaboration is an assumed activity and many organizations serve some type of collaborative facilitation role. Therefore, the interview protocol included questions related to the main activities of the organization and the interviewee. The extent to which the individual and organization served as a facilitator of coordination is considered during analysis of the interview data. If an organization did not provide any type of direct product or services beyond collaborative coordination, they were not included.

After taking these criteria into consideration, the following breakdown accounts for the final sample used for in-depth interviews.

**Table 12: Breakdown of Organizations Qualified for Phase 1 Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Type</th>
<th>Consistent Change Patterns</th>
<th>Met all Criteria for Sample Strategy I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contraction</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churn</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, during the data analysis process it became apparent that this study inadvertently adopted an assumption that an organization contains an architect or manager that guides the organization’s collaborative portfolio outcomes. This may or may not be true. Therefore, the sampling strategy addressed this unanswered question in its protocol by reaching
out to the manager or executive level staff person of an organization first, via email and phone, to see if the leader of a given organization does drive decision-making. If it appeared they did not, a second protocol was available and used for individuals within organizations.

The protocol crafted for individuals was used several times, but ultimately it became clear that the people potentially identified as individuals were some type of hybrid between an individual and someone who managed collaborative participation on behalf of his or her organization. What occurred in several instances was that a person thought of themselves as an individual, but during the interview it became clear that they were managing collaborative decisions for their organization.

**Interview Protocol Development**

The study questions were developed in direct relation to the research questions with particular attention given to understanding the drivers of change or stasis in the overall portfolio and the origin of those decisions within an organization. The interview protocols, recruitment material, and informed consent forms for managers and individuals are available in Appendix X, but a description of the protocol is also provided below.

Corbin (2002) notes that “grounded theory operates from a correspondence perspective in that it aims to generate explanatory propositions that correspond to real-world phenomena” (489). Although some definitions of grounded theory specify that theory “is inductively generated from field work” (Patton 2002, p11), according to Glaser (2000) “grounded theory…can be used on any data or combination of data,” (7) meaning interview data are appropriate for use in grounded theory. Charmaz (2014) states that intensive interviewing is a good fit for grounded theory methods because both are “open-ended, yet directed, shaped yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted” (85).
Because the interviews needed to yield information-rich data, which requires context-specific data, the interview protocol was developed after analyzing the collaborative portfolios. Doing so beforehand may have yielded inappropriate questions that failed to lead to the type of data needed to answer the research questions at hand related to the most and least common types of collaborative portfolio change as well as how portfolios are managed and the drivers of decisions regarding portfolios.

**Interview Protocol Content**

Once the portfolio patterns emerged during the quantitative analysis, the interview questions were generated. Charmaz (2014) recommends beginning a grounded theory interview protocol broadly and then focusing in on questions that invite a detailed discussion related to the topic (p. 65). Therefore, descriptive questions comprised the beginning of the interview protocol to understand details about the person being interviewed such as title, length of tenure in current position and at the organization, main tasks undertaken in the role, as well as details about the organization such as confirmation of its mission as it relates to health and overall activities, and its staff size.

The next set of questions focused on how the organization deals with the management of collaborative participation generally asking about how requests from collaboratives are fielded, what things are considered when joining, staying in or leaving, what communication about collaborative participation looks like internally, and the nature of portfolio change experienced over time. Several broad questions marked the opening to these sections. One question asked interviewees how collaborative participation is managed generally, the other question asked what the organization would consider if a collaboration called them up and asked them to join.
Again, following the advice of Charmaz (2014), broad questions were followed by more detailed discussions related to the generated collaborative portfolio, focused on understanding the context around and drivers of change or stasis per collaborative. Although these questions sought descriptive information, they remained fairly broad with many probes prepared to clarify details. This approach allowed the interviews to be flexible and follow leads from the interviewees.

Finally questions related to organizational capacity and a catchall question concluded the protocol. The protocol aimed to directly ask interviewees about components related to this study’s research questions while also asking questions in such a way that allowed interviewees to indirectly reveal the organization’s attitude or view of participation in collaboratives. The full interview Manager protocol is available in Appendix A.

Phase 1 Interviews

Twenty-six organizations met the sampling frame criteria for Phase 1 of interviews. A first wave of organizations were contacted via email initially with a message describing the study, requesting participation, and providing contact information and a statement that the researcher would follow-up via phone that week. The sampling protocol design identified the executive director or equivalent position as the person to contact in order to assess the architect assumption present in this study. If that person was unavailable or unwilling to participate the researcher reached out to a recommended staff person within the organization. The researcher began reaching out to organizations in each change category and aiming to schedule interviews evenly in relation to the change categories so that emerging data would contain potential variation. Only one organization in the initial wave declined to participate due to limited time.
Over a five month time period, this study completed 8 phone interviews in the following categories.

**Table 13: Organizations Interviewed in Phase 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Type</th>
<th>Organizations in Sample</th>
<th>Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contraction</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churn</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In-depth notes were taken while on the phone and if given consent by the interviewee the interview was recorded in order clarify the written notes. Interview notes were kept in encrypted word-documents.

**Analysis Process for Phase 1 Interview Data**

The study used grounded theory methods to analyze the data collected. The following sections discuss the process of data analysis and proposition generation. Throughout the following sections, the dissertation shifts to the first person to appropriately describe the grounded theory research process in which the researcher remains close to the data at all times (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) described ground theory’s constant comparison method as containing four stages. The first stage requires the researcher to compare incidents applicable to each category, meaning the researcher begins by coding each incident or data point in her data into as many categories of analysis as possible (105). As other data emerges, it either fits within an existing category or creates a new category. Charmaz (2014) instructs the first stage of initial coding take place line-by-line, word-by-word. This stage is crucial as “coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data” (113). Coding
in inductive research differs from deductive in that inductive research allows patterns to emerge from the data and develop into codes whereas deductive research compares collected data to a list of predetermined codes. Due to the importance of the first step to the end goal of the method, this process required a great deal of time (Charmaz, 2014).

I began the first phase of analysis by reviewing the audio transcriptions of the interviews to ensure the notes I took during the interview fully reflected the conversation. Then, I began coding the first five interviews in Memo 1 by pulling the main components related to the research question into a spreadsheet, word by word, and identifying key words or phrases from each interview. Coding took place in a spreadsheet to organize emerging codes or themes in relation to the following items: portfolio change related to expanding, maintaining, or contracting components of the portfolio or descriptions of an organizational architect. Key words, usually one or two words phrases, related to the areas described above were pulled into the spreadsheet. For example, some early codes related to expanding the portfolio’s size by joining a collaborative include the following: related to our mission; asked us to apply for a grant; aligned with our work; able to participate; opportunity to share information; opportunity to learn; something to give.

Grounded theory coding requires the researcher to generate as many unique codes as possible initially. I followed this open-coding approach for all coding conducted for the first eight interviews (Charmaz, 2014). However, after the first five interviews, I also shifted to conducting focused coding concurrently. Focused codes appear frequently and allow the researcher to analyze large pieces of data through given lenses that emerged from the data (Charmaz, 2014, p 138). Charmaz (2014) suggested researchers take the items identified in the first step of coding that are most relevant to the research questions and test them against
extensive data in subsequent data gathering, which is how this study processed all interview data. So, in generating the focused codes I examined the initial codes and started to group similar codes together. I identified the following focused codes after analyzing the first 8 interviews.

Table 14. Focused Codes for Initial Eight Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Joining</th>
<th>Reasons for Staying</th>
<th>Reasons for Leaving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Remains relevant</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission alignment</td>
<td>Mission alignment</td>
<td>No mission alignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff capacity</td>
<td>Staff capacity</td>
<td>No staff capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something to give and/or gain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While working on coding, both open and then focused, I also wrote summative memos for each case. Memo 2 contained summaries for the first five interviews. In the summative memos, a summary per interview included a description of the type of change experienced, overarching comments and ideas, quotes related to specific changes made to the collaborative portfolio, and a breakdown of ideas related to joining, staying, and leaving collaboratives. Below, Figure 2 provides an example of a summary for a case in the study.

Case X Summary Memo

Portfolio: Contraction

General thoughts about the RQ after reading interview

This person used the phrase mission alignment frequently throughout the interview. This portfolio experienced a contraction – they maintained participation levels in two collaboratives (one low, one high) and then dropped out of two collaboratives – one of which this director had never heard of before. Then they joined a new collaborative that they wrote the grant for and help lead – people approached them to do this. So in terms of how the portfolio changed, it seemed to change according to relevance and opportunities. The organization itself did not change size or mission. So I would say the organization responded to external changes or opportunities more than having internal changes drive portfolio change in terms of the new...
collaborative. The two dropped collaboratives seem to be gone/dropped because they didn’t align w/their mission.

**Architect**

Director offers guidance and tries to fit the right people with opportunities, but also allows his/her workers (13 total) to seek collaborative opportunities as well and pursue those and report back/inform him/her. Collaborative participation is part of the employees’ annual evaluation. If money is involved, however, the director is more of an architect or in control b/c as he/she explained, funds are limited. Discussed changes to portfolio occurring incrementally

Great quote when asked if there is an architect in the organization managing collaborative participation: “So an architect… somewhat but not totally, not a gatekeeper.”

**General drivers to joining a collaborative**

- Mission alignment
- Opportunities to network
  - Share information as well as pick up information about what’s going on in the community
- Someone asked the organization to join or serve a specific role – writing the grant for an effort or serving as the manager or fiscal agent
  - “Specifically, Collaborative X, the coordinator for that group is actually supervised by me and I write the grant that funds the effort. I also write the grant for the Collaborative Y. Both of these initiatives started other places – one started as a grant fund through the health department but started w/ a community transformation grant. It got started and when the funding died, our office stepped in and helped apply for the current funding”
  - “Collaborative Z – the discussion about it initiated in a task force. When I came two years ago I had prior experience in this area and the collaborative targeted our office to help apply for funding b/c I had also had experience writing grants. The work of the collaborative fit our organizations’ mission, perfectly connecting our areas of work.”
- Capacity
  - (staff time) is available (to join) or not available (not to join)

**Drivers to stay**

- Remains in line w/what they’re interested in and working towards

**Drivers to leave**

- Misalignment of missions OR misalignment with part of their mission but not the other.
  - Gave an example about joining groups that may seems to support their overall mission, but in fact support a more specific subset of the greater idea. They have to stay at the larger level as they’re a government entity and can’t support one approach over another.

---

**Figure 2.** Excerpt from Case Summary Memo
Memos 3 and 4 contained summaries for cases 6-8 similar to the example above, but they also contained free-writing and clustering analysis. Free-writing allowed me to think through emerging ideas in the summaries related to the focused codes and how the data spoke to the overall research questions. Free-writing typically also occurred in the beginning of the memo at which point I reviewed where the study stood at that point in time methodologically and any reflections I had during the summary or during the generation of the given memo. An example of a portion of freewriting related to organizational architects in Memo 4 is below.

I’ve now run into two cases where an architect in the traditional sense of all controlling or complete central control is not present (but it could potentially be 3-4 cases depending on how I conceive of it). It’s more individualistic in some instances in that the organizational architect tells its folks to go and be collaborative but doesn’t dictate it directly. All of these instances still have a lot of communication taking place in terms of the people doing the collaborative work reporting back to the organization and bosses/colleagues which has led me to the idea that decisions about participation in collaboratives often occur collaboratively – no one is undertaking work in collaboratives in vacuum. I’m not exactly sure what to do w/the “architect” question. I feel like it’s still fairly present in that people are making strategic choices about collaboration whether it coordinates to the top level positions (as it does in some cases) or if it’s delegated out. I feel like b/c it’s actively communicated and more than one person weighs in even if lower level people are making the calls, it indicates there is some type of plan/strategy/architect but not a dictator or as Interview 2 stated – “an architect but not a gatekeeper”

Figure 3. Excerpt from Freewriting Memo

An example of clustering in Memo 4 is provided below in which I grappled with the drivers of decisions to join, stay, or leave collaboratives and an attempt to move from the focused codes to proposition-like ideas or more fully developed ideas related to these changes across all cases. I was also trying to merge drivers of change with the involvement of architects at this point. The development of propositions from categories marks the second stage of grounded
theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Some sentences or ideas are similar in my attempt to cluster themes and work towards propositions. These were later condensed or re-written.

Figure 4. Excerpt from Clustering Memo

To recap, Memos 1 through 4 attempted to generate big ideas from the data and move towards explanatory propositions. Memo 5 documented my steps towards the propositions by generating them and providing data to support them. The study’s propositions went through several stages of developments where core concepts were pulled from early memos and fit into concepts or more actionable ideas. Each interview was tested against a generated proposition. If the interview contained data that supported a given proposition, direct quotes were pulled to support the proposition. If an interview did not support a given idea, a sentence explaining why followed in the memo. This process is called theoretical sorting, a logical process that helps the researcher organize analysis in a way that leads to creation and refinement of theoretical links, prompting the research to make comparisons between categories (Charmaz, 2014, 216).

During the process of memo generation, I shared the memos with and spoke to my dissertation advisor regularly to think through what types of relationships were emerging in the data. In an early conversation, we discussed what (if any) differences I noted between cases with
different change patterns. For example, thinking through how the portfolios that contracted – or participated in fewer collaboratives and did so at a lower level of effort - differed from portfolios that expanded in size and effort. In explaining the portfolio change I saw to my advisor, it became apparent that the most of the organizations I interviewed up to that point typically did not approach change holistically, thinking about all of their collaborative participation while making adjustments to participation in any way. Instead, organizational architects seemed to approach change in portfolios per collaborative, incrementally in most but not all cases. This discovery became the basis for the first proposition generated and the base of a proposition related to portfolio change. It also caused a shift in the level of analysis for the second phase of interviews from maximizing differences between portfolios with the same change in both change categories to looking for portfolios with the maximum number of changes within them.

Memo 5 contained the first attempt to generate proposition including exploring the concept of incremental or radical portfolio change described by interviewees, how decisions regarding collaborative participation were made primarily by the interviewee but in conjunction with other staff, and identifying some of the major drivers of decisions. These propositions emerged from the focused codes. I linked some of the codes together while some remained independent. In this step, I was attempting to move the focused codes to explanatory propositions, answering the study’s research questions. Quotes from each case populated the sections under each proposition to support it. However, I did not realize until later that these attempts were more descriptive than explanatory. Also, I realized later that several of the above points were actually sub points of the “fit” interviewees described between the organization and collaborative.
While working on the propositions in Memo 5, I also worked on writing Memo 6. As is evident at this point, I often worked on more than one memo at a time because I executed different types of analysis in different memos. The remaining memos in phase one continued to grapple with various components of the propositions that ultimately went to several peers for a peer check in Memo 11. Also during the later parts of the phase 1 memos I generated the sampling frame for phase 2 interviews. As discussed above, in order to understand portfolio change, the study shifted the level of analysis from the portfolio level to the dyadic relationship between an organization and a given collaborative. Obtaining the most information rich cases for Phase 2 of interviews required the sampling frame to shift from maximizing variation at the portfolio level (complete portfolio expansion, contraction, or churn) to maximizing variation at the collaborative to organization level. Memo 9 and 10 detailed the parameters of the second sampling frame and the organizations included.

And so, the first phase of in-depth interview analysis concluded in Memo 11 with a peer check when three people assessed the concepts and the supporting data provided per concept to determine whether the information logically related to the propositions provided. The peer reviewers offered questions and comments, which I addressed in a following memo and resulted in slight refinement of concepts or particular pieces of supporting evidence.

**Phase Two**

The second phase of in-depth interviews served to confirm existing propositions, but allowing for refinement and adjustment (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Like the first phase of in-depth interviews, the second needed to select a sample similar enough to compare but different in the areas of interest. Due to the discovery I made in the first phase, I shifted the sample to look for variation of change within a portfolio rather than solely between. In doing so, I could look at the
change per organization to collaborative dyadic relationship. The selection criteria for Phase 2 were as follows:

1. Only government and not-for-profit entities were considered because for-profit organizations depart in mission and drivers of organizational action.

2. Only organizations with health, defined broadly, as a main component of their organizational mission were included.

3. Organizations not included in Phase 1 of interviews.

4. Organizations that participated in some combination of collaboratives between 2012 and 2017: 2 and 2, 1 and 3 or 3 and 1. If collaborative participation exceeded these combinations, the organization could still be considered. This criteria was included to maximize the variation in the dyadic level of decisions from the organization to collaborative. Any combination with less than these amounts would not provide information-rich cases.

5. Organizations where the total number of people participating in collaboratives was above 1 and below 20 were considered. This criteria was included to make sure some variation of decision-making occurred but enabled the study to generate a sample of somewhat similar organizations but excluding organizations with much larger numbers of employees participating, which may generate the need for different types of decision-making regarding collaborative participation.

Collaborative portfolio change categories overall no longer mattered in the second phase of sampling based on these criteria. Therefore the number of organizations that met all criteria for phase 2 totaled 15 and 13 organizations agreed to participate. Two organizations declined, one due to time and the second did not respond.
Phase 2 Interviews

The same interview protocol used in Phase 1 of interviews was used in Phase 2 as there was already a set of questions related to understanding decisions around collaborative participation per collaborative. Grounded theory takes place until data saturation occurs for a given set of research questions.

Fifteen phone interviews took place from July to September of 2018. Interviews were recorded if the interviewee granted permission. During the process of reaching out to organizations to participate, it became evident that a governmental entity the Mapping Project identified as one organization represented two for the purposes of this study in the form of different branches. One program manager was interviewed for one division and a program manager and the coordinating branch manager were interviewed for the other case.

Analysis Process for Phase 2 Interview Data

The analysis process for the second phase of interviews mirrored the first phase in that I began with one to two word phrase coding in a spread sheet followed by focused coding and then memos summarizing each case and expanding upon the codes. Coding is important and done for a second time because as Charmaz (2014) suggests it is “through coding you define what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what that means” (113). Following coding, interview data were compared against the propositions generated in Phase 1 and if supporting data existed it was placed in a new document under the given proposition and if not it was noted why. Additionally, as new themes emerged in the second phase of data, they were crafted into new propositions. Then, interview data from Phase 1 was tested against the new propositions.

I also wrote a case summary for each interview as I did for the first 8 interviews. During the case summary writing process, I realized that several interviewees discussed how their
organization’s participation in a given collaborative may increase or decrease temporarily due to things like an annual event or the existence of temporary funding. Also, the idea of staff capacity expanded to include more detail around not wanting staff to waste time participating in collaboratives with unclear goals or those that simply “meet to meet.” Memo 16 began exploring new ideas present in the interviews and building propositions from them from the 15 additional interviews generated in the second phase while circling back to the original eight interviews. Memo 17 used data from the new 15 interviews to test against the propositions generated and peer checked at the end of the first phase of research.

After these two steps I realized I had a lot of ideas and propositions I was exploring. Some of the propositions were new and validated by data from the initial eight interviews and the new fifteen interviews while the final propositions generated at the end of the first phase had new support and more depth. Memos 18 through 22 tried to reconcile the new data with former propositions while incorporating potentially new propositions. The result was an expansion of propositions related to interesting ideas present in the data instead of a distillation process to answer the specific research questions in this study. Charmaz (2014) suggested that grounded theory can yield many interesting paths within the data, but the researcher has to remain near their original questions or risk getting lost.

At this stage of the process I presented the findings to a doctoral colloquium attended by doctoral students and faculty. This step was extremely helpful because it caused me to refocus on the data and reorient analysis of it to the research questions. I presented the colloquium with 9 propositions, which were not mutually exclusive.

After the colloquium, I met with my advisor and she clarified two steps in grounded theory methods for me. First, she said I needed to focus on how cases were different and in those
differences rested the larger ideas. She stated that looking for patterns or trends in the data was helpful, but in this type of qualitative research it could not lead to the same types of conclusions confirmatory research could. So I needed to assume any one case could be an outlier or that perhaps all were. Second, she told me that I had described and categorizing the data extensively, but I needed to take a bigger inferential leap to generate propositions with mechanisms instead of just describing what the data relayed.

Stages three and four of grounded theory require the researcher to go beyond description to delimit theory and write it. Theorizing requires the researcher to stop and assess, go back to the data, and assess again to take apart what is happening from multiple vantage points while making comparisons, following leads and building ideas (Charmaz, 2014, 244). Again, it is important that during the process of coding, memoing, and theorizing that the research remain close to the research questions. There are many pathways to different theories or propositions in data, as such it is important to remain near those relevant to the research questions.

In order to generate propositions that border on theory, I moved from pure description to look at how all of the data collectively related to portfolio change and the biggest differences or variation between the change experienced by participation organizations and the mechanism underpinning those differences. This process was extensive and time intensive. The later memos range from ten to thirty pages long. Ultimately, spending so much time with my data in the descriptive phase enabled me to know it well enough to make the step to generating more meaningful propositions and feeling confident in that step. One of the biggest discoveries I made was in relation to understanding portfolio change, I was actually looking at how architects described going about change. As such, it is the architect’s strategic orientation that in part
influences how portfolios change either incrementally or more holistically. Additionally, during this time I constructed a typology of collaborative portfolio architects’ management styles.

The final propositions emerged in these steps and checked by three people. Overall, fourteen memos comprised the second phase of data analysis. During this time, abductive reasoning took place to make the analytical shift and inferential leap from description to theory building (Charmaz, 2014, 200). The propositions are discussed in depth in Chapter 4, but ultimately focused on the nature of portfolio change being incremental or radical and the mechanisms behind those change. Also, a typology related to organizational architects emerged.

**Study Sample Breakdown**

Eight organizations participated in the first phase of in-depth interviews. In the second phase 14 organizations participated and 15 interviews occurred because an organization the Mapping Project study identified as one, conceptualized itself as two and required several interviews. Therefore, overall this study conducted 23 in-depth interviews, representing 22 cases in the community of interest. Although 227 organization portfolios were initially generated, only 113 related to organizations present in 2012 and 2017 and only 86 of those represented health-related, nonprofit or government organizations. Of those nonprofit and government health-related organizations, only 33 completely met Phase 1 or Phase 2 sample criteria and 22 agreed to participate. Three organizations declined to participate – one in Phase 1 and two in Phase 2. Not all organizations in sample one were revisited in sample two as the study shifted focus from maximizing variability between portfolio change types to maximizing variability within portfolios. The second phase only had 15 organizations that fit its criteria. One declined to participate due to time. In phase one two entities declined to participate because of time.
Looking for a final “n” or sample size in this study proved unhelpful as qualitative, inductive research hinges on reaching saturation in a question, not reaching a count total or threshold (Charmaz, 2014, 108). Also, again because the level of analysis shifted from the organizational portfolio to the dyadic relationship between an organization and a collaborative, the “count” of analysis points for the second phase of in-depth interviews is much larger than 22. Instead, the number of cases required is as many as needed to answer the questions at hand and inform the research enough to develop theory from rich data (33). During the second analysis phase of in-depth interviews, this study continued interviews until no new data related to the research questions emerged.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This study sought to understand how organizations’ collaborative portfolios evolve over time and why. Additionally it sought to understand how – if at all – organizational leaders manage collaborative portfolios, the factors that influence those decisions, and the strategies used in that management. In searching for the answers to these questions, this study used a mixed-methods approach examining data in a given domain of health and wellness collaboratives.

The first phase of the study used quantitative data to observe organization-level collaborative portfolio change over time. By observing the quantitative patterns and changes identified in portfolios, the study generated a sampling frame for the second phase of research in which in-depth interviews with organizational architects yielded information-rich data. This data was inductively analyzed using grounded theory methods and proposition generated followed. The findings associated with the quantitative assessment are provided first followed by the findings of the qualitative, inductive grounded theory analysis.

Quantitative Analysis: How do organizations’ collaborative portfolios evolve?

The first portion of this study’s research question one asked, what types of organization portfolio change patterns occurred most and least frequently in the domain of interest. The second portion expanded upon the first to ask how those changes related to the two areas of portfolio change observed – size and strength of participation. The dissertation obtained population-level data of individuals, organizations, and collaboratives in a health and wellness collaborative domain to address these questions. The outcomes are discussed below.

Portfolio Change Patterns

The study generated 227 portfolios representing organizations with active portfolios in 2012, 2017, or both years. As described in Chapter 3, the compilation of two change measures
provided the information to assess overall portfolio change. The two change measures assessed an organization’s portfolio size, or the total number of collaboratives it participated in both study years, and its strength of participation in those collaboratives measured by meeting attendance and level of leadership involvement. Based on the scoring criteria per change category in which an organization contracted, expanded, maintained, or churned the study found the following patterns overall.

**Table 15: Overall Collaborative Portfolio Change Patterns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Change Pattern</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contraction</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churn</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, of the four overarching change patterns in this community, almost the same amount of portfolios experienced contraction as expansion at 45% and 44% respectively. The remaining two areas of change represent churn and maintenance, totaling 11%. However, the larger measures of contraction and expansion contained several subcategories that help describe what happened when portfolios became smaller or larger.

Contraction change patterns represent portfolios that contracted in size and strength of participation in one of three ways. A contracting portfolio could decrease its presence in the domain to the point it no longer participated and instead “exited.” Alternatively, a contracting portfolio could decrease the number of collaboratives it participated in during the five-year period and decrease the effort it dedicated towards participation, but remain active in the domain. Finally, a contracting portfolio could keep the number of collaboratives it participated in the same, but decrease the number of meetings or events it attended or leadership roles it held in those collaboratives by decreasing its strength of participation. As shown in **Table 16** below,
26% of portfolios contracted by exiting, 7% contracted in size and strength, and 11% contracted in strength but not size.

Oppositely, expansion in portfolios represents an organization that increased the number of collaboratives it participated in and the strength of participation dedicated to those collaboratives. Like contraction, expansion emerged in three different ways. Expanding portfolios occurred when organizations entered the collaborative domain, meaning the organization was not participating in a health or wellness collaborative in 2012 but was as of 2017. Expansion also occurred when the number of collaboratives an organization participated in increased between the research years as did the strength of participation in those collaboratives. Finally, expanding portfolios include those that maintained the number of collaboratives they participated in but increased the strength of participation. Twenty-six percent of portfolios entered the domain while 11% expanded in size and strength of participation and 9% expanded strength of participation but maintained size.

Portfolios that churned typically decreased the size of their portfolios while increasing the strength of participation in the remaining collaboratives. Twelve of the 15, or 80%, of portfolios that churned followed this pattern. This may reflect an organization adjusting their portfolio to match their capacity to participate or it may reflect an organization focusing on collaborative participation that is more meaningful or helpful to them. Another type of churn occurred when one organization increased the number of collaboratives in a portfolio and maintained the overall effort dedicated to collaboration from a cumulative standpoint, meaning it expanded its scope but not overall level of effort. Also, one portfolio that churned did so when size and strength of participation remained constant but flipped. So in 2012 the organization participated in one collaborative at the second highest level and one at the lowest level. In 2017 they shifted
participation in one collaborative from the second highest level to the lowest and the lowest level
to the second highest in the other. This may reflect temporary priorities or demands of
collaborative participation shifting over time or adjustments of the organization to send staff to
collaboratives at a level of participation that most benefits the organization.

Additionally, 24 portfolios received a compositional flag. These portfolios changed
within an existing change pattern but the composition shifted differently. For example, one
organization participated in 6 collaboratives in 2012 and 5 in 2017. As of 2017, the organization
participated in 3 of the original 6 collaboratives, which means they exited 3 collaboratives and
joined 2 new groups. They also decreased the overall level of participation. So the organizations’
collaborative portfolio contracted, but was flagged for a differential compositions shift. The first
wave of samples did not consider portfolios with compositional shifts because it focused on
portfolios with consistent change. However, the second wave of interviews used it as contextual
information for organizations that met the second wave sample criteria.

### Table 16: Subcategories of Overall Portfolio Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detailed Change Pattern</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exit</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraction</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraction Strength</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion Strength</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churn</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exit and Entrance**

Of the 227 generated portfolios, 50% of the portfolios exited or entered between 2012
and 2017. As described above, that means organizations were inactive in one of the study years
and active in the other. The Mapping Project found that a third of the organizations participating
in the collaborative domain were new as of 2017 while the overall number of organizations in the
domain remained fairly constant. The exit or entrance of organizations into the domain accounts
for a great deal of the contraction and expansion taking place. Essentially a quarter of all
collaborative portfolios existed in 2012 but not 2017 and a quarter did not exist in 2017 that
existed in 2012.

The stable churn within the domain appeared first at this overarching level and is further
described and explained as the study examined more nuanced components of portfolio change in
subsequent sections. But the fact that a quarter of organizational portfolios swapped positions in
the domain indicated some organizations no longer found value in participating in certain
collaboratives while others discovered value in joining. The exit of two collaboratives that
dissolved from the domain since 2012 and the three new collaboratives that entered also helped
explain some of this change and stability.

The remaining 45% of portfolios that did not exit or enter were active in both years, but
experienced some type of change as only 9 portfolios or 4% of all portfolios experienced no
change and maintained the same portfolio between 2012 and 2017.

**Contraction and Expansion**

Of those portfolios that contracted but did not leave the domain, 7% decreased size and
strength of participation and 11% decreased strength but maintained size. Therefore, nearly a
fifth of portfolios contracted in some way but remained in the domain. Similarly, a fifth of
portfolios expanded and were present in both study years. Overall, nearly 40% of portfolios
expanded or contracted in size or strength, which represents organizations active in the domain
but making adjustments to their participation over time. Some of these adjustments were small,
perhaps scaling back the frequency an organizational member attended a given collaborative’s
activities or deciding to participate in 2 instead of 3 collaboratives. However, some of these changes were larger, shifting size or participation in three or more collaboratives.

The remaining 11% of portfolios represent those that were either unchanged (4%), or those that experienced churn (7%). Most organizations in this category decreased the size of their portfolios but increased the strength of participation in the remaining collaboratives. For example, one organization participated in two collaboratives in 2012 at a low level, attending meetings sporadically. By 2017 they stopped participating in one of the original collaboratives, decreasing the size of their portfolio, but they increased participation in the remaining group from sporadic to regular while voluntarily taking on leadership roles in the group.

So, in speaking to the first set of research questions, the most experienced portfolio change patterns at the domain level were contraction and expansion, at roughly the same rate, while the least experienced change pattern was no change or maintenance. Complete exit and entrance represent the most commonly experienced subchange categories, representing half of all portfolios. Those that remained expanded, contracted, or churned in 45% of instances.

This type of balance between larger changes (exit and entrance) and more incremental changes in portfolio management is a reoccurring theme that emerged in the qualitative analysis as well. The larger concept of dynamic stasis, or changes occurring within a carrying capacity, was present in the Mapping Study as well and confirmed and detailed in this study.

**Portfolio Change by Sector**

After analyzing portfolio change patterns overall and by subcategory, the study examined whether sectors experienced portfolio change patterns similarly or differently. Descriptions of change per sector appear first and then a discussion of the meaning of those changes follows. **Table 17** provides the breakdown of change by sector.
Table 17: Portfolio Change Patterns by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detailed Change Pattern</th>
<th>For Profit</th>
<th>Nonprofit</th>
<th>Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exit</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraction</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraction Strength</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion Strength</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churn</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Count Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**For-Profit Portfolio Changes**

The collaborative domain contained data for 60 for-profit entities active in health and wellness collaboratives in the community of interest at some point during the study period. The data showed that 35% of these for-profit entities completely stopped participating in health and wellness collaboratives after 2012 and exited the domain. An additional 22% of for-profit portfolios contracted in size and strength of participation or just strength of participation. This resulted in 57% of for-profit portfolios decreasing their presence in this collaborative domain.

Despite this large reduction, the for-profit sector maintained a presence in the domain. In fact, 20% of for-profit portfolios were new to the domain as of 2017. So even though something about the collaborative domain failed to retain a large number of for profit organizations altogether or at a consistent level of participation, factors were present within the collaboratives that still attracted for-profit organizations. However, only an additional 2% of for-profit portfolios experienced expansion in size and strength of participation, indicating that something attracted for-profit entities to the domain but failed to expand their involvement in current or additional collaboratives. However 12% of portfolios did expand the level at which they participated in collaboratives while maintaining size, meaning some organizations joined and expanded participation in specified collaboratives.
Three portfolios maintained the size, composition, and strength of participation in their portfolios over time and three decreased size, but increased participation in the remaining collaboratives. Both of these groups represent 5% of for-profit portfolios, which indicates these are unlikely changes for for-profit entities and as the overall data showed for any type of organization to make. These trends indicated that for-profit entities tended to make similar adjustments to portfolios – either wholesale increasing or decreasing – to both size and the level of participation or at least to the level of participation more frequently than size.

**Nonprofit Portfolio Change**

This study examined 96 non-profit collaborative portfolios. The changes seen in these portfolios in expansion and contraction balanced one another at 41% and 45%. Ten percent of non-profit portfolios churned while 4% experienced no change at all. Complete exit and expansion accounted for the largest subcategories within contraction and expansion at 24% and 22% respectively. Stated differently, a quarter of non-profit organizations participated in collaboratives in 2012 but not in 2017 and almost a quarter were not active in 2012 but entered the domain prior to 2017. An additional 17% contracted size and strength or just strength. Oppositely, 23% expanded size and strength. Here, we again see the pattern of dynamic stasis or churn within the nonprofit sector where organizations made adjustments to their collaborative participation but the cumulative result of all organizational actions balanced each other instead of expanding or contracting in greater numbers overall.

Of the non-profit portfolios that churned, 7 decreased the number of collaboratives they participated in but increased participation in the remaining collaboratives. In one instance, the size expanded but the overall effort of participation remained the same. Finally, one maintained
size and flipped participation among collaboratives. These represent 10% of non-profit portfolios. Finally, 4% of the portfolios stayed the same in size and strength of participation.

**Government Portfolio Change**

Finally, the study examined 71 government organizations’ collaborative portfolios. Of these portfolios, 41% experienced some type of contraction while 53% experienced some type of expansion, 3% maintained, and 3% experienced churn. In contrast to the for-profit sector where over half of all portfolios contracted in some way, over half of government sector’s portfolios expanded size, the level of effort they dedicated to participating in collaboratives or both.

Notably, the largest subcategory of change pattern experienced by government entities was entrance at 31%, which was almost equal to the number of for-profit portfolios exiting the domain, creating a type of dynamic stasis between sectors. This was also interesting because unlike non-profit or for-profit entities, government organizations related to health and wellness experience more stability in terms of remaining viable or in business, particularly in this context. For example, a county department of social services or city department of parks and recreation is less likely to go out of business than a non-profit entity providing health education or a small for-profit hospice service. The overall decrease in funds dedicated to public service provision at the state and local level within this given context over the past 10 years might suggest government organizations collaborated to increase their ability to deliver services.

**Portfolio Sector Analysis and Discussion**

In examining the sectors, the for-profit organizations decreased collaborative portfolio size and lessened participation at the highest rate of all sectors. They contracted in 57% of all portfolios. But as stated previously, something within the domain still attracted for-profit entities with 20% entering the domain and an additional 14% increasing strength of participation, size, or
both, and 5% maintaining. Nonetheless, for-profit portfolios were more likely to contract or dissolve.

Government portfolio changes offset for-profit portfolio changes. Government portfolios expanded at the highest rate with a third of them entering the field for the first time. Oppositely, only 20% exited and 40% of portfolios contracted. Therefore, even though government portfolios entered at the highest rate of all three sectors and expanded at a higher rate than either sector, some government portfolios reflect entities decreasing size or effort. So variability was still present even within the government sector.

Differently however, non-profit portfolios were more likely to have considerable variation among each other in their portfolios in terms of the intensity of their involvement in the domain. Stated differently, a non-profit portfolio was less likely to remain stable over time and was equally likely to contract or expand whereas for-profits primarily contracted and government entities more readily expanded. While at the domain level, the level of nonprofit involvement appears to be static, this apparent stability masks considerable variability across nonprofits with 41% reducing the intensity of their participation in collaboratives overall and a corresponding 45% increasing their intensity of participation in collaboratives overall. This again suggests that nonprofit organizations appear to have highly dynamic portfolios that expand and contract as well as strengthen and weaken over time, which may indicative of the more fluid nature of the field of nonprofits.

The change patterns by sector further illuminate the concept of dynamic stasis occurring within a collaborative domain. Specifically, for-profit portfolios and government portfolios related to exit and entrance almost mirror one another, indicating almost a swap of sectors within the domain. Non-profit portfolios seemingly experienced stability at the domain level but a large
amount of dynamism within that staying presence. Government actors are expanding in the domain while for-profit actors are contraction.

**Portfolio Change per Change Category**

The second portion of research question one asks: What are the most and least common types of change patterns experienced related to an organization’s collaborative portfolio size and strength of participation? As discussed in Chapter 3, portfolio size represents the overall number of collaboratives an organization participated in as of 2012 and 2017. Composition was a subcomponent of size, only used to flag portfolios that experienced a type of change in composition not reflected in size change. Size and compositions are intrinsically related, but an organization’s size may remain stable over time while the makeup of collaboratives varies. Finally, portfolio strength represents the level at which the most active member of an organization attended collaborative meetings and assumed leadership roles per group.

**Table 18: Portfolio Change Related to Size and Strength of Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Size Percent</th>
<th>Strength Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contraction</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The portfolio size change category measured whether an organization decreased, maintained, or increased the number of collaboratives it participated in from 2012 to 2017. This measure counted all collaboratives an organization participated in as of 2012 and 2017, compared the two, and then designated an overall decrease, maintenance, or increase per portfolio accordingly. Looking only at portfolio size evolution, a balance existed between contraction and expansion at 39% and 35%, followed by 26% of portfolios maintaining.
Portfolios in this domain were equally likely to decrease or increase strength of participation in collaboratives. Unlike the size measure however, where inaction balanced change, organizations’ almost undoubtedly changed their portfolio strength with 46% contracting and 49% expanding.

After the initial findings, the study further examined the data more granularly to look for other patterns that may differ between sectors beyond the size and strength of participation measures as they were operationalized for the study. Specifically, the study examined the number of people who assumed leadership roles in 2012 and 2017. The totals of people holding a leadership role in a collaborative were counted in each year, per portfolio and then the difference between the two were calculated. A negative number indicated the measure decreased, a zero indicated no change occurred, and a positive number indicated the measure increased.

**Table 19: Changes in Organizational Staff Dedicated to Collaborative Leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Changes</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This assessment indicated that portfolios did not make sweeping changes to the number of people that held leadership roles as over half of the portfolios made no change in this area. If change did occur, it was more likely to be an increase rather than a decrease. This measure is different than the strength of participation measure used throughout the study, which measures the highest participating individual per collaborative. Instead, this measure indicated the number of people dedicated to holding leadership roles.

This secondary analysis also helped reaffirm the approach the dissertation used in collaborative portfolio measurement. When broken down by sector, all sectors were most likely to make no change to the people holding leadership roles. This suggests organizations only have a certain capacity or level of effort to give to collaborative participation, which may contribute to
the stasis present in the domain. But as the next finding suggests, it is fascinating that this balance also occurred due to different types of changes made between sectors.

**Size and Strength Change by Sector**

The changes observed per change category per sector nearly mirrored all the trends seen at the portfolio change level by sector with one exception. For-profit portfolios were more likely to decrease in size and participation relative to other sectors. Government entities were more likely to increase size and participation efforts. Changes observed in the non-profit population reflected the dynamic stasis seen at the domain level in which increases, decreases, and making no changes are equally likely outcomes. But differently from changes seen at the domain level were non-profit adjustments made to their strength of participation in collaboratives. Nonprofit portfolios maintained a steady presence in the domain level but this stasis masked a pronounced amount of change in the form of nonprofits exiting, entering, or adjusting their portfolios.

**Table 20: Size and Strength Change Patterns by Sector**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>For Profit Percent</th>
<th>Nonprofit Percent</th>
<th>Govt Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size – Contraction</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size – No Change</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size – Expansion</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation – Contraction</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation – No Change</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation – Expansion</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examining how portfolios change per each category—size, and strength of participation—by organizational type provided further detail into the overall changes observed at the portfolio level. Although the most information-rich level appeared to be the portfolio because the size and strength analysis essentially mirrored that of the portfolio change by sector. The area of variation appeared when assessing sector difference in portfolio change.
Quantitative Findings Summary

The analysis of collaborative portfolios at the domain level revealed that organizations were active in adjusting their collaborative participation and portfolios over a five-year period. Only 9 of 227 portfolios remained the same while the other 218 changed. The Mapping Project identified the concept of dynamic stasis in this particular domain due to roughly the same number of organizations entering the domain as those exiting. The results of this dissertation’s analysis affirm the presence of a domain’s carrying capacity, meaning participation in collaboratives by organizations is not infinitely expandable or contractible. The dissertation expanded the discussion of dynamic stasis by illuminating how change occurs and by whom in terms of organizational sector.

Stasis involved a certain number of collaboratives and organizations remaining present and active in the community. However, the data in this study suggested a substantial amount of change occurred, while holding the overall carrying capacity of collaborative activity, and that change varied by sector. Of the 227 organization portfolios analyzed, half participated in the domain in 2012 and 2017. The remaining half represent a quarter of organizations exiting or entering the domain after 2012. Therefore, a carrying capacity was not maintained simply because no change occurred. The collaborative domain was dynamic and varied by sector.

For-profit portfolios told a story of contraction and decreased presence, which was offset by government portfolios entering and expanding in the domain at higher rates. Although non-profit portfolios equally decreased, increased, or made no change to their portfolios, they made adjustments to the size of their portfolio and the level at which they participated. The latter adjustment occurred more frequently than size.
Therefore, for profits were present in the collaborative health and wellness domain but in lower overall numbers and at faster rate of decline. Perhaps this was due to the nature of for-profit organizations operating out of resource-driven perspective, which may not always benefit from participation in collaboratives. Yet, some for-profits still joined collaboratives, meaning a benefit was present and perhaps diminished over time or the promise of a benefit was present but not realized, causing for-profit organizations to decrease or dissolve collaborative participation.

Non-profits portfolios demonstrated more equanimity in relation to portfolio changes of contraction, expansion, and maintenance as well as the specific change categories of size and composition. However, they experienced more churn, increasing and decreasing their strength of participation at higher rates than maintaining. Overall, nonprofits exemplified the idea of dynamic stasis in that they exited, entered, and experienced all types of collaborative change that generated stability despite change. This dynamism may reflect the sector in general, which operates in between the for profit and government sector, often filling the gaps between the two and receiving funds from either sector. Accordingly, nonprofits sometimes function more like for-profit entities and others times function more like government entities or extensions of the government. Compared to government organizations, which are likely more stable, nonprofits may dissolve or be absorbed into another entity more frequently, potentially leading to more changes in portfolios. They also shift mission or focus, which could also help explain the higher level of change in their portfolios.

Government portfolios experienced expansion overall and exited at the lowest rate of the three sectors. The high level of portfolio expansion was due to entrance but also a high rate of portfolios increasing in size and tie creation as well at strength of participation. Several of the government organizations involved in health and wellness collaboratives were larger, established
organizations. This type of organizational stability may have allowed entities to expand collaboration more readily. Additionally, the recent contraction in government spending may have triggered these government entities to seek collaborative partnerships to achieve their missions and leverage resources to serve the public.

Finally, an overall finding emerged from this section that about three quarters of portfolios experienced fairly sizeable or radical change (exit, entrance, or change in all three change categories), while the remaining quarter underwent more incremental changes, shifting one out of the three categories. The concept of radical versus incremental change emerged in the qualitative findings, but in a slightly different way. This is discussed in the next sections.

The quantitative analysis of portfolios allowed this study to examine portfolio change patterns and subsequently generate a sampling frame for in-depth interviews. The in-depth interviews further explored how portfolios changed as well as why. Ultimately, the combination of the quantitative data and its analysis paired with the qualitative data collection and analysis led to the generation of propositions related to the study’s overarching questions; both types of data were needed to do so.

**Qualitative Analysis**

Although all 227 portfolios were included in quantitative, domain-level analysis, only the 113 portfolios that existed in 2012 and 2017 were considered during sampling for in-depth interviews. As described in the methods section of this study, the 113 portfolios served as the base for beginning the sample process for in-depth interviews because they offered information-rich data conceptualized by their continual presence over time and changes made during that time. The study took this approach to more fully understand the evolution of portfolios instead of their dissolution or birth. Although the latter two concepts are important, they were outside the purview of this study. As such, the study proceeded from the 113 complete portfolios and
sampled from that pool. Of those, 86 portfolios represented health-related, nonprofit or
government organizations, which were used due to the more similar nature of their relation to the
public as compared to private entities that serve shareholders and ultimately seek to generate
profit. Also, the sample only considered organizations for whom health and wellness was likely
to be their primary domain of collaborative engagement.

In total, 33 organizations met Phase 1 or Phase 2 sample criteria related to the change
patterns their portfolios experienced. Three organizations declined to participate – one in Phase 1
and two in Phase, therefore 22 organizations comprised this qualitative portion of this study. The
sampling criteria detailed in Chapter 3 was put into place to hold as many factors as possible
constant while allowing the variation related to portfolio change decisions.

Fourteen of the 22 architects interviewed worked at non-profit entities and 8 worked at
government entities. Although the number of nonprofit architects interviewed was larger than
government architects, this reflects the larger overall number of nonprofits in the domain, 96
versus the government’s 71. Fourteen of the architects were women while 8 were men. The
average amount of time the architects spent at their current organization was 15 years and the
average time spent in their current position was 9 years. However, the range of time spent in the
organization varied from 2 to 40 years and the range of time spent in the current position varied
from 1 to 38 years. The organizations these architects represented ranged in size from a few staff
members to over 100 staff members.

Architect Interview Descriptives

The second phase of this study collected qualitative data from interviews with
organizational architects defined for the purposes of this study as the primary people who make
decisions regarding organizational participation in collaboratives. The protocol for identifying
the architect, described in Chapter 3, started by reaching out to the highest level of management within a given organization at the local level. The Mapping Project provided data for this process as well as Internet searches. If the initial person contacted had no involvement in managing collaborative participation or offered another persons’ name who did, the study interviewed the subsequent person. As such, the study interviewed people at various organizational levels detailed in the table below in order of higher management to more direct service provision.

**Table 21: Organization Position of Interviewed Architects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Division Leader</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Director</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care Coordinator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three interviewee held positions that managed several divisions within an organization, including a non-profit President that oversaw several large programs that operate almost as suborganizations, a Chief Executive Officer that oversaw several community-based non-profit entities, and a Branch Division Manager that oversaw several government departments. The President and Chief Executive Officer were the point of contact provided in the Mapping Project for that organization and the Branch Division Manager was referred to me by a lower-level manager who was initially interviewed for that organization because the Branch Division Manager oversaw multiple divisions and therefore did not fit the study’s sample outreach parameter of an executive-level architect. However, the study allowed organization’s to self-identify the architect and the Branch Division Manager was identified by staff as the manager of collaborative participation for the organization.
Eleven people interviewed held executive director titles or an equivalent title. Aside from holding an executive director title, four people held program director or coordinator positions. Some programs within organizations functioned almost as a separate organization in terms of their structure, which is why some of these positions were present. Other architects at this level existed because they volunteered to manage collaborative participation. This level of architect worked closely to the activity that directly benefited from collaboration.

Two people held community director or coordinator positions. These positions are often charged by their organizations with collaborative engagement due to the nature of their work and presence in the community. Finally, one person was an assistant director and one was a care coordinator. Although initial concern arose related to the care coordinator position being a person who only coordinated collaboration, this person helped administer a program that also provided direct services; therefore the person and organization met the sampling criteria.

Although all architects aided in portfolio management, they varied in terms of their organizational position as demonstrated above. Not only did they not hold a uniform position within organizations, they varied in terms of whether they assumed architecture duties according to positional duties or volunteering to do so. This suggests that organizational architects do not represent an institutionalized position approach.

**Architect Involvement Typology**

Research question 2a asked how or by whom organizations manage their collaborative portfolios. The interview protocol sought to confirm the assumption made early in the study that architects were present in organizations and helped manage collaborative portfolios. Based on the interview protocol approach and the answers of the interviewees, the organizations in this study contained architects that actively managed collaborative participation for themselves and
other staff members. Therefore, for this group of organizations, it was apparent that the role of architects as defined by individuals strategically making decisions about collaborative participation on behalf of the organization was present. However, architects varied substantially from each other in terms of the position within the organization that they held, the degree to which they controlled decisions, and how they viewed collaboration overall.

Variation in architects surfaced in their approach to management, their view of the role of an architect, and the role of collaboration in their organization. Charmaz (2014) described the importance of language in grounded theory research and how researchers may need to examine answers to a particular question in the way someone answered the question rather than the content. In examining how architects spoke about participation in collaboratives as well as how they managed their own and others’ participation in collaboratives, I constructed the following typology of architect involvement in collaborative portfolio management.

As shown in the table below, some architects delegated collaborative participation management to lower level staff members and checked in periodically while others maintained full control. A third group fell in the middle, marked by architects that maintained control but included staff members throughout the management process. The figure below provides a brief description, indicates the level of organizational positions the architects held per type, and finally includes the case numbers that fit each type.
Typology of Architectural Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Delegator</th>
<th>Collaborative Manager</th>
<th>Regulator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Delegates portfolio management. Receives updates, offers insights</td>
<td>Manages portfolio but includes staff in process</td>
<td>Manages portfolio entirely by making all collaborative decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Org level position</strong></td>
<td>Branch Manager, High-Level Director, President</td>
<td>Executive Director Level</td>
<td>Line-Worker Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Director, Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># of cases</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.** Collaborative Architect Typology

**The Delegator Architect**

As shown in the table above, a delegator architect type represents those that managed collaborative portfolios from a distance. They were informed about which staff members participated in different collaboratives and offered aid or counsel when needed, but they also trusted lower level managers and staff members to manage participation in each collaborative and report back to them. As Case 3 stated, “Folks that are participating in these committees, I meet with monthly and I check in, but if they don’t report directly to me I may not get a monthly report. But they may be talking to their superior about the conversations going on at those meetings.” The architect from Case 16 discussed a similar situation in which staff reported to their director supervisors and information about participation filtered up multiple layers of the organization to the architect bi-monthly.

The architect from Case 16 also discussed delegation that occurred not just based on organizational structure, but also because people close to the work may be able to access
collaborative opportunities or share particular insights with a collaborative group that are helpful. This architect stated, “Sometimes people in the field are able to identify partnerships much quicker. So they suggest us to join – it’s a great opportunity and reason to be out and about.” However, the same architect described maintaining a role in managing collaborative participation by stating decisions about collaborative participation balanced initiative of line-workers seeking opportunities as well as her decisions about participation. Therefore this person still maintained an architect position because she did not fully delegated to someone else.

The third delegator in the study described how the system of collaborative management was built into their organizational structure as an expectation of staff to participate and communicate up the chain of command. Regular meetings with higher-level management then helped the architect assess that participation and the architect made adjustments when needed, echoing the setup in the other two cases perhaps with more formality.

The presence of the delegator illuminated the fact that organizations may contain more than one architect. The delegators identified as an architect but also described other manager-level positions that are involved in decision-making or management around collaborative participation. They viewed themselves as the architect because they held ultimate decision-making power in collaborative participation, but they also delegated those activities in some instances. This study did not probe around instances of more than one architect as it had the organizations self-identify the architect. But these cases indicated more than one may be present.

All three delegators held multi-divisional positions and worked for organizations with more than 50 employees with two of them having more than 100 employees. Two architects worked for nonprofit organizations and one worked for a government organization. Although size emerged as a commonality between these three interviewees, other architects interviewed
represented large organizations but took a more involved approach to collaborative portfolio management. Nonetheless, the fact that delegators worked for larger organizations may suggest size plays a role in how architects approach collaborative management. It also suggests organizational position may relate to the involvement level of architects, particularly when architects hold high-level management positions.

Although this type of architect may seem like the most removed, their organizational positions suggests otherwise. Each of these three architects held high-level positions within their organizations. In fact, they hold the highest organizational positions of all architects interviewed, indicating that despite their higher organizational position and the ability to completely delegate collaboration to lower levels, these architects remained informed and involved in collaborative management. Architects in other organizations that held executive director or director positions particularly within governmental entities had a higher-level supervisor above them that could maintain that architectural control but did not. Therefore, it seems as though the position architects held within their organization, like a branch manager, may have influenced their involvement. They recognized that lower-level staff members carried more subject-matter expertise and were able to sometimes gain access to relevant collaboratives. As such, they provided guidance and adjustment when needed as part of the overarching organizational strategy, but also delegated a large amount of decision-making to other staff members.

**The Collaborative Manager Architect**

In relation to a delegator architect, a collaborative manager architect more actively engaged in making decisions about participation in collaboratives. Although decisions about collaborative participation ultimately rested in the collaborative manager architect (like the delegator), he or she included staff members in those choices. Interviewees that fit into this
category described active, continual communication with staff members about collaborative participation including decisions to join, remain in, or potentially leave a given group. In addition to seeking feedback, interviewees that fit this type of architect expressed seeing management of collaborative participation as part of his or her job.

A quote from Case 2 embodied the components of the Collaborative Manager architect by describing her management of collaboratives as part of her job, but done in conjunction with staff input. She stated:

“I certainly think from an overall office role, that my role is to be aware of if an opportunity exists and who might be a good fit for it from our organization, whether we could do it and who might could commit to it. So an architect… somewhat but not totally, not a gatekeeper.”

Similarly, Case 6 described a type of active, collaborative management as part of his job by saying “Ultimately I’m responsible for everything. But I sit down and talk to people on my staff…It isn’t a collaboration between the board and staff, it is between the staff and myself. Yes, I make the decision but I don’t make it in a void – we discuss it.”

Interviewees reported discussions between architects and staff occurring both formally and informally at standing monthly or weekly meetings and in passing. The architect in Case 11 stated, “I like people to report on what happened in a meeting, who was presenting, is there any valuable information we need to share? The information gets shared at a Monday staff meeting unless a staff member needs feedback right away.” Typically, staff members in collaboratives shared information about participation with the architect and other staff members after attending meetings or events. One case described a standing meeting between a seven-member leadership team that discussed and analyzed collaborative participation. Others noted discussing collaboration both in leadership-level meetings and larger staff meetings.
The various types of communication served as mechanisms to relay relevant information from a collaborative about its work or events, the community, or given constituents the given organization serves. Communication also provided a check to determine whether the organization’s participation remained relevant. Also, if issues arose in relation to participation, the architect and staff person communicated, signaling the architect to decide whether that person should continue participating, if another person should go, or if the organization should cease participation. The architect in Case 10 described communication as a feedback mechanisms by stating, “[If staff say] ‘this isn’t working’ I would ask why and we would discuss if the mission isn’t the right fit or if they’re not productive or it might just be a person fit and we would think ‘oh, Mary might be a better fit’ and shift…It’s a discussion on why it’s failing and why it’s not working – do we need to continue and reassign or do we need to pull out?”

Despite the input sought from staff regarding decision-making, these architects did maintain control of the decisions. But as stated previously, this control occurred because the architects felt their job and role included the management of participation on behalf of their organization. The architect in Case 11 described this type of active, collaborative management but with ultimate control resting in the architect stating, “I send most requests to full-time staff and say ‘hey this might be something we want to consider, give me your feedback.’ And sometimes they’ll say yes let’s do it or no. And sometimes they say ‘no we’re not interested,’ and I say ‘ya, but we’re going to be’ [laughs].”

Seventeen of the twenty-two architects interviewed fell into this typology but were subdivided by organizational position and related approaches to management into executive directors and line-level workers. Although both groups function similarly, they differed in terms of the responsibilities implied or sometimes delineated in their organizational roles. They also
differed in terms of how many people they managed in relation to collaborative participation and their relationship to them.

Executive directors tended to manage more people and have some authoritative control over staff members to ask, albeit in a collaborative manner, that a given staff member participate in a collaborative. Line-level workers represented staff members that may hold some type of managerial position, but one that is lower than the level of executive director. Additionally, this type of staff member worked more directly with the population their organization served or the service the organization provided. Line-level worker architects tended to manage fewer people or none at all and therefore sometimes relied on requests rather than directives to staff members to participate in collaboratives on behalf of the organization.

In some instances line-level architects took a more informal approach to collaborative management or one that was somewhat reactive to requests or opportunities. Several cases described collaboratives approaching them directly due to their professional expertise instead of the executive director. In these instances, the line-level architect communicated with the executive director, but then managed participation themselves by attending meetings, sharing information, and potentially asking other staff members to attend meetings. Initially, I thought these people may simply be individuals, and in some ways they are, but they also make decisions about participation from the organizations’ perspective, communicate with staff about participation, and sometimes ask others to attend. So they are managing collaborative participation. However, in some instances of line-level workers architects functioned similarly to executive director architects, managing collaborative decisions formally, communicating with higher and lower level staff members regularly about participation.
The communication flow of line-level workers to staff was similar in that it was collaborative and sought to share information or address whether the organization should initially join, remain in, or leave a given group. Also, line-level workers spoke about collaborative management as part of their role in an organization just as those holding executive director roles; however, line-level workers more frequently noted that they began or continue to manage collaborative participation either because they were tasked to do so or alternatively out of necessity because no one else in the organization was filling that role. One interviewee said she felt it was important to have someone from her organization represented on collaboratives and active in them so she assumed the role of architect even though she is not the executive director. The executive director and regional director fully support her work, but it is something she assumed voluntarily. Executive directors more frequently spoke about it as their role as an architect without explanation, simply stating it was part of their job.

Finally, both types of Collaborative Manager architects also participated in collaboratives individually so it is not as if Executive Directors always delegated participation nor did line-level workers always assume all participation duties.

Because of how many organizations fit into this category, they represented various staff sizes from a few people to over 100. As described, this category encompassed both executive directors and line-level workers such as program coordinators or directors among other roles. Interestingly, some of these organizations matched the size of those in both the delegator the regulator architect type, being very large and small. This similarity signals that organizational size or structure alone cannot predict the level of an architect’s involvement, but may remain a relevant factor. Some of the architects in the collaborative management architect type category could take a less active role, but chose to be highly involved.
The Regulator Architect

In two cases, the architects maintained complete control over decisions regarding collaborative participation. Both of these architects managed small organizations with small staff sizes and few resources. Also, both organizations described the need to actively communicate their work to the public and understand the public’s needs even though the work of each group differed greatly. Because of the need to communicate with and learn about the public, both architects described actively seeking collaborative opportunities.

In one instance, the nonprofit organization had a staff of less than ten people, some of which were part-time and some of which were seasonal interns. Additionally, the executive director of this organization originated it and holds a deep connection to its mission. Therefore, this architect described making all decisions about collaborative participation, often on behalf of her own time but also for other workers.

The organization in the second case had a larger staff of about 40 people. It provided a direct public service and was once a nonprofit entity but was subsumed under a government department some time ago to make sure the work was completely transparent. The architect stated that most staff members were unavailable to help with participating in collaborative and on the whole the organization was short resources. Therefore, he completely managed participation and often participated personally.

Although the title of regulator and the description of being in complete control may suggest that an architect was resistant to collaborative participation, this was not the case. Both of these architects actively sought collaboration and expressed a positive view of it as central to their organization’s mission.
In fact, all architects fell into one of two categories regarding their view towards collaboration – either supportive and seeking more or hesitant and cautious – and both of the regulator architects were supportive of collaborative participation but lacked the staff capacity to delegate participation let alone management of participation to staff. This division is discussed further after the meaning of the architect typology is concluded.

**Meaning of the Architect Typology**

Ultimately, the typology emphasizes the fact that the work of managing an organization’s collaborative portfolio is not institutionalized and varies. Architects emerged from different organizational positions and approached decisions about collaborative participation from various levels of control and communication standpoints. It somewhat mirrored the practice of leadership by individuals within an organization, sometimes coinciding with a position, but not always. In all instances, the person felt it was their duty to perform this task.

More importantly, the typology of a collaborative management architect provides researchers with a tool to conceptualize variations in architects’ strategic orientation to managing collaborative management. It helps researchers understand the level at which an architect actively makes decisions about collaborative participation and the extent to which they rely on other staff members in that decision-making process. Organizational size and structure undoubtedly influence architects’ approaches to collaborative management. Multi-divisional managers in larger organizations appeared to delegate collaborative decisions more frequently while executive-director level positions in small organizations maintained full control of decisions. However, organization size and structure alone cannot predict an architect’s approach to management as shown by those that fell into the collaborative manager category that represent both large and small organizations and various organizational positions. Those from larger
organizations could have delegated more and fit into the delegator type and those from smaller organizations could have maintained complete control and fit into the regulator type. As such, the data suggest size and structure relate to architect management but do not solely predict it.

Architects’ View of Collaboration

While analyzing data related to architects and creating the typology, a dichotomy emerged related to whether architects view participation in collaboratives as a valuable endeavor that should be expanded whenever possible, or as a potentially valuable activity to be carefully monitored and contracted appropriately to maintain organizational integrity.

Some architects discussed participating in collaboratives to support organizational work by accessing information and people, particularly in relation to learning about community needs. Additionally, they spoke about participating in collaboratives to communicate with the public about services the organization provides and how to access it. The language used to describe collaborative participation revealed these architects find it valuable and necessary to achieving the organization’s mission. The architect in Case 1 demonstrated this stating:

“Well I think partnerships are key… our organization cannot be effective in vacuum. We have to know what’s going on and partner with other people who have experience that we don’t have. I don’t think the value of being a part of other groups could be over stated. Each organization has to decide what’s most relevant and carry out their mission and then if they have time to do it. [For us, it’s] very important.”

Similarly, the architect in Case 16 described how their organization’s work could not occur in a silo and how participating in collaboratives supports their overall work. In total, 15 of the 22 architects in this study described the important of participation for their organizations’ successes and their related efforts to expand collaborative participation. This sentiment was particularly pronounced in relation to accessing information about the community and the services other organizations provided in order to better serve the given group an organization sought to help.
Additionally, architects spoke about the importance of working together to address the often challenging issues present in the health and wellness domain. The architects spoke as if collaborative participation from their organizations knew no limit and that they would make time to participate in any group that helped address an interest or need related to their work. Case 19 described that even in the face of limited resources, “we do try to join most partnerships or groups if it makes sense and we can.” This architect also described being careful and slow to exit groups, instead trying to make a partnership with a collaborative successful first before leaving.

While all architects expressed positive sentiments about collaboratives, seven of the 22 architects described collaboration with a more tempered and cautious approach. They expressed the priority of meeting their internal organizational demands first before siphoning staff time and resources to participate in collaboratives.

Several of the cases discussed being actively and heavily recruited to participate in collaboratives in a way that signaled they were perhaps experiencing collaborative participation burn-out. Others expressed joining collaboratives only to contribute more than the majority of the effort. The architect in Case 19 discussed participating in collaboratives willingly and positively, but tempered by caution due to potential overuse of his staff. He stated, “Our staff is very busy so we have to be careful. We want to join things that are equal, meaning we don’t want to be brought in to do all the work or be in a group where we and a few others are doing most of the work.” In light of limited resources, some cases noted only seeking to participate in well-managed, established collaboratives that produced results. The Case 14 architect described this stating “After 40 years of going to meetings, I’m over going to sit there. So if the people providing leadership aren’t organized and working towards a mission, purpose, and strategy, I’m not joining or staying.” And finally, some felt in joining collaboratives their organizational name,
reputation, or skills were used in the name of meeting grant requirements or to access a given population. As such these architects discussed making conscious choices to downsize collaborative participation when the organization’s mission or activities were suffering due to the dispersion of staff efforts in collaboratives or when one of the above actions appeared to occur.

The architect in Case 10 described holding a leadership position in many collaboratives but having to downsize because their internal work was not being fully addressed saying “When I got here three years ago, we collaborated with probably 25 different agencies and today it’s probably more like 5. I think most large nonprofits you’re always going to be 1) understaffed and 2) underpaid. So how will you have the time to participate in a large number of collaboratives?”

None of these architects expressed a negative view of collaborative participation in theory, however they more readily discussed the pitfalls of collaborative participation and actively adjusting participation to avoid misuse of staff time and energy. Although the divide between the two types of approaches to collaborative participation – actively seeking to expand versus cautiously participating – was evident, this division did not correlate to the architect typology except that the Regulators were active seekers and supporters of collaboration. Despite the direct correlation to the types, it is important to be aware of the value architects place on collaboration as an activity and the subsequent approach they take. Assuming all architects actively seek to expand their participation is erroneous and somewhat shown in the quantitative analysis of portfolios. If it were true, more portfolios would expand in all change categories and across sectors.

Nonetheless, the findings suggest organizations contain people who actively dedicate time and resources to managing collaborative participation. They approach this management differently in terms of the degree of control they retain around decisions. Finally, findings
indicate variation across architects exist in how they value collaboration. Stated differently, the strategic orientation of architects to the management of collaborative participation varies. Furthermore, architects do not hold a designated position in organizations, meaning this is not an institutionalized role, although it exists and there may be more than one architect present in a given organization especially if it is large. Given the lacuna of information about these individuals to date, this study contributes to the literature by identifying this role and the variation within it to start a conversation around how organizational architects manage collaborative portfolios.

**Final Propositions**

The second finding from the grounded theory analysis tried to understand differences in portfolio change in relation to organizational actions. As noted in Chapter 3, early in the interview process, it became apparent that some architects approached collaborative participation one collaborative at a time. Interviewees said things like “We don’t regularly review our participation in partnerships formally…We take the opportunities as they come and assess situations and time commitments.” Others described opportunities that arose organically due to things like natural disasters or alternatively in response to planned, annual events that caused them to join a group or shift efforts temporarily or permanently. This discovery led to the adjustment in the second sampling phase and further exploration of the idea that organizational architects approach collaborative decisions one collaborative at a time, making portfolio changes incrementally instead of holistically.

But the results of subsequent interviews revealed that while many architects in this population approached portfolio change one collaborative at a time or incrementally, others approached it more holistically, changing the organizations’ relationship to all collaboratives in
their portfolio. Figure 6 depicts the differences in architects’ strategic orientation to portfolio change.

Figure 6 depicts the differences in architects’ strategic orientation to portfolio change.

The impetus behind the different approaches to portfolio change are discussed in detail in the next sections, but the base proposition of this finding is below.

**Proposition:** Strategic management of collaborative portfolios occurs either incrementally or holistically.

**Understanding Holistic Portfolio Change**

Five of the twenty-two cases described portfolio change as more radically occurring in relation to internal changes in leadership, organization mission and activities, or both. Three organizations in the sample experienced shifts in leadership that led architects to make more holistic shifts in collaborative participation. In Case 8 the newly instated leaders felt that the organization needed to adjust its work to respond to the evolving context of health care as they
provide education within that realm. As such, leadership encouraged staff to participate in
collaboratives related more broadly to the work of the organization. This organization’s portfolio
expanded from participating in one collaborative to five. Expanding the portfolio took time but
was done so deliberately at the direction of new leadership.

Case 10 also experienced a leadership change. A director instated three years ago guided
the portfolio to contract from participation in 25 collaboratives to 5 due to staff time constraints.
Staff were not meeting their organizational goals so the architect decreased their participation in
collaboratives. Here, the architect’s orientation to collaboration was one of caution instead of
expansion. During the interview, this architect emphasized the importance of meeting
organizational-based goals and pointed out how many nonprofits fail because they stray from
their mission and are overextended. He also discussed the organization’s shift in position within
the domain as an entity needing partners to one that needed to fulfill its mission. In relation to the
decisions to decrease participation, the interviewee provided the following context:

“We were actually part of the leadership teams that formed most of these [collaboratives
in portfolio]…We are a well-known organization and a large organization. But in 2012
we were really trying to get partners, but now we are doing more with less staff wise and
we realized that we were holding a lot of leadership positions in these groups, doing a lot
of work, but not getting our agency-work done.”

Although the decrease in participation was conscious, he said it took place over time and that
ongoing review of participation is critical to success.

A promotion of a staff member to executive director also caused this organization’s
architect to make holistic, radical change in portfolio of Case 12. This organization’s leadership
team – consisting of seven high-level employees – meets regularly to discuss collaborative
participation and determine which collaboratives the organization will continue to staff. The
leadership team was considering the time commitment required per collaborative as well as
which staff person is participating. The interviewee described this saying:

“Our internal leadership [is] asking the hard questions of – what is our impact? What are
our outcomes? Why are we doing what we’re doing and how is it serving the community
that we serve? Would our hours be better dedicated to something else? We had a 2.5 hour
meeting about this and went through and looked at our goals and even went as far as to
see, what are the different organizations and collaboratives in our community that exist
and which ones are we part of and which ones are we not a part of – do we want to be?
We’ve taken a much more proactive approach to how we’re participating in
collaboratives this year.”

Until recently, the community coordinator position almost exclusively participated in
collaboratives. However, the organization now seeks the right person to participate in the right
collaborative in terms of content-knowledge or expertise.

Case 6 shifted its mission and related organizational activities a few years ago from
supporting a broad array of causes to focusing on children and early education. As a result, the
architect steered the organization to align its new mission with the collaborative domain in which
it participated. The organization exited two health and wellness collaboratives, decreased from a
leadership level to an affiliated level in one collaborative and remained affiliated with another
health and wellness collaborative that has a focus on children. Finally, Case 22 experienced an
organizational mission shift and a change in leadership, leading the architect to completely
change the organization’s health and wellness collaborative portfolio.

All of these architects experienced an internal change and then approached portfolio
change holistically, leading this study to craft the following proposition shown in writing and

**Figure 7** below.

**Proposition:** Architects approach portfolio change from a holistic perspective when they
are responding to large, internal organizational changes.
When describing incremental changes, architects described shifts in the dyadic relationship between an organization and a single collaborative rather than their portfolio overall. Categories or common fit components related to the dyadic relationship that could lead to incremental change began emerging across interviews. This study identified several areas that were discussed repeatedly including mission alignment, expectation alignment, capacity alignment, and accessing resources. Figure 8 depicts how a change in the dyadic fit between an organization and collaborative as perceived by an architect leads that architect to adjust participation in that group. Then each fit category architects’ discussed is outline below.
Architects discussed different causes or reasons why the shift in the dyadic relationship between the organization and collaborative occurred. Mission alignment emerged fairly consistently in cases where architects described making incremental changes to their collaborative participation. One architect described his view of joining or participating in collaboratives and the role of the organization’s mission stating “Obviously, everything goes back to your mission. The organization’s mission. So if there were opportunities for us to join a collaborative, it would have to align with our mission, first and foremost. Have to be within the sphere of the work we do on a day-to-day basis and it would have to make sense for the organization to be at the table.” Essentially, the goals of the collaborative need to compliment the organization in some way for the relational fit between the two form and remain over time.

Several architects discussed a particular collaborative in this domain that shifts its focus every few years based on community feedback. Architects noted that after a given shift the focus of the collaborative no longer pertained to their organization and therefore they decreased or exited the group, making an incremental change to their portfolios in response to a shift in the dyadic relationship. The architect in Case 1 described this saying “Every two to three years they
do a community health assessment and determine what are their priorities. And we have not been very active since their last determination of priorities because there was not a good place for our organization and activities to fit in. [So we] pulled back because we’re not fully aligned.”

Mission alignment is likely the most transparent area where the fit between an organization and collaborative caused an architect to adjust participating accordingly. Particularly given the number of nonprofit architects present in the sample, it makes sense that mission was at the forefront of their mind. Additionally, government entities’ responsibility to the public and their mission is also a driver of their activities, which means government architects likely orient their collaborative participation to align with their mission.

**Proposition:** Architects approach portfolio change incrementally when they perceive shifts in the dyadic fit between their organization and a given collaborative based on mission misalignment.

In addition to discussing alignment of mission, architects discussed wanting to make sure the outcome of their participation in a collaborative aligned with their expectations. This alignment extended beyond merely aligning tasks or goals and perhaps personifies architects’ strategic orientation. Architects expressed having an idea or expectation of what collaborative participation would look like.

In the instances discussed in interviews, the examples offered were ones in which expectations were not met. The architect in Case 16 describe a collaborative relationship in which the expectations set forth at the beginning of participation did not align with reality. The architect stated “I’ve been a part of a group where it was billed as community-based, participatory and it wasn’t. The community and us were being used for grant fulfillment. It
seemed like the community wasn’t going to be left with anything afterwards. We don’t want to be part of box checking.”

Another architect talked about expectations related to workload distribution. This architect from Case 19 said their organization was often sought as a collaborative partner to serve as the leading organizations contributing the most work. He stated, “We want to join things that are equal, meaning we don’t want to be brought in to do all the work or be in a group where we and a few others are doing most of the work.”

Finally, some interviewees spoke about expecting the collaborative to be productive in terms of producing a result beyond information sharing or “meeting to meet.” Case 7 discussed leaving a particular collaborative that meets to share information stating, “That is a group of nonprofit organizations that meet once a month and it’s not a discussion about anything; they don’t have a purpose. People talk about what they’re doing but no goals. So I was like, OK, once I tell the story about who we are and what we do – I don’t want to tell it every month or every time I see you. As far as a collaboration – there is none. It’s just a bunch of people sitting there meeting every month. And I thought, this is a waste of my time.”

In relation to expectation alignment, it seems as though some of the issues occurred due to unclear communication about roles of the organizations and the purpose of the collaborative initially. In other instances, organizations discussed collaboratives shifting perspective or activities and therefore organizations expectations were no longer met. No matter the cause of the misalignment in expectations, architects reported shifting out of collaboratives when they failed to receive the outcome they hoped for.
**Proposition:** Architects approach portfolio change incrementally when they perceive shifts in the dyadic fit between the organization and collaborative due to the expectations of the organization participating in a collaborative going unmet.

Architects also spoke about the ability to contribute staff time as well as the need to find the right staff person to contribute in establishing a solid organization to collaborative relationship. When one of those things shifted, an incremental change occurred to shift collaborative participation. According to interviewees, the right person may be based on the position a person holds within the organization such as the director versus a person closer to providing the organization’s services directly. Alternatively the right person may have content-specific knowledge related to a given group or simply be enthusiastic about joining a collaborative. If that person leaves or shifts or if the collaborative shifts the fit may change. The architect in Case 3 discussed this saying, “Is it more of a higher level conversation that’s strategic and would be more appropriate for myself or is it more at the ground level and dealing with the practical application of activities and patients – then I would find the right person to go and participate in that committee or coalition.” Speaking more specifically to finding the right fit concerning specific activities, Case 14 stated, “But for instance, a person on our staff does senior adult programming, so we have her more active in elderly-related collaboratives, whereas someone else might be more active in collaboratives around youth.”

In addition to finding the right person, many architects spoke about finding staff that have time to participate in collaboratives. In hypothetical scenarios given to architects, the most commonly cited reason for leaving or decreasing participation in a collaborative was a lack of staff time. Architects cited the requirement to meet organizational tasks first before collaborative activities and how that often leads to decreased or completed ceased collaborative participation.
**Proposition:** Architects approach portfolio change incrementally when they perceive shifts in the dyadic fit between the organization and collaborative due to the organization being unable to dedicate staff to the effort.

Finally, architects discussed the relationship between their organizations and collaboratives in terms of access to resources. Some of the resources architects sought included people or developing a network or accessing social capital. Other resources discussed included information or money. In many instances, architects discussed how access to multiple resources caused them to adjust collaborative participation in different situations.

In describing how access to information and people caused them to join groups, the architect in Case 20 stated “Sometimes we participate in groups that give information to the people we are trying to help or helps us get them services and sometimes we join groups to help let other people in the community doing work know what we are doing.” The architect in Case 9 echoed this stating, “It’s a group of nonprofits and government agencies. A good way for us to find out what’s going on in the community before you hear about it on the news. So if there’s a new program coming up or if they have resources to share.” But as stated in a previous comment and echoed in other interviews, some architects found that after a certain amount of time participating in information-sharing collaboratives they reach a point of diminishing returns, and leave or decrease participation, leading to more incremental change.

Some architects frankly discussed how money caused them to join a particular group. The architect in Case 15 said, “When I started going to Collaborative X… they were doing these mini grants and they went to a local company here and a year or so later went to our organization so both of those mini grant programs I was involved in and involved my department.” The architect in Case 9 comically described how money motivated their organization to originate a
collaborative stating, “Well, I’ll tell ya… money. I’m going to be very blunt. If we get some grant funding, and it has requirements. That’s why I started the Collaborative Z because it was related to funding we got.” Case 14 similarly discussed temporarily increasing participation in a collaborative currently because they received a large grant and how the organization may have to decrease participation elsewhere because of this opportunity. Funds are typically temporary in the nonprofit and government sectors and therefore shifting collaborative relationships in response to that would lead to incremental change.

Architects discussed accessing a variety resources, often in conjunction with each other. However, whether the fit component considered was mission, expectations, staff capacity, staff alignment, or accessing resources, the interview data suggest these fit factors signaled architects to make a shift in the dyadic relationship between an organization and a collaborative.

![Diagram showing dyadic fit shifts](image-url)

**Figure 9.** Shifts in Dyadic Fit Lead Architects to Make Incremental Changes to Portfolio
A shift could include exiting or entering a given group or increasing or decreasing the level of participation. All of these shifts led to an incremental change in an organization’s collaborative portfolio due to the architect’s assessment and action. Despite the presences of different factors that led to changes in the fit between an organization and collaborative, the mechanisms underlying all shifts in fit and subsequent changes was the fact that organizational members participated in collaboratives to meet an organizational need or gap. When the dyadic relationship between the organization and collaborative no longer met a need or gap, the architect shifted participation.

**Proposition:** Architects approach portfolio change incrementally when they perceive shifts in the dyadic fit between the organization and collaborative due to the organization’s reason for participating in the collaborative going unmet.

**Proposition Discussion**

As shown in the discussion above, architects’ strategic orientation to internal changes or shifts in the dyadic relationship between the organization and collaboratives caused them to make what they saw as holistic or incremental. Holistic or radical change occurred when architects responded to large, internal shifts occurring in their organizations like changes to the organization’s mission or new people filling leadership positions. Incremental changes occurred when the architects perceived a shift in the dyadic relationship between an organization and collaborative based on various factors like mission and expectation alignment, staff capacity, and access to resources.

These findings suggest that organizations’ collaborative portfolios will change in small ways, one collaborative at time when internal operations are stable. When large internal factors in an organization change such as the mission or leadership, portfolio change will reflect this in a
more radical, holistic way. However, even when an organization experiences a radical change, the architect may make initial, holistic portfolio changes and then shift back to incremental change. Similarly, an organizational architect making incremental changes may experience a large shock internally and shift to radical change. Evident in all the qualitative data is the fluid and dynamic nature of change in portfolios within a given year or even a season.

Findings Conclusion

This study sought to understand how organizations’ collaborative portfolios change over time and why. Particularly, the study tried to understand who within the organization makes decisions around collaborative participation and what influences that person’s decision-making. The quantitative findings suggest collaborative portfolios evolve over time in large ways by completely leaving the collaborative domain or entering it as well as small ways by making incremental adjustments to the level at which the organization participates in collaboratives or by dropping out of one collaborative or joining one, for example.

Interestingly, collaborative portfolio evolution varied by sector. For-profit entities stopped or decreased participation in collaboratives in the majority of cases, but not all. Non-profit entities decreased, maintained, and expanded collaborative portfolios equally. And government entities entered or expanded portfolios in the majority of cases, but not all. Despite sector differences however, the domain achieved a dynamic stasis in that it did not infinitely expand, contract, or remain the same. The stable churn in the domain was established by government organizations filling space within the domain that the departure of for-profit entities created while nonprofit organizations adjusted their portfolios frequently, exiting, entering, and maintaining but adjusting participation.
This study made an early assumption that someone within an organization led the effort to manage collaborative participation. The interview protocol and sampling approach helped to address this assumption by reaching out to the executive level position first and then speaking with someone else if that person did not identify as an architect. In the 22 cases examined, architects emerged or rather one or more people within an organization appeared to dedicate time and resources to managing the organization’s participation in voluntary collaboratives. However, these architects varied in terms of the position they held within an organization, their approach to management of collaborative participation, their view of the role of collaboration, and their strategic orientation to changes in collaborative participation.

The study produced a typology of architectural involvement to help delineate between various types of approaches. It also identified a dichotomy in how architects view collaboration. Some architects viewed collaboration as an activity to be expanded while others saw it as a potentially helpful endeavor to be tempered, particularly if internal operations suffered because of collaborative participation.

Finally, the study found that architects in these cases oriented themselves to portfolio change incrementally or holistically depending on other changes occurring with the collaboratives or within the organization. Architects approach collaborative portfolio changes incrementally when they perceived a shift in the dyadic fit between their organization and a given collaborative. Alternatively, architects approached collaborative portfolio changes from a radical or holistic approach when they responded to large, internal organization shifts. Importantly, architect strategic orientation to change seemed capable of shifting between holistic and incremental change depending on the circumstances. Furthermore, architects described portfolios shifting multiple times over a 5-year period or even within a one-year period.
Ultimately, these cases suggest collaborative portfolio change is fluid and continual. From a more macro level, the changes seem to balance each other and result in a domain-level carrying capacity. At the meso-level, the study suggests organizations from different sectors approach collaborative participation differently. And at the micro level of the organizational architect, it appears their orientation to internal changes and changes in the dyadic relationship between the organization and collaborative influence their strategic orientation to making portfolio changes.

However, this study highlights the complexity of collaborative research in terms of levels of analysis and how examining different levels provides different insights. Initially the study sought to examine portfolio change and management by observing changes at the portfolio level. After the first phase of in-depth interviews, it became apparent a great deal of change occurred at the dyadic level in the relationship between an organization and collaborative. But both perspectives are needed. Future research should endeavor to continue this research using flexible methods that allow for multi-level analysis.

Chapter 5 furthers the discussion around the main findings, how they fit into current literature, and directions for future research.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study explored how the collaborative portfolios of organizations evolve and why. Collaboratives represent a group of three or more autonomous entities working jointly towards a shared goal within a given problem domain (Gray, 1989; Kouzes & Mico, 1979; Trist, 1983; Huxam, 1996; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Nowell et al., 2016). An organization’s collaborative portfolio, as defined by this study, is the collection of collaboratives in which an organization participates at a given time.

Despite the proliferation of research related to collaboratives, little if any specifically examined the issue of how organizations manage their participation in collaboratives, what that participation looks like cumulatively (in a portfolio), and how that portfolio changes over time and why. Using collaborative arrangements became popular during the New Public Management movement that championed privatization of public goods and service delivery (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006). As such, many academic fields began studying this phenomenon. But collaboratives emerge for various purposes in differing settings and arrangements. Accordingly, many academic fields study different components of collaboratives. They do so through difference lenses and typically in accordance with the dominant theories, assumptions and approaches of their discipline. The result is a growing body of literature, but gaps remain.

The dissertation examined a population of organizations within a health and wellness collaborative domain. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study quantitatively analyzed changes in organizations’ collaborative portfolios and constructed a sampling frame based on those changes. In-depth interviews then took place based on the sample and grounded theory methods were used to inductively analyze the results.
No existing theory or theories could answer the research questions at hand; therefore a mixed-method study including inductive research was appropriate. The dissertation could have ciphered off specific factors suspected to be related to collaborative portfolio change and management and tested those factors against pre-existing theory, further confirming or refining that theory. However, applying pre-existing codes or theoretical assumptions to the data would have limited the possibilities of outcomes and therefore the study (Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, using an inductive approach allowed for the existence of co-occurring influential factors at different levels of analysis, something qualitative, inductive examinations allow for (Nowell & Albrecht, 2019). Without this flexibility, the discovery that architects orient themselves to portfolio change incrementally when the dyadic relationship between the organization and collaborative shifts but approach portfolio change holistically when internal organizational changes occur may not have emerged. Ultimately, the study asked how and why questions related to portfolios because the answers were unavailable.

This chapter provides discussions around the major findings of the study, how they relate to current research, and possible directions for future research. The major findings discussed include the following: differential portfolio change by sector maintained a dynamic stasis or carrying capacity in the collaborative domain of interest, a lack of institutionalization of organizational architects that manage the entity’s collaborative portfolio, and the relationship between architects’ strategic orientation and their approach to portfolio change. However, the chapter begins with a discussion of the study’s context and limitations.

**Study Context and Limitations**

The study assessed population-level data in a health and wellness collaborative domain. Due to the availability of population data, the study conducted descriptive quantitative analysis,
assessing trends. Other statistical analysis was not needed to extrapolate results of a sample to the population because the population data was present. As such, this portion of the study was only limited by the quality of the data from the Mapping Project study and the construction of portfolio change parameters.

The Mapping Project rigorously collected data in two time periods and extensively crosschecked the membership components of that data. As a result, the only limitation present is more of a reality of research. Time continues to change the membership of organizations participating in collaboratives and therefore some of the portfolios generated based on the 2017 data have since changed. This may have been problematic if the variation sought in the qualitative inquiry stayed at the portfolio-level between portfolios instead of shifting to within portfolio variation because in the former approach pure portfolio change would have been necessary and needed to be verified in each case. But by chance, the grounded theory analysis revealed variation occurred in relation to how architects approached collaborative decisions based on their strategic orientation and the best way to understand that orientation was through interviews with organizations that had a lot of change within their portfolios.

A second potential limitation to the quantitative data exists in the portfolio change parameters applied. In order to assess change over time, the study specified areas of change to observe. The dissertation based these change parameters on a pre-existing thought-based study that discussed resource and environmental factors that influenced the way networks changed through organizational actions (Koka et al., 2006). The article contributed a great deal to the questions in this study, but it did not fully operationalize the concepts it presented.

This dissertation operationalized portfolio size and strength of participation in a way to assess cumulative changes over time. Consequently, the study may be limited in some ways due
to aggregating the size variable, using the highest participating member per collaborative, and using composition as a secondary information variable. Aggregation generally leads to data attenuation, but this study chose to do so to combat size bias. A secondary analysis of leadership changes that included counts of people confirmed the size measure captured the movements present in the portfolios. Therefore, the study’s operationalizations may lose a small amount of detail but accurately reflects trends in portfolio decisions.

Beyond the quantitative descriptive analysis, the remainder of the study used qualitative grounded theory methods to understand portfolio management. Inductive methods can be assessed using criteria to evaluate the rigor applied during execution. As Nowell and Albrecht (2019) detailed, the criteria used to assess deductive and inductive studies differ. Deductive research seeks to find causal results generalizable to a population or setting through a replicable method that randomly sampled a population (Nowell & Albrecht, 2019). The idea is that any given sample of a population would experience similar results. But qualitative, inductive inquiry purposively samples cases that are of specific interest and relevance to the study (Patton, 2015). The selected cases need to be information rich and illuminating, but not necessarily replicable. The criteria of quality for the majority of this study related to inductive research hinge on the quality of study design and data interpretation.

A major component of the grounded theory research design is theoretical sampling that is refined throughout the process of data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2014). This dissertation initially sampled based on the idea that the organizational choices related to uniform portfolio change patterns reflected the meaning behind those changes. During analysis, it became apparent that architects made portfolio change choices incrementally or holistically due to the dyadic relationships of organizations and collaboratives that comprise a portfolio or to internal,
organizational changes. The sampling frame shifted to learn more about those decisions and relationships. The selected organizations illuminated decisions behind portfolio change.

Aside from the proposition-driven component of the sample, the study met standards of rigor by collecting a data-rich set of information. The information gathered is complex and challenging to access in terms of the quantitative data from the Mapping Project that provided this study with the basis for the sample. That collaborative data was collected over time and reflects individual level data nested in organizations nested in collaboratives in a given collaborative domain. Finally, the sample of in-depth interviews is also information rich because it spoke to questions unanswered and not yet asked. The interview protocol asked both structured and open-ended questions to allow the researcher to probe around interesting areas or search for information related to the questions at hand.

Data saturation is another important component of grounded theory and inductive research. The study defined the sample as organizations within the government and nonprofit sectors that met certain criteria to help ensure their similarities. Although some research suggests the public, private, and non-profit sectors share commonalities and are more alike than different (Rainey & Bozeman, 2000), others suggest they are distinct (Williamson, 1975; Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006). Due to the importance of the sampling process in grounded theory, this study erred on the side of caution and made the choice to exclude for-profit entities in the event their approach to collaboratives were drastically different than nonprofit and government entities. Based on these parameters, saturation was met because the cases were rich with information and variability appeared (Nowell & Albrecht, 2019). However, the results generated in the inductive analysis could not be readily applied to for-profit portfolios or any sector’s portfolios that exited or entered because this study did not examine those areas.
General limitations of this study include items such as access to full information and potential researcher bias. To address these limitations, the study allowed for ample time, a year, to collect data that addressed the research questions. Fortunately, the previous data collection efforts in the community of interest established trust between the researcher and the interviewees. Phone interviews provided convenience to decrease access-related issues. They also helped establish uniformity in the data collection effort. Finally, peer checks occurred throughout the analysis process to combat or identify any bias or unsupported conclusions.

The qualitative findings related to architects contain a few limitations or rather emergent challenges based on the findings. First, interviews with organizational architects suggested that an architect’s strategic orientation to portfolio management resulted in either incremental or holistic change. But these orientations are not static. Therefore, even if architects orient themselves to portfolio change by making incremental adjustments to dyadic relationships, these changes can accumulate into larger changes over time. Similarly, architects that respond to internal organizational change by orienting themselves to portfolio change more holistically, may shift back to incremental changes or have to make incremental change to achieve the holistic change. It is important to note that changes to portfolios from the macro level (small or large) may not parallel an architect’s orientation to portfolio change. For example, the macro level portfolio change may be full expansion, but an architect may view that change more incrementally. However, these differences do not negate the existence of both findings. Rather, they require the researcher to note from what level and perspective portfolio change is examined.

Another emergent challenge exists in the fact that organizations may contain several architects. The study contacted organizations at the executive director level and asked the organization to identify the architect. This approach may have missed the presence of more than
one architect by asking for one as it is conceivable an organization may have more than one person dedicating time and resources to management decisions around collaborative portfolios. Future research needs to consider and verify the issue of more than one architect.

Finally, the study assessed portfolios from the health and wellness collaborative domain only. Defining the sample within these parameters helped the grounded theory sampling process by keeping as many factors constant as possible to allow only the areas of interest to vary. Nonetheless, during interviews some organizations discussed participating in collaboratives outside of the health and wellness domain. For example, an organization with a mission related to children’s health participated in health and wellness collaboratives as well as education collaboratives. Collaboratives outside of the domain specified for this study were not captured in the quantitative portfolio analysis and based on the interviews in which this emerged, the architect did not differentiate portfolios by domain. This does not nullify the qualitative findings, but may indicate some of the quantitative portfolios were not complete from the perspective of the organization. Future research could try to capture organizations that straddle more than one domain, but per this study’s sampling frame, the organizations identified hold a primary mission related to health and wellness.

The limitations discussed temper some of the findings to orient them to the context at hand – inductive research that took place in a health and wellness collaborative domain over a five year period - and encourage future research to consider the various decision points of inductive research and how to build upon these findings. The purpose of inductive, qualitative research is to allow the data to generate patterns from reality (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 28; Eaves, 2001). This research aimed to generate new knowledge and identify patterns related to the gap
associated with organizations’ collaborative portfolios and their management. The remainder of the chapter will address the major findings in relation to current literature and future research.

**Discussion of Major Findings**

**Dynamic Stasis: Understanding Variability in Collaborative Portfolio Change**

With little known about organizations’ collaborative portfolios, this dissertation observed changes in the collection of collaboratives an organization participated in within a given collaborative domain both quantitatively and qualitatively without a priori assumptions regarding change over time. Both methods of analysis helped assess the presence of change and stability in the domain, which the Mapping Project first identified. Providing detail of the organizations exiting, entering, and those adjusting participation within the context, this dissertation identified patterns that help explain why dynamic stasis occurs in this setting.

A quarter of the portfolios in the collaborative domain exited from 2012 to 2017 while a new quarter of portfolios entered. Similarly, the number of organizations that decreased their portfolios in size and strength of participation but remained in the domain was similar to those that expanded their portfolios while remaining in the domain at 43 and 46 respectively. The balance of exit and entrance, contraction and expansion, reflects consistent change occurring the carrying capacity of the domain.

Importantly, portfolios from the for-profit, non-profit, and government sectors exhibited different types of trends in portfolio change that achieved the stasis. For-profit portfolios contracted and exited at similar rates to government portfolios expanding and entering while nonprofit portfolio change varied consistently in all categories. The offset between the for-profit and government sectors was almost equal in the various change categories. Therefore the
explanation behind dynamic stasis in this domain was the differential but balancing sector portfolio changes.

Scholars disagree about the extent to which organizational sectors differ in meaningful ways with some arguing the differences are real and others suggesting they are overstated (Williamson, 1975; Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006; Rainey & Bozeman, 2000). Some assumptions about differences in managerial roles, organizational structure, formalization of procedures and policies, are assumed to exist between public and private sector organizations. However, not all of these assumptions have withstood empirical investigation (Buchanan, 1975; Rainey et al., 1995). Ultimately, findings related to empirical comparisons of sectors provide conflicting results (Rainey & Bozeman, 2000).

This dissertation offers one of the first examinations into sector differences in patterns of collaborative engagement within a domain over time. Findings suggests sector distinctions in a collaborative domain are real based on collaborative portfolio change. The for-profit and government sectors appear to differ the most from one another and the historical context of the environment in which the domain is situated may shed light on the impetus behind the differential behavior.

In 2012, the state-level government offices related to the domain in this study shifted to a conservative majority in the House and Senate. As a result, subsequent years saw decreased governmental spending in areas like health and wellness. It is possible that in response to fewer resources, government organizations in this study’s domain increased collaborative participation to fill the gaps. Oppositely, perhaps fewer for-profit organizations entered collaborative arrangements or stayed in them due to a lack of consistent resources from governmental sources.
In terms of the non-profit sector, it is likely these entities experienced both patterns of change as literature suggests the non-profit sector, also referred to as the third sector, can adopt structures and operational approaches from the government sector or for-profit sector depending on what serves them best (Evers & Laville, 2004; Kendall & Knapp, 1995; Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006). When delivering public services, non-profits assume government-like structures and formalization as they undergo the institutionalization process from working closely with government entities (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006). But unlike government entities, non-profits still seek to maximize income more like private entities, although not necessarily to maximize profit, but rather to remain solvent. Non-profits can assume a more for-profit like structure when appropriate. For example, one the largest nonprofits present in this domain is a hospital that operates more like a for-profit entity than a government entity. Non-profit entities taking on government-like or for-profit-like identities may explain why non-profit organizations approached portfolio change evenly in each area.

Although this study brings to light a new finding that the dynamic stasis in a health and wellness collaborative domain is achieved through variation in collaborative portfolios by sector, this information could be explored in other collaborative domains to determine whether it exists in other settings in a similar way. Stated differently future research could ask, how do organizational sector differences relate to portfolio evolution in a collaborative domain?

The idea of dynamic stasis is presented in population ecology research, which evaluates the environmental carrying capacity or the number of organizations that the social, economic, and political conditions in a given environment can support with available resources (Hannan & Freeman, 1984; Anheier, 2005, 149). Through this lens, when resources are available, organizations can survive; but when resources contract, the carrying capacity of the environment
also contracts. In this view, organizations compete for resources and therefore compete with each other (Aldrich, 2008). Organizational form, such as being for-profit, non-profit, or public entities, enables entities to harness competitive advantages through their differences, which a given environment can support even as actors leave and emerge (Anheier, 2005, Roughgarden, 1979). As such, domains can support a certain number of diverse organizations.

Access to resources undoubtedly plays a role in organizational participation in collaborative domains, as the qualitative analysis revealed. However, access to resources alone may not fully capture or predict the movement of organizations in a collaborative domain and the changes they make to their collaborative portfolios. The context of this study challenges some of the premise in that government resources contracted, but the entire domain did not contract. Instead, certain types of organizations exited while others entered. Paarlberg and Varda (2009) note the limitation of population ecology in assessing organizations in a given community. Nowell, Hano, and Yang (in press) suggest examining movements within a collaborative domain through a resource-driven, rational perspective constrained by social contexts and pressures may not fully capture all dynamics present (Granovetter, 1985).

Due to the potential interaction of rational and social-based decision-making in a domain, recent research asks the extent to which population ecology theories can be applied to collaborative settings and encourages others to do the same (Nowell et al., in press; Albrecht, 2019). Therefore, future research should build on the discovery that sector differences related to the establishment of a carrying capacity within a health and wellness collaborative domain. The larger environment of organizations and availability of resources may influence this carrying capacity as well as how organizational forms are or are not supported in certain environments.
But these approaches should be tempered to take into account social constraints and influences on organizations’ collaborative portfolio decisions.

The question of what types of actions, pressures, and conditions lead to collaborative change are some that the initial questions Koka et al. (2006) asked that inspired this dissertation. The dissertation’s finding around carrying capacity suggests the environment influences organizational actions differently by sectors and future research can delve into the various types of pressures that contribute to these sector differences.

**Collaborative Portfolio Management Has Yet To Be Institutionalized**

The study’s early assumption that someone within an organization managed collaborative participation was tested through the sampling approach and during in-depth interviews. The 22 cases in this study contained individuals who were identified by others and/or self-identified as managing the organization’s participation in voluntary collaboratives. However, these architects varied in terms of the position they held within an organization and the degree to which they controlled decisions related to collaborative participation on behalf of the organization. Stated differently, collaborative architects existed in the domain studied but did not fill uniform roles.

As such, a significant contribution of this study is the identification of a collaborative architect typology. Collaborative architects operated in government and non-profit organizations and held positions ranging from line-level workers to branch directors. Similarly, they ranged in the level of control they kept over collaborative decisions from fairly uninvolved to exclusively in control. These differences are interesting because ultimately the architects made decisions regarding collaborative participation for their organization, but did so in different ways.
We know organizations are dedicating major resources towards collaboration (Nowell et al., in press) and we know collaborative public managers play a vital role in facilitating collaboration (McGuire, 2006; Agranoff & McGuire, 2001). But research up to this point has paid less attention to what roles these managers hold in their organizations and how they compare to one another in their approach to management collaborative participation. The architect typology and lack of institutionalization of architects helps expand these conversations.

Previous literature on collaborative public managers focused on their activities in building collaboratives through actions like partner selection or what some literature calls activation and others call game management (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Doz & Hamel, 1998; Oliver, 1990; Burt, 1992; Gulati, 2007; Manning, 2010). The same vein of literature examined the different activities public managers undertake throughout the lifecycle of a collaborative and the skills needed to weather these changes like negotiation, persuasion, the ability to establish trust, and possessing excellent communication skills (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Other bodies of research diverge between assessing manager strategies through relationships or structure and how that influences changes in collaboration (Kicker & Koppenjan, 1997; Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004; O’Toole, 1988).

But these bodies of research have not spent extensive time defining the public manager or their structural position within their organization. McGuire (2006) provided a summative article discussing collaborative public management and in the first paragraph referred to public managers in various existing research articles including a school superintendent (Meier & O’Toole 2005), a city government department (Agranoff and McGuire 2003), and an emergency collaborative task force involving federal actors (Moynihan, 2005). This discussion brings to
bear many questions. Is the individual, the department, or the taskforce the public manager? Is it a person or a group? How did the individuals in these situations come to hold these roles and how are they similar or different? The findings of this dissertation add to the conversation of public managers by encouraging researchers to ask who the collaborative public manager (or as this study refers to it who the collaborative architect) is. Furthermore, are there many public managers within an organization? Perhaps architects represent one type of public managers among many.

The typology provided by this dissertation suggests people in different levels of an organization can and do assume the role of managing collaborative participation. Therefore, positional power, or the influence a person has based on their job such as director (Hollander & Offermann, 1990), may not guarantee a person is the collaborative architect. Literature on emergent leadership may provide more insight into the topic. An emergent leader is one established informally due to a context that allows or precipitates someone rising to the task of leader as well as personality traits that may predispose someone to step into that role (Pescosolido, 2002). This concept relates to collaborative research that has studied emergent leaders that volunteer to guide collective efforts without the promise of personal maximization, but because they believe in the larger objective (Nowell & Harrison, 2010). The typology could expand the conversation of emergent leaders to not just include those that fill the role of managing collaboratives, but also those that manage collaborative portfolios within organizations. These leaders may emerge based on resource-drive perspectives or due to a sense of duty to their organization (Perry & Wise, 1995) or feelings of duty and obligation to advance the well-being of a group and its member (Nowell & Boyd, 2014).
Some architects interviewed in the study spoke of feeling the need to have their organization represented on community collaboratives or the need to know more about the community. These architects assumed the role of architect as a result. Neither a higher level manager nor a job role description tasked them to do so. Similarly, some executive directors that managed sizeable organizations remained very involved in the management of collaborative decisions even though they held the authority to delegate such tasks. But it is possible architects emerge due positional power in some instances and due to emergent leaders in others.

The addition of the architect typology also prompts the current literature on collaborative public management to look inwards to the organization not only to learn how architects come to be and vary, but also to look at the impact they have on their organization. Nowell and Foster-Fishman (2010) encouraged scholars to look for intermediate outcomes from collaborative participation by examining the capacity organizations gain in participating in collaboratives. Future research could build on their idea and this study to understand what organizations gain or lose by having a person manage collaborative participation and how those outcomes vary according to the approach an architect takes from fairly removed to in complete control. It could also endeavor to examine the positive or negative outcomes of the lack of institutionalization around the architect role. Perhaps the lack of formality allows for emergent leaders to assume these roles and in doing so generates a fit between those that feel it is their responsibility or in their interest to manage these activities and the activities. But the lack of institutionalization may mean some organizations do not have a collaborative architect and as a result fail to access resources or relationships that could enhance their mission. The findings around the collaborative architect bring up many questions, but ultimately ask us to begin a conversation that addresses this specific role in organizations and its outcomes for organizations and collaboration.
Understanding Architects’ Strategic Orientation to Portfolio Change

Another significant contribution of this study is the finding that architects’ approach to portfolio change diverged based on their assessment of their internal organizational environment as well as the status and quality of the fit between the organization and a given collaborative. The cases in the dissertation suggested when large, internal organization changes take place architects strategically orient themselves to portfolio change holistically, making adjustments to all collaborative participation. Oppositely, when internal organizational settings are stable, architects approach portfolio change incrementally, making adjustment per collaborative. This phenomenological finding indicates that even within with architect typology, the way an architect interprets change around them influences their approach to portfolio management.

The idea that major internal organizational shifts lead to other organizational shifts is not novel (Bons & Fielder, 1976). But, it is interesting that various types of internal shifts – leadership, mission, activities – all prompted a more holistic approach to portfolio change. Perhaps large internal shifts lead to a more holistic perspective related to an organization. But as I spoke with some architects that were not approaching portfolio change holistically, they commented that perhaps they should. Therefore this research may aid in the field to alert architects of the behavior noted and prompt them to examine their entire portfolio prior to a large, internal shift, if appropriate. This study provided a report of the findings to the participants and collaborative domain and perhaps this information will aid architects in some way.

But just as internal organizational change signaling other organizational changes is not new, neither is the idea that the fit between a person and her job, organization, environment, or superior matters (Kristof, 1996; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Furthermore, literature supports the idea that certain conditions or traits lead to partnerships
among or between entities (Doz & Hamel, 1998; Oliver, 1990; Burt, 1992; Gulati, 2007; Manning, 2010; Oliver, 1990) and that when those conditions shift, the changes aggregates up to larger environmental changes (Koka et al., 2006). But this study adds a new component to the fit conversation. The cases in the dissertation suggest that when the organization to collaborative fit shifts, as identified by individuals, architects make incremental, organization portfolio change.

Combining fit literature with collaborative partnership literature and the findings of this study may further this conversation. The concept of person to entity fit extends from early management research to present-day efforts (Parsons, 1909), particularly related to the concept of person to vocation fit in management and psychological research (Hollenbeck, 1989). The research posits that an individual and another entity (organization, supervisor, environment) “fit” when a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, b) both entities share characteristics like values, goals, norms and personality/culture, or c) both a and b occur (Kristof, 1996, 4). Therefore, fit can occur based on similarities or differences, but either or both lead to a compatibility perceived by the actors involved. Although different research has conceptualized and measured fit in various ways, some authors argue that perception of fit best predicts outcomes (Kristof, 1996; Cable & Judge, 1997). This conclusion supports this study’s findings in that it is the perception of the individual architect either from their own observations or communication with staff that leads to a shift in the organization to collaborative relationship. The fit literature and this study indicate there is a personal, psychological-based component to identifying and addressing fit.

Compared to the fit research, the collaborative research shifts the level of analysis from the individual and another entity to the organization and another organization or a collaborative. In the collaborative partnership literature, external conditions or internal organizational
characteristics can lead an organization to partner with others. A synthesis by Oliver (1990) of the determinants of interorganizational partner selection identified necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity, efficiency, stability, and legitimacy to be the major drivers of organizations joining interorganizational collaboratives. Each of these determinants present contingencies that lead to the selection of certain partners or in the case of a collaborative portfolio would cause a collaborative architect to make the decision to join a collaborative, remain in one, or leave one. Some of the determinants are due to environmental factors or influences while others are due to internal characteristics. Similarly, Ahuja et al. (2012) identified heterophily, homophily, prominence, brokerage, and closure as drivers that cause actors to create new ties, maintain existing ties, or dissolve existing ties in collaborative settings. Like the study from Oliver, some of these factors depend on internal, organizational traits, while others relate to other organizations or the greater collaborative domain in which an organization operates.

Below is a table showing Oliver’s determinants, Ahuja et al.’s microdynamics, and this study’s findings in terms of what they are and when they relate. A discussion follows regarding these fit components from collaborative literature and the fit literature relate. An important differentiation between the two studies and this dissertation in that the other studies examined how organizations relate to one another and decide to partner accordingly. This portion of the dissertation finding focused on how an organization relates to a collaborative as identified by individual organizational members.
Table 22. Relevant Literature Related to Fit Between Organizations and Other Entities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oliver (1990) Determinants of Organization to Collaborative Fit</th>
<th>Ahuja at al. Microdynamics of Tie Creation, Maintenance, Dissolution</th>
<th>Dissertation Determinants of Organization to Collaborative Fit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Necessity:</strong> Partner for legal or regulatory purposes</td>
<td>Heterophily: Partner with those different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asymmetry:</strong> Partner to assert power over others</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mission Alignment: Partner with entities with similar goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heterophily</td>
<td>Expectation Alignment: Partner with those when activities and outcomes are similar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homophily: Partner with those similar</td>
<td>Capacity Alignment: Partner when the right staff are available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reciprocity:</strong> Partner to contribute and receive benefits</td>
<td>Heterophily</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homophily: Partner with those similar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brokerage: Partner with entities outside of current partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closure: Partner with entities in current partnerships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency:</strong> Partner to improve their internal input to output ration</td>
<td>Heterophily</td>
<td>Mission Alignment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brokerage</td>
<td>Expectation Alignment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closure</td>
<td>Capacity Alignment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stability:</strong> Partner to manage environmental uncertainty</td>
<td>Heterophily</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homophily</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brokerage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Closure</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legitimacy:</strong> Partner to gain reputational support</td>
<td>Prominence</td>
<td>Access to Resources:</td>
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Before discussing the individual concepts and how they relate, it is important to note that all approaches straddle factors that are influenced by internal needs and external pressures or conditions. Other fit research also leaves the level of the individual and examines the relationship between organizational structure and the environment (Drazin & Van de Vin, 1985) suggesting certain forms may result in a greater chance of survival. Collaborative research is exceedingly
complex in that levels of analysis are related from the individual to the domain, but research attempts to isolate them. Therefore, this chapter will end with a discussion around the need to examine pieces and re-aggregate information in the future.

Speaking to the table however, Oliver’s work describes necessity, a situation in which an organization must partner with others for legal or regulatory purposes. Neither the work from Ahuja et al. nor this dissertation captured the regulatory nature of some collaborative partnerships. This is likely due to some collaboratives, like the ones in this study, being voluntary. Collaborative participation required by law or even by grants is important to include in future research regarding collaborative portfolios. However, it was not present in this data.

Asymmetry occurs when an organization tries to exert power or control over others particularly to access resources. This is somewhat similar to the idea of heterophily, but not entirely. Heterophily occurs when an organization partners with an entity unlike itself to access other resources, knowledge, or skills it does not have. Asymmetry speaks more to partnering with entities different from one’s own with the goal of overpowering them. This type of fit component did not emerge in this study, again likely because the collaborative are voluntary and based on health and wellness in which everyone seeks to improve community health outcomes. Also, response bias may be present in some of the answers in that an architect may not admit to joining a collaborative to overpower other organizations.

Reciprocity contrasts asymmetry in that it describes collaborative relationships between entities that contribute to and receive benefits from that partnership. The idea of reciprocity was overwhelmingly present in the interviews of this study. The concepts of expectation and capacity alignment directly speak to this. Architects spoke about wanting to be clear about a group’s expectations of all parties so all parties could achieve the outcomes desired. Similarly, architects
discussed the need to have staff time available for these purposes and finding the right person to benefit the collaborative and organization. All of the microdynamics discussed by Ahuja et al. could potentially lead to reciprocity if they are chosen with the idea of each party benefitting. But they could also be executed without that in mind, so it is possible to have either. Efficiency drives organizations to join or form collaboratives in an attempt to improve the internal input to output ratio of their organization.

Stability described organizations operating in uncertain environments and seeking ways to make it more predictable or stable. This is similar to partnering with similar or dissimilar partners for stability or partnering within a current network to strengthen relationships or with partners outside the environment to diversify and increase stability. This study found architects discussed access resources, especially information or other people in the community to help maintain internal operations.

Of all the concepts, legitimacy, prominence, and access to social capital were the most similar. Legitimacy drives organizations to partner with others to gain reputational support. Prominence attracts certain partners to others to be respected. And this study identified architects seeking dyadic partnerships with those that held a great deal of knowledge and reputational capital in the community.

As discussed, overlap exists in various veins of research related to the items that may predict the organization to collaborative relationship formation or oppositely discontinuation, although other research does not explicitly address it. Taking the base of some of these commonalities, future research could use these leads to observe the dyadic fit between organizations to collaboratives as perceived by individuals using the psychological-based
This dissertation’s finding relates to individual perceptions of the organization to collaborative fit, which when adjusted changes an organization’s collaborative portfolio incrementally. Interestingly, the collaborative portfolio architect may or may not be the individual participating in a collaborative. Therefore as described in the interviews, architects noted the importance of communication among staff members about collaborative participation. They described how frequent communication, both formal and informal, served as a mechanism of notification to architect that change may be needed in the organization to collaborative fit. The areas that architects identified as resulting in fit changes related to mission alignment, expectation alignment, capacity alignment, and access to resources.

This finding as well as the other major contributions of this dissertation point to the need for understanding components of collaborative domains as well as the domains themselves. Various factors influence change including individual perceptions, interactions among individuals within and between organizations, environmental availability of resources particularly within a collaborative domain but also within an organization’s operational setting. In short, many dynamics influence collaboratives. Scholars are searching for a way to study these influences together (Ahuja et al., 2015; Albrecht, 2019; Nowell et al., in press) and this study hopes to add to the conversation by affirming the presence of various pressures from an individual’s perception to a domain’s differential influence on organizational sectors.

Conclusion

This study sought to examine a gap related to understanding organizations’ collaborative portfolios and how they evolve over time and why. Within that question existed a strong search
to understand who makes decisions about changes in portfolios and what factors influence those decisions. The study brings to light a new ideas related to this topic and confirms the existence of former ideas such as dynamic stasis in a domain, the importance of resources in organizational actions, the presence of a collaborative portfolio architect, as well as factors causing shifts in the fit between organizations and collaboratives and how that influences portfolio change.

Ultimately, the contributions exist in confirming dynamic stasis occurring at the collaborative domain level and adding further understanding of the change as it varies by sector. Additionally, the study brought to light the work of collaborative architects within organizations, but their lack of institutional structure, their variation in management style, and an understanding how their strategic orientation to their internal organizational environment and organization to collaborative relationships result in the portfolio adjustments. Finally, the study emphasized how architects orient themselves to portfolio change differently due to their perceptions of their internal organizational environment and external dyadic relationships with collaboratives. The study expanded conversations happening in the literature as well as calling for clarification or specification in other bodies of literature. Much work remains in understanding collaboratives and the author of this dissertation aims to keep contributing and exploring these dynamics in the future.
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Appendix A: Executive Director/Manager Interview Protocol Tool

Background Questions
To begin I just want to get a little more information on you and your role within your organization.

1. What is your job title in your organization?
2. How long have you been with your organization?
3. And how long have you held your current position?
4. How long have you worked in Pitt County in the field of health or wellness?
5. What role(s) do you fill within the organization? What are you major responsibilities as ________?

Organizational Questions
6. I show the mission of your organizations is ________. We want to talk with organizations where health is a primary goal of your organization. Do you have any other major goals within your mission?
7. What is the size of your organization (staff)?
8. How old is your organization?

Great thank you.

Collaborative Portfolio Questions
This next set of questions relates to the health-based collaboratives that your organization participates in or have staff members who are active members in. One of the questions I’m interested in learning about is where decisions get made to join a collaborative or to cease or reduce involvement in a collaborative. So, during this section of questions, I will be asking you more general questions and then referencing your organization’s collaborative portfolio from 2012 and 2017, which I sent you in an email prior to our discussion and asking more specific questions.

9. In general, can you tell me how decisions to join, participate or withdrawing from a collaborative get made in this organization?

PROBE: Do you make those decisions at your level and delegate down or do they tend to get made at a lower level?

PROBE: The academic literature suggests that there is often an architect or chess master within an organization that drives decisions regarding an organization’s members and their involvement in collaboratives. But we know there are many different models. In your experience, do you see this architect idea at work? Or does it look differently in your organization?

(what drives your decision-making)

PROBE: Did you receive any instruction or direction from a higher level boss to encourage or manage
PROBE: Would you describe the changes in your organization’s participation in collaboratives over the past 5 years as evolving in a more organic fashion or the result of a more centralized planning process? Please describe

10. If a new health collaborative contacted you and said, we’d really like for someone from your organization to be involved in our effort, what types of information would you want to know before taking further actions?

PROBE: Would participation in other collaboratives influence your decision to dedicate organizational capacity to this collaborative?
PROBE: Would you considered dedicating a member of your staff or yourself towards the effort?
PROBE: If yes, how would you approach asking for or assigning participation in the collaborative?

11. Does the current participation of your organization in health-related collaboratives look accurate? (reference email and collaborative portfolio for their organization in 2012 and 2017)

ARCHITECT CHECK
If it appears the person you are speaking with is not an architect, go through these questions at this time. If they appear to be the architect or in charge of management of decisions around collaboration, continue on and skip this section.

AC1. So, it seems like at your level, you’re not delegating people to join or participate in collaboratives or making decisions around collaborative participation. Does that sound right?

AC2a. (IF individual participation) Ok great, then if it’s alright, I’d like to ask you a few more questions about your own participation in health-related collaboratives (SHIFT TO INDIVIDUAL PROTOCOL)

AC2b. (IF NO individual participation) (add padding around different models) I plan to reach out to some of your colleagues to learn more about their decisions to participate. We have records of individuals that participate from your organization, but I’d also like your input if you have any. I’d love to be able to talk with your staff about their experience with participating in Do you know of any colleagues that participate in health-related collaboratives that would be a good fit to chat with about their participation?

12. We’ve been talking more generally and now I’d like to get a better idea of specific collaborative work your organization participates in. Specifically, I’d like to go through the portfolio and learn a bit more about the organizations participation in each collaborative. (go down the list of collaboratives in 2012 and 2017 and ask each below – follow leads when they present themselves)
13. Time Component: In general, is there a level of time or staff level your organization aims to dedicate to these various collaboratives?

PROBE: Do you prioritize participation in some collaboratives over others? If yes, what factors influence those choices?

JOIN: When the organizations joined the collaboratives in 2012 or any new as of 2017, do you remember some of the thoughts or impetus behind joining?

PROBE: How involved are you in deciding whether to dedicate staff resources toward a given collaborative group?

PROBE: Who decides which staff members will participate?

PROBE: Do you talk to staff members that participate in collaboratives about their collaboration? And if yes, what does that look like in terms of content and frequency?

STAY: Staff members from your organization have been involved in __________collaborative since 2012.

PROBE: What are some of the reasons you think the organizations has kept folks in this/these collaboratives?
PROBE: Do you all discuss remaining in that group? If yes, how often?
PROBE: Is there any circumstance that would cause your organization to stop participating in this/these collaboratives?

LEAVE: Staff members from your organization were involved in __________collaborative in 2012 but no longer participate. Can you tell me a little bit about how that happened?

PROBE: Was there a discussion or a reason you or other staff members decided it was time to leave the collaborative?
PROBE: Who all was involved in the decision to leave or stop collaborating?

14. Do you feel that there is a threshold or limit to your organization’s capacity to participate in collaboratives?

PROBE: What would that be? How would you know if you encountered it?
PROBE: What signs would you look for to suggest the need to re-evaluate your organizations portfolio of collaborative activities?

15. Is there anything else that influences your organization’s decisions regarding participation in health-related collaboratives we haven’t talked about? Or anything else you think is relevant to this conversation?
Thank you so much for your time and sharing this information. It’s extremely helpful to me. I will follow-up when the study is complete to share the results.
Appendix B: Individual Interview Protocol Tool

Background Questions
To begin I just want to get a little more information on you and your role within your organization.

1. What is your job title in your organization?
2. How long have you been with your organization?
3. And how long have you held your current position?
4. How long have you worked in Pitt County in the field of health or wellness?
5. What role(s) do you fill within the organization? What are you major responsibilities as ________?

Organizational Questions
6. I show the mission of your organizations is ________. We want to talk with organizations where health is a primary goal of your organization. Do you have any other major goals within your mission?
7. What is the size of your organization (staff)?
8. How old is your organization?

Great thank you.

Collaborative Portfolio Questions
This next set of questions relates to the health-based collaboratives that your organization participates in or have staff members who are active members in. One of the questions I’m interested in learning about is where decisions get made to join a collaborative or to cease or reduce involvement in a collaborative. So, during this section of questions, I will be asking you more general questions and then referencing your organization’s collaborative portfolio from 2012 and 2017, which I sent you in an email prior to our discussion and asking more specific questions.

9. In general, can you tell me how you make decisions to join, participate or withdrawing from a collaborative?

    PROBE: Does your affiliation with your organization influence your decisions regarding participation in various collaboratives? If yes, how so?

    PROBE: Do you and other staff members talk about participating in collaboratives?

    PROBE: Do you and other professional colleagues talk about participating in collaborative?
    (what drives your decision-making)

    PROBE: Did you receive any instruction or direction from a higher level boss to encourage or manage
PROBE: Would you describe the changes in your organization’s participation in collaboratives over the past 5 years as evolving in a more organic fashion or the result of a more centralized planning process? Please describe

10. If a new health collaborative contacted you and said, we’d really like for you to be involved in our effort, what types of information would you want to know before taking further actions?
    PROBE: Would participation in other collaboratives influence your decision to join?
    PROBE: Would you discuss your decision to join with any of your colleagues or boss?

11. Does this current participation portfolio for you in health-related collaboratives look right?

12. Specifically, I’d like to go through the portfolio and learn a bit more about your participation in each collaborative. (go down the list of collaboratives in 2012 and 2017)

    JOIN: When you joined these collaboratives in 2012 or any new as of 2017, do you remember some of the thoughts or impetus behind joining?
        PROBE: Did someone invite you to participate? Did you seek participation?
        PROBE: Was your organizational affiliation influential in why someone sought you or you sought them?
        PROBE: Did you inform anyone at your organization about your participation in the collaborative?

    STAY: You have been involved in __________collaborative since 2012. What factors influence your decision to stay?
        PROBE: Have you ever considered leaving? Why?
        PROBE: Is there any reason you would leave a given collaborative?

    LEAVE: You were involved in___________collaborative in 2012 but no longer participate. Can you tell me a little bit about how that happened?
        PROBE: Was there a discussion or a reason you decided it was time to leave the collaborative?

13. Do you feel that there is a threshold or limit to your capacity to participate in collaboratives?
    PROBE: What would that be? How would you know if you encountered it?
    PROBE: What signs would you look for to suggest the need to re-evaluate your organizations portfolio of collaborative activities?
14. Is there anything else that influences your decisions regarding your participation in health-related collaboratives we haven’t talked about? Or anything else you think is relevant to this conversation?

Thank you so much for your time and sharing this information. It’s extremely helpful to me. I will follow-up when the study is complete to share the results.