Collaborative Governance in New Zealand: Important Choices Ahead

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Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy

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Educated in New Zealand and England, Sir Ian held Professorships at Cornell University and the University of California, and was Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University of Wellington for three years. For many years, Sir Ian was director of the Max Planck Institute for Aeronomy in Germany, where he was involved in the planning of several space missions, including those of the Voyager planetary explorers, the Giotto space probe and the Ulysses galaxy explorer.

Sir Ian was recognised as one of the great thinkers and communicators in the world of space science, and was a highly respected and influential administrator. A recipient of numerous science awards, he was knighted and named New Zealander of the Year in 1995.

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- To reinforce United States/New Zealand links by enabling fellows of high intellectual ability and leadership potential to gain experience and build contacts internationally.
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- To build a network of policy experts on both sides of the Pacific that will facilitate international policy exchange and collaboration beyond the fellowship experience.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The human world is fragmented. Boundaries divide regions, jurisdictions, organisations, and land owners. Yet public policy problems do not conform to these tidy lines. Responding to today's challenges including climate change, water pollution, disaster response, health and wellness, poverty, housing, food safety, and sustainable development requires boundary-spanning action.

This report concerns collaborative governance *from a public management perspective.* The public management literature generally divides collaboration into three separate, yet overlapping categories: Interorganisational, public participation, and groups of individuals (which includes workplace teams). This report examines collaboration between and among organisations in New Zealand that may include the public.

Catalysts to collaboration in New Zealand were found to be:

- The need to achieve results
- Directives from the top
- Systems perspectives and systems incentives
- Organisation culture and organisation incentives
- People and their relationships
- Collaboration "under the radar"
- Cultural diversity
- Fair, inclusive and creative public processes.

Challenges to, or inhibitors of, collaboration in New Zealand were found to be:

- An unfinished agenda from the New Public Management reforms of the 1980s and 1990s
- A bureaucratic culture in which individuals are positively reinforced for working in silos
- Different understandings of the word "collaboration" and what it means to collaborate
- Difficulties delivering the collaboration message to the bureaucracy
- Public servants with enormous responsibilities with little room to try something new
- Tensions between central and local governments
- Tensions between central government and non-governmental organisations
- Fear of loss of power, loss of credibility, loss of control, suboptimal outcomes, loss of resources, and loss of authority
- A risk-averse culture
- Lack of trust
- Lack of funding or slack in the system
- People, personalities and relationships
- The media
- Lack of knowledge concerning the skillset of the collaborative manager.

Conditions that hinder culture change toward an environment in which collaboration is seriously considered as a management and leadership strategy in New Zealand include the stifling of grassroots innovation; programmes that are stripped down to their basics with managers "playing tennis at the net" all day without time to get off the court and think about new ways of serving the public; lack of shared understanding concerning the meaning of the words collaboration, collaborate, collaborative and co-production; a culture where risk is discouraged and public servants fear deviating from standard operating procedure; and the fact that prime movers of collaborative ideas leave when room to manoeuvre closes down.

Ways to influence organisation culture include: Making clear what will be monitored and controlled, reacting appropriately to critical incidents and organisational crises, practising deliberate role modelling and coaching, establishing clear criteria for rewards and punishments, coordinating organisational designs and cultural messages, coordinating organisational systems and procedures with cultural messages, designing physical space to communicate organisation culture, employing stories about events and people, developing formal statements of organisation's philosophy, approaching transformation as comprehensive organisation change, coordinating cultural leadership and change with strategic planning, coordinating cultural change with technology, structure, and design; and paying attention to the informal organisation.

In addition to changing organisation culture, other suggestions include:

- Carefully defining the terms surrounding collaboration to promote mutual understanding and common expectations;

- Expanding the analysis that leads up to the decision as to collaborate or not, to include factors such as context, purpose or mission of the collaboration, member selection and capacity building, motivation and commitment of the collaborators, structure and governance of the collaboration, power in collaborations, accountability, communication, perceived legitimacy, trust, and information technology.

- Training managers in new ways of leading in a shared power world including jointly crafting vision, helping others frame a collective definition, sharing decisions and values, communicating across diverse groups with competing interests, working across boundaries, tolerating ambiguity and complexity, facilitating and coordinating shared action, and knowing when to let other collaborators lead.

- Developing the collaborative mind set of employees by training them in the skillset of the collaborative manager including: collaborative problem solving, conflict management; facilitation; negotiation; strategy and vision; and consciously using individual collaborative attributes such as being open-minded, patient, diplomatic, respectful and empathetic

There is a compelling case that the time is right to commit to organisation culture change as well as the training of New Zealand public servants to enable collaboration when appropriate. The world is growing more complex. Collaboration across boundaries is needed to better serve New Zealanders now and in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

When I arrived in New Zealand in early February, 2014, I started reading the local Wellington newspaper, the *Dominion Post*, every day to learn more about the issues that were most important to New Zealanders. At the end of my first month in the country an article written by former Prime Minister, Sir Geoffrey Palmer, was published with the title, "Why New Zealand's Public Service Needs Fixing".[1] Palmer offered fourteen reasons why a royal commission is needed to examine the New Zealand public service. Those most salient to this report include:

> The silo effect between departments produces an absence of co-ordination, and the need for more co-operation has been a serious problem.

> The problems confronting New Zealand in the future will be harder to solve than they have been in the past. The thinking has to go beyond the three-year election cycle, in which serious issues are brushed under the carpet. Think climate change and the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Two days later a rejoinder was printed, authored by State Services Minister Jonathan Coleman, titled "Royal Commission Not Necessary."[2] Coleman offered several reasons why "a royal commission, as Sir Geoffrey recommends, wouldn't necessarily fix anything." His points most salient to this report include:

> [New] legislation fosters a public service where agencies can work together to provide high-quality results, delivering value for money.

> Chief executives are obligated to act in a collective manner to achieve goals. Sir Geoffrey's complaint of siloed departments has been addressed.

> The public service is more engaged with communities to achieve results.

I knew it was going to be an interesting seven months and it has been. Collaboration is both inherently political and a management and leadership strategy. It is an issue being raised from the grassroots all the way to the ministerial level. This report focuses on the catalysts and inhibitors of collaboration in New Zealand. Insights and lessons learned are offered with the most salient being a need to incentivise collaboration within the New Zealand bureaucracy.

Scope and Limits of This Report

This report concerns collaborative governance *from a public management perspective.* I fully acknowledge that there are many definitions of collaborative governance and many other lenses through which to examine this fascinating topic.

My sources of data include more than 100 interviews, participant observation at two seminars with 66 local government officials, observations from attending public meetings, archival data and government documents. This report was peer reviewed by sixteen people: Three former chief executives from New Zealand central government, three VUW professors, seven current public servants, and three PhD students. Changes to previous drafts were made in response to their very helpful feedback. Any

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[1] Palmer, The Dominion Post, 25 February 2014, p. A9
[2] Coleman, The Dominion Post, 27 February 2014, p. A9

errors that remain are mine. Feedback is warmly welcome: Please contact me at oleary@ku.edu.

1 WHAT IS COLLABORATION AND WHY IS IT SO HARD TO DO?

Today the term "collaboration" is widely used in all sectors around the world – public, private, and non-profit. For the purposes of this report, I define collaboration as the process of facilitating and operating in multi-organisational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by single organisations[3] and add that collaboration can include the public.

> *"Collaboration is the process of facilitating and operating in multi-organisational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by single organisations. Collaboration can include the public."*

For the purposes of this report, I use the following definition of governance:

> Governance refers to the institutions and resources used to achieve direction and coordination between individuals (and organizations) ... to advance joint objectives.[4,5]

The public management literature generally differentiates among cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and service integration. (See Box 1.) Collaboration from this perspective is best examined as a dynamic or emergent process rather than a static condition. In Selden, Sowa, and Sandfort's[6] dimensional illustration of a collaborative continuum, the right-hand side of the continuum describes the highest level of service integration and the least autonomous relationships, while the left side describes relationships where the joint action is less central to organisational mission.[7]

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[3] Agranoff and McGuire (2003)

[4] Imperial, Ospina, Johnston, O'Leary, Williams, Johnson, and Thomsen (forthcoming).

[5] Governance involves more than the configuration of governmental and non-governmental organisations. Governance includes enabling statutes, organisational and financial resources, programmatic structures, and administrative rules and routines. It is shaped by formal and informal rules and social norms that create the structures used to govern relationships between organisations.

[6] Selden, Sowa and Sandfort (2002)

[7] Not all management scholars agree with this continuum. Feiock (2009) and Feiock and Scholz (2010), examining these concepts through the lenses of decision making and game theory literatures, argue that these are not points on a single scale, and that problems of coordination and cooperation are fundamentally different forms of collaboration in terms of the risks faced by potential collaborators.
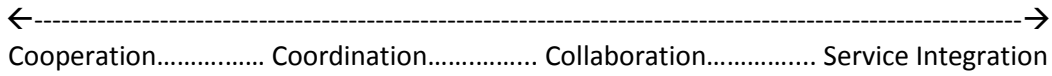
Further, the public management literature generally divides collaboration into three separate, yet overlapping categories: Interorganisational, public participation, and groups of individuals (which includes workplace teams). See Box 2.

Box 2

Three Types of Collaboration Most Often Mentioned in Literature
(From a review of over 200 articles)

Interorganisational

Public Participation

Group of Individuals
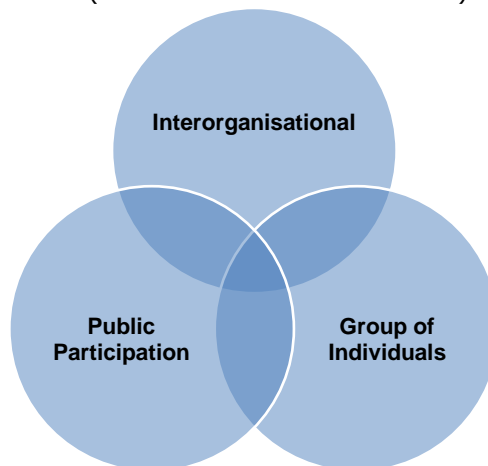
The focus of this report is collaborative governance in New Zealand *from a public management perspective*. As a management consultant, author of public management books and articles on collaboration, and a professor of public management, it has been a delight to research and write about current collaborative efforts, challenges and opportunity in a country that takes good governance seriously. This is an exciting time as many in central, regional, and local governments in New Zealand seek more enduring solutions to pressing policy problems through collaborative approaches.

Reasons for Collaboration

New Zealand is not alone in its pursuit of collaborative solutions: this is a global phenomenon.[8,9,10,11] Several practical and theoretical reasons account for the increase in collaboration as a management and leadership strategy both in the literature and in practice. First, on the practical side, most major challenges are larger than one organisation, requiring new approaches to addressing public issues. Think of any significant public policy challenge: housing, poverty, the economy, education, pollution, to name a few. In order to address any one of these challenges effectively, collaboration across boundaries is needed.

Second, the desire to improve the effectiveness and performance of programmes is encouraging public leaders to identify new ways of providing services. Collaboration can result in innovative approaches to service delivery, including multi-sector partnerships.[12,13,14] Third, technology is helping public organisations and personnel share information in a way that is integrative and interoperable, with the outcome being a greater emphasis on collaboration.[15] Finally, citizens are seeking additional avenues for engaging in governance, which can result in new and different forms of collaborative problem-solving and decision-making.[16]

As New Zealand is a country famous for making sweeping policy and management changes based on theory (largely economic)[17], it makes sense to review the theoretical reasons why public organisations might collaborate. I do so here, despite the fact that most scholars of interorganisational collaboration agree that organisations prefer autonomy to dependence.[18]

Resource dependency is the most well developed theory of interorganisational partnership. The basic assumption of resource dependency theory is that individual organisations do not have all the resources they need to achieve their goals, and thus, must acquire resources, such as money, people, support services, technological knowledge, and other inputs, in order to survive.[19] That is, organisations must rely on a variety of inputs from a collection of interacting organisations, groups, and persons in the external environment to do their jobs and do them well. Although resource exchange theory is based on the notion of dependency,[20] even relatively independent organisations may collaborate to take advantage of available resources.[21] Organisations may actively seek out funds within existing network structures, or seek to initiate collaboration to tap into funding sources.

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[8] See O'Flynn, Blackman, and Halligan (2013)
[9] See Torfing and Triantafillou (2011)
[10] See O'Leary and Bingham (2009)
[11] See Bingham and O'Leary (2008)
[12] Selden, Sowa and Sandfort (2006)
[13] Goldsmith & Kettl, 2009
[14] Andrews and Entwistle (2010)
[15] Pardo, Gil-Garcia, & Luna-Reyes (2010)
[16] Nabatchi, Gastil, Weiksner, and Leighninger (2012)
[17] Boston (2012)
[18] Bryson, Crosby, & Stone (2006)
[19] Pfeffer & Salancik (1978)
[20] Ostrom (1990)
[21] Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012)

A second reason found in theory as to why organisation leaders choose to collaborate is *common purpose*. Organisations form linkages in order to achieve similar, compatible, or congruous goals.[22] Issues that were previously thought of as single-agency issues are now increasingly understood to have broad linkages and to be interconnected with other issues.[23] Accordingly, many groups or organisations have – or should have – some partial responsibility to address public challenges[24] and are using collaboration to do so.

Related to common purpose is the notion of *shared beliefs*. A similarity in values and attitudes make the formation of interorganisational linkages more probable[25,26] and make these linkages more stable over time.[27] A common belief system, including norms, values, perceptions, and worldviews, provides the principal 'glue' to hold together networks of actors.[28,29]

> *"Networks are structures of interdependence, involving multiple nodes – typically agencies and organisations – with multiple linkages."*

In addition to shared beliefs, organisations also sometimes pursue their *political interests* through collaborative arrangements. Through participation in a policy network, for example, organisations may promote the views or desires of their members or constituency; gain access to political officials or decision processes, and cultivate political alliances; gain political legitimacy or authority; and promote organisational policies or programmes.[30,31]

Catalytic actors, or leadership both within the organisation and by network leaders or coordinators, can provide other important incentives for the formation of collaborative linkages.[32] Thus, individuals acting as leaders or catalysts may provide incentives for organisations to collaborate. Sometimes this takes the form of an individual whose sense of what it means to be a highly professional actor includes the imperative to collaborate.[33] Other times, the catalytic actor may be an individual who naturally engages in collaboration throughout his or her career.[34] Catalytic actors may come from any level of an organisation and include thought leaders.

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[22] Gray (1989)
[23] O'Leary, Gerard and Bingham (2006)
[24] Crosby and Bryson (2005)
[25] Aldrich (1979)
[26] Alter & Hage (1993)
[27] Van de Ven et al (1975)
[28] Fleishman (2009)
[29] Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993)
[30] Heclo (1978)
[31] Sowa (2009)
[32] Bardach (1998)
[33] McGuire (2009)
[34] Hicklin, O'Toole, Meier and Robinson (2009)

In sum, there are many drivers of collaboration. But collaboration is not always wise, as is discussed in this report. Evaluating when and where to collaborate, and strategically choosing collaboration to enhance outcomes and better serve the public, has become just as important as collaborative processes themselves.

Think da Vinci

The phrase "lateral thinking" is used to describe creativity that stems from taking knowledge from one substantive context or discipline and applying it to an entirely different one. One well known example of a lateral thinker was Leonardo da Vinci, whose genius stemmed from moving fluidly from art to science, engineering, mathematics, medicine, architecture, and beyond. He found universal rules of nature manifest in widely varying contexts. He dissected the human arm and a bird's wing, and then tried to engineer a machine to enable people to fly. In this way, da Vinci applied what he learned from human physiology and natural science to engineering.

"Think da Vinci" is an important idea for collaboration because in an ideal world, the primary reason to collaborate is if something can be created that would not have been created otherwise. Huxham (1993) explains:

> Collaborative advantage will be achieved when something unusually creative is produced – perhaps an objective is met – that no organization could have produced on its own and when each organization, through the collaboration, is able to achieve its own objectives better than it could alone. In some cases, it should also be possible to achieve some higher-level … objectives for society as a whole rather than just for the participating organizations.[35]

The Land and Water Forum is considered by most as a shining example of collaboration in New Zealand. See Box 3.

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[35] Huxham (1993) p. 603

Challenges in Collaborative Endeavours

All collaborative networks are not created equal. Some are sophisticated and well run; others are awkward and poorly run; most are somewhere in-between. In addition, motivation to collaborate varies. Some leaders choose to collaborate to increase performance or to better serve the public. Others may collaborate in order to be free-riders and obtain benefits without commensurate effort.

For these and other reasons, collaboration is not always wise, and those I spoke with in New Zealand were keenly aware of this. In fact, it could negatively impact the primary mission of one's organisation. Tied in with this is the possibility that collaboration may lead to conflict. Managing that conflict can be a formidable challenge.

Networks by definition are complex conglomerations of diverse organisations and individuals. The characteristics that add to the complexity of managing and leading in collaboration with others are numerous:

There are multiple members. Collaborative networks typically involve many individuals and organisations. Each member brings their own interests that must be met. If interests are not met, members may leave the collaborative agreement.

Network members bring both different and common missions. There must be some commonality of purpose to provide incentive for collaborating. Each organisation also

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[36] Eppel (2013) p. 14

has its own unique mission that that must be followed. These can at times clash with the mission of the network.

Network organisations each have a different organisation culture. Culture is to the organisation what character is to the individual. Just as each individual is unique, so is each organisation culture. Diversity among collaborating organisations' cultures may present challenges within the network itself.

Network organisations have different methods of operation. Collaborating organisations will differ in degrees of hierarchy as well as forms of management control. These and other differences may affect what a network can and cannot accomplish and the speed at which it is accomplished.

Network members have different stakeholder groups and different funders. In order to satisfy their diverse constituencies, network members embrace different perspectives on appropriate direction and activities. Some of these preferences will overlap, some will not.

Network members have different degrees of power. Not all members of networks have equal standing. Despite network rules that may give an equal vote to each member, some are typically more powerful than others. For example, in emergency management networks, central government organisations are often the beneficiaries of legislation that allows them to pre-empt local and regional actions, as has been the case with the post-earthquake actions in Christchurch. Differences in power can pose immense challenges to collaborative entities.

There are often multiple issues. Networks typically are formed to address complex problems that are not easily solved by one organisation. Complex problems bring with them multiple issues and sub-issues. Multiple issues and sub-issues typically yield multiple challenges.

There are multiple forums for decision-making. Public decisions may be made by networks. At the same time, the same public issue may be debated and dealt with in Parliament, in the courts, or in the offices of career public servants. Whether and how a decision is made by a network can be a challenge.

Networks are both interorganisational and interpersonal. The networks I studied for this report are spider-webs of organisations. But each organisation typically is represented in the network by one or more representatives of that organisation. Just as networked organisations may clash, so too may networked individuals.

There are a variety of governance structures available to networks. How the network chooses to govern itself, lead members, build agreement, and create conventions for dialogue and deliberative processes all are exceedingly important and demanding for networks. Just the design of governance rules for the network can be an exceedingly complex procedure.

Networks may encounter conflict with the public. Increasingly, collaborative public management networks are engaging citizens through a variety of means. While this is a positive development, because networks often address issues of concern to a diverse public with multiple interests, conflict may emerge and needs to be managed.

The Management Paradox – Balancing Autonomy and Interdependence

There are paradoxes involved in being a collaborative leader or manager. As managers work both within their own organisations and within networks, they are

challenged in ways very different from traditional management. These challenges demand different skill sets from managers. Here are some of the paradoxes of being a collaborative manager.[37] While I focus on networks, these challenges pertain also to collaborations outside of networks.

Collaborative managers must work both with autonomy and interdependence. As a leader of a single programme or organisation, managers often work with independence, setting the rules and calling the shots. As a member of a collaborative network, a manager is typically now one of many managers with numerous intertwining interests that must be met.

Collaborative managers and their networks have both common and diverse goals. Each member of a network has goals that typically are unique to that member's organisation or programme. At the same time, as members of a network, managers typically share common goals.

Collaborative managers must work both with a fewer number and a greater variety of groups which are increasingly more diverse. When organisations combine to form a collaborative network, they become one body – hence the lesser number. Yet within this one body typically is a great variety of organisations with different cultures, missions, and ways of operating – hence the greater diversity.

Collaborative managers need to be both participative and authoritative. Behaviour within a network is typically participative as the members make decisions concerning the direction of the group. Yet as a manager of a single programme or organisation, a manager is expected at times to take command and call the shots as he or she sees them.

Collaborative managers need to see the forest and the trees. A manager of a single programme or organisation needs to master the details and fine points of what they do on a daily basis. At the same time, as a member of a network, that same manager needs to think holistically and laterally. Some call this systems thinking, examining how the sum of the parts work together.

Collaborative managers need to balance advocacy and inquiry. Every manager has an obligation to promote, support, and act in favour of his or her organisation. Yet because of the intertwining interests, managers need to probe and question to gather the information for decisions necessary to act in the best interests of the network.

These paradoxes pose fundamental challenges to working collaboratively both within and outside of networks. It is easy to understand, therefore, why collaboration is so challenging. In the following sections I move from the general to the specific, examining the catalysts to collaboration in New Zealand, as well as the challenges to collaboration in New Zealand. I close with lessons learned and some ideas for the future.

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[37] Connelly, Zhang, and Faerman (2008)

2   CATALYSTS TO COLLABORATION IN NEW ZEALAND: WHAT MAKES COLLABORATION WORK?

I asked one hundred New Zealanders: Given the many challenges to collaboration, what are the catalysts to collaboration in New Zealand? What makes collaboration work? Their ideas fell into eight major categories: 1) The need to achieve results, 2) Directives from the top, 3) Systems perspectives and systems incentives, 4) Organisation culture and organisation incentives, 5) People and their relationships, 6) Collaboration under the radar, 7) Cultural diversity, and 8) Fair, inclusive and creative processes. Each is discussed in this chapter.

The Need to Achieve Results

Most New Zealanders I interviewed said that the need to achieve results with scarce resources and develop integrative solutions to complex issues motivates collaboration. Many in central government mentioned the speech that Deputy Prime Minister Bill English made to the Institute of Public Administration New Zealand (IPANZ) where he said, in part:

> Another [popular] term has been collaboration. Well, collaboration is a process not a result, and one of its features has been goodwill: that's great. But collaboration neither invokes nor invites accountability, and that's not great. Too often, collaboration means even larger and longer meetings.

> However, when we start considering collective impact, it's focused on what we can together actually achieve. It's not focussed on the fact that we've found out that there's another department that does what we thought we were doing and so we're going to work with them.

> The public don't really care about that. They care about results. They assume that we spend our time thinking about achieving results for them, not about designing processes for ourselves.[38]

This sentiment was reflected in many interviews. "We need to show collaborative impact and results" most in central government told me. "We must have a results focus and be able to demonstrate outcomes."

The clearest avenue toward this goal is to bring together organisations with similar priorities where there is a mutual need. When collaborating with the public, a South Island elected official emphasized that there must be agreement that there is a clear problem. Tied in with this there must be the will and commitment to find a solution.

New Zealand public servants, generally, see collaboration as an opportunity to leverage resources, identify duplication, and coordinate efforts. The nature of the public problems they face; i.e. complex, cross-organisational, and cross-sectoral; also prompts a collaborative approach. Further, those I interviewed described instances where all parties achieve results as powerful catalysts.

Thoroughly analysing the problem and opportunity for collaboration, identifying best practices from other countries, and developing a vision and strategy about future goals were touted as a way to understand the need to collaborate.

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[38] English, IPANZ Speech, 21 February 2013

A strong sense of urgency, current crisis, disaster, or threat from external forces catalyses collaboration in New Zealand. In the Christchurch earthquake clean up, for example, collaborators from central, regional and local governments focused on what they did NOT want in the future (environmental problems from the unwise disposal of earthquake debris) as one catalyst for collaborative action.

Others described personal pressures, including time pressure to complete tasks and increasing workloads, as motivating collaboration. While past success with collaboration was a catalyst for some, others pointed to failure with other approaches as motivating a willingness to try collaboration. One thought leader in the field of education described the fact that some New Zealand schools are "stretched to the limits" as a catalyst for collaboration.

Directives from the Top

New Zealanders described legislation and directives from elected and appointed leaders as catalysts to collaboration. "There must be strong demand from the top," said a central government official. Inferred directives, including organisational culture (agency core values) and personal values, were again discussed, but this time as motivational catalysts rather than reasons for collaboration.

Systems Perspectives and Systems Incentives

Many New Zealanders I interviewed talked about the importance of a systems view. One healthcare professional gave the example of having an integrated view from patients/customers perspective. "It is not just about what you think you control," he said, "but about the whole system." The idea of being client-centred and building a collaborative system that best meets the need of the client was repeatedly mentioned. See Box 4 that profiles collaboration in the Canterbury health system.

Box 4

Example of Collaborative Governance in New Zealand

The Quest for Integrated Health and Social Care in Canterbury

Key findings from a study by the Kings Fund[39]:

The District Health Board for Canterbury is transforming from gridlock to providing integrated care – care that crosses the boundaries between primary, community, hospital and social care.

The stimulus for change in Canterbury was a health system that was under pressure and beginning to look unsustainable.

Canterbury adds to the small stock of examples of organisations and systems that have made the transition from fragmented care towards integrated care with a degree of measurable success.

Creating a new system takes time – Canterbury has been working to create 'one system, one budget' for at least six years and the journey is far from complete.

It takes many people to transform a system. A small number of leaders were at the heart of Canterbury's transformation, but this leadership rapidly became collective, shared and distributed.

Source: http://www.cdhb.health.nz/What-We-Do/Projects-Initiatives/kings-fund/Pages/default.aspx

But one top-level executive cautioned that "Willingness to collaborate is not enough, purpose is not enough, mutual need is not enough. We need INCENTIVES, including cross-sector funding and accountability across agencies. We need to move from "we should collaborate" to "we must, because we will be jointly held accountable."

A different perspective was offered by three high-ranking SSC officials, who separately talked about the need for individual mental models of stewardship across the system and sustainability. "We need public servant leaders committed to the effective and efficient use of social, human, and economic resources," one told me. "People who can work in the dual worlds of delivering 'government of the day' priorities while simultaneously keeping an eye to the future."

Another put it this way:

> Yes, with 100% certainty we need to collaborate. But the idea that there will be large sums of money to 'incentivize' collaboration is naïve. We need individuals with high public service motivation who will willingly 'take one for the team', collaborating when there may not be an immediate payoff for them or for their organization. The reality is that there will be no new money for collaboration. The incentive must come from a strong desire to serve the people of New Zealand.

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[39] Timmins and Ham (2014)

Organisation Culture and Organisation Incentives

Another category of catalysts to collaboration mentioned in interviews concerned organisations. The New Zealanders I talked with repeatedly mentioned the need for an organisation culture that supports discussions about "other" ways of accomplishing the business of government and allows experimentation, risk, and learning. How might this be done? Here are some suggestions from those I interviewed:

- Ask: What could it look like? How can we change the status quo?
- Tell stories about individuals who made a difference by acting collaboratively: people who made change happen. Then ask: What can you do?
- Start with the quick wins so people can see that collaboration can work and tell stories about what makes this work.
- "Look out for those who see collaborative advantage and make sure they are promoted," said a high-ranking central government official.
- Seek those who have a positive appetite for risk.
- One initiator of collaborative activity gave his staff cards that said, "You have permission to fail."

Also mentioned was the idea that an agency's governance structure can be a catalyst for collaboration if organisation design, distributed governance, and work dispersal are conducive to collaborative efforts. The funding of pilot projects or experimental collaborations also is key. Another aspect of collaborative-friendly governance mentioned by New Zealanders was the dissemination of research findings and other information about government work that are essential building blocks of a collaborative effort. Again, some New Zealand collaborators told me that incentives, particularly rewards, for those participating in collaborative endeavours are crucial.

People and Their Relationships

"The key to effective collaboration is relationships, and New Zealanders do relationships well," a consultant who worked in central government for two decades told me. Most who talked about relationships focused on catalytic leaders – both positional leaders and thought leaders – and on the collaborators themselves.

Leadership is viewed as a strong catalyst for collaboration among the New Zealanders I surveyed. Leadership is defined as making things happen.[40] This may be a senior leader who champions or mandates collaboration, a new dynamic leader with a vision, an enthusiastic local champion, or a political leader who is on board. It may be a lower-level employee who can articulate a different vision and convince others that there are collaborative alternatives. These people must "have an appetite" to push the system because in a siloed bureaucracy, this could be a "career-limiting move."

Individual collaborative partners may also be catalysts. Some pointed to partners with shared missions who seek mutually beneficial solutions as a positive force for collaboration.

The attitude and attributes of individual collaborators, described as strong public service motivation, an open mind, willingness, belief that joint advantage can be

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[40] Huxham and Vangen (2000)

obtained by collaborating, and "young thinking" (even though collaborators can be found in every age group) was seen as motivational. See Box 5 for the example of the Student Volunteer Army.

For some, past success, positive experiences, trust, and past relationships with players contributed to the desire to collaborate. Still others point to a personal desire to learn from others and expand their networks as catalysts. One local government thought leader put it this way: "Collaboration is driven by people, people who come together in a particular time, a particular place, and who have a particular vision." One director of a prestigious foundation said, "I give grants to people who I know will collaborate, not organisations. These catalytic actors might leave [their organisations], but they will create [good things] across New Zealand for many years."

Contrasted to the view of the need for top-level support are those who argue that it is "bottom up culture" that will catalyse and sustain collaboration. This is a culture where there managers protect their staff and "open up space" for them to collaborate. These are people with "passion, big-picture thinkers, who know the system" who are not afraid to empower those at the bottom or in the middle.[41]

A high-level central government public servant described such people as having "sheer doggedness, amazing resilience." Others used the word "tenacity" repeatedly. In Dunedin, a town with a large Scottish population, "the Scottish way" of not giving up was repeatedly mentioned as a way of furthering collaboration.

Friendships were often mentioned by those outside of central government, especially those working at the local level. "Collaboration requires a lot of push and pull" said one local government public servant. "People need to be able to disagree and carry on. But anything is possible if relationships are there."

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[41] Eppel, Gill, Lips and Ryan (2013)

Box 5

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Example of Collaborative Governance in New Zealand

The Student Volunteer Army

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On 4 September 2010, Christchurch was struck with a 7.1 magnitude earthquake. The Student Volunteer Army was created via a Facebook page and served as a platform to coordinate volunteers. It is an example of both collaboration among a group of individuals, as well as interorganisational collaboration as the students worked with CERA, the city of Christchurch, emergency medical workers, Civil Defence, and other organizations. More than 2,500 students cleared over 65,000 tons of liquefaction.

Far greater damage was sustained on 22 February 2011, where the 6.3 earthquake took place. One hundred and eight-five people were killed, homes and businesses were destroyed and thousands faced emotional hardships. The Student Volunteer Army used "everyday technology" such as texts, email, and Twitter to bring together thousands of volunteers within a three week period.

The cleanup surrounding the second earthquake catalysed the Student Volunteer Army to expand its services, not only shovelling liquefaction from properties, but also focusing on the wellbeing of residents, offering hot meals, clean water and assistance to those in need. Chemical toilets were delivered, information pamphlets were handed out, sandbags were hauled, and call centres were staffed.

With the help of Geoop.com, the students designed a mobile management system whereby residents could register their need for assistance via a free call number, text message service or web site. Each job was examined and prioritised by the student call centre. Three hundred sixty thousand tons of liquefaction were removed in over 75,000 volunteer working hours. The SVA Facebook page had over 26,000 followers.

Among the lessons learned for successful collaboration after disasters, according to Sam Johnson, the creator of SVA, is to "build up hope, build up confidence [of the volunteers] and break down barriers put up by those who insist you need permission".

Source: http://www.ucsva.org and interview

Collaboration Under the Radar

"Collaboration under the radar", or behind the scenes, was repeatedly mentioned at the central government, regional government, and local government levels. "Don't tell the chief executives you are collaborating" quipped one central government public servant, "as they might feel threatened by a perceived loss of control." "I never told anyone I organised this collaboration," said a local government public servant, "because it is highly likely it would be reversed because I did not follow standard operating procedure."

This has been the subject of important research by Elizabeth Eppel, Derek Gill, Miriam Lips and Bill Ryan[42] who examined seven cases of collaboration in New Zealand. These researchers concluded that:

> [C]ross organisational working is not an object that can be pre-defined and directed from the top down. It is emergent work, something that must be enabled and allowed to spread outwards from the middle of organisations. If and when the conditions of possibility arise or are triggered, those who are capable of working these ways will rise to the task – but their efforts must also be protected, supported and sustained over time and in different ways….[43]

Among the vital ingredients for successful collaboration in New Zealand, according to these scholars, are "public entrepreneurs" with a deep public service motivation, "fellow travellers" or like-minded people with whom to work, "guardian angels" or people who can mentor, protect, advise and advocate for the collaborators, and a client who is an active and fully engaged co-producer.[44] Many I interviewed mentioned leaving central government or moving to new agencies when their "guardian angels" could no longer give them the protected space they needed to collaborate under the radar or when their room to manoeuvre collaboratively closed down.

Cultural diversity

New Zealand's bi-cultural society is an enormous source of strength. That same strength poses challenges according to some I interviewed. "The Māori world is one of true collaboration," a regional government administrator told me, "but they are forced to work in a democratic world." If embraced, the Māori perspective has the possibility of enhancing collaboration (Some legislation makes Māori participation mandatory.) For this reason, cultural diversity is discussed in this report as a catalyst to collaboration rather than as an inhibitor (as was mentioned by some I interviewed).

One high ranking Māori leader in Wellington expressed concern that in collaboration, one might get "sucked into outcomes without focusing on values." He continued:

> We take for granted that we all have the same values, but we often do not. Ask if you really want to collaborate. What are you trying to do? Examine your own value base beyond outputs and outcomes. What legacy will you leave behind?

Another Māori individual complained of 'Māori collaboration fatigue syndrome.' "We are asked to collaborate all the time," she said, "often so government officials can check off a box indicating that they tried. But the feeling is that the efforts, at times, are not sincere."

Another Māori leader shared the Māori Kaupapa based approach to life that he advocated as whose sole focus might be output or outcome oriented. Process and values count. How you treat other collaborators matters. It is excerpted in part here:

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[42] Epple, Gill, Lips, and Ryan (2013)
[43] Ibid. p. 61
[44] See also Lips, O'Neill, and Eppel, E. (2011) and Lips, O'Neill and Eppel, E. (2009)

Manaakitanga

We should express manaakitanga, or mana enhancing behaviour towards each other ... taking care not to "trample" another's mana. The concept of Manaakitanga includes the understanding of tapu and noa, and mana. In pōwhiri rituals ... on the site of business, the object is to deal with the tapu and the mana of the tangata-whenua and manuhiri in an enhancing, positive way. In our relationships with others we are aware of mana, our own and theirs. We can act in a mana enhancing way, by expressing manaakitanga.

Rangatiratanga

Rangatiratanga is the expression of the attributes of a rangatira, including humility, leadership by example, generosity, altruism, diplomacy and knowledge of benefit to the people. We strive to be acknowledging of the rangatiratanga of individuals, whanau, hapū and iwi in our activities. We understand the importance of "walking the talk", following through on comments and commitments made, manaakitanga, integrity and honesty.

Whanaungatanga

The people are our wealth. This system of kinship, including rights and reciprocal obligations (utu) that underpins the social organisation of whanau, hapu and iwi should be part of the life of our business. Whanaungatanga is about being part of a larger whole, of the collective. Maori are related to all living things and thus express whanaungatanga with their surroundings. Whanaungatanga is about knowing that you are not alone, but that you have a wider set of acquaintances that provide support, assistance, nurturing, guidance and direction when needed.

Whanaungatanga could be seen as the antithesis of European models of individualism. Independence, standing on your own two feet; accusations of nepotism, tribalism and other such ideas are inconsistent with whanaungatanga.

Kotahitanga

This is developing and maintaining a unity of purpose and direction and avoiding approaches and decisions that lead to division and disharmony. A commitment by the ... [organisation] through oneness of mind and action to achieving its vision would be the expression of Kotahitanga. All must be encouraged to make their contribution, to have their say.

Ukaipotanga

This kaupapa highlights the importance of *tūrangawaewae, te haukāinga,* where whanau and associates ground themselves to the land (island) and home. Ukaipo are the places or the place, we find ourselves, our strength, our energy. Having a place where you belong, where you count, where you are important and where you can contribute is essential for Maori wellbeing. As a whole person with your identity intact, you can make your contribution.

Kaitiakitanga

Preserving and maintaining the existence of the ... [organisation]-and the entity that nourishes ... so that it can continue to fulfil its functions and obligations is the essence of this kaupapa. Kaitiakitanga has several facets, including;

The preservation and conservation of taonga tuku iho – treasures handed down by our ancestors – flora/fauna/waterways and ocean/and culture and language.

Appropriate financial management that ensures the organisation can operate as a growing and developing entity.

Accountability to ourselves, whanau and staff, hapū and iwi – and clients – customers and suppliers.

Whilst financial growth and strength is one of many kaupapa, in no way is it to be considered the paramount consideration in the life of a kaupapa-based organisation.

Fair, Inclusive and Creative Public Processes

Despite the fact that many New Zealanders pride themselves at being good at relationships, many emphasised that "acting collaboratively" is not that natural – especially in the central government where years of incentives have reinforced "siloed" behaviours.

While Bill English's remark about collaboration mentioned earlier (urging a focus on collaborative results, not on collaborative process) was appreciated by many, it did not erase the desire or need among everyone I interviewed – but especially those outside of central government (local government public servants and NGO representatives) – for thoughtful collaborative processes variously described as "cross-sector forums" where "we are all in the same room" and where people listen to each other. While most, but not all, of these insights focus on government collaborating with the public, the ideas conveyed may apply to multiple forms of collaboration.

A South Island public servant emphasised the need for respect for other parties and their views, understanding where others are coming from, focusing on commonalities, negotiating trade-offs, reminding participants of the success of the collaborative whole and celebrating those successes:

Spread responsibility and power. In a public meeting, ask the crowd for help. Admit when you are wrong. If there are 20-40-60 people at meeting, then there will be 20-40-60 good ideas. Don't be overly confident that you have the right answer. Get buy-in. Use humour. Keep it real.

Another veteran of public meetings to discuss possible collaborations on the South Island advised that savvy instigators of collaborative ideas are those who are strategic in how they pitch the issue in public: "Don't get too much ahead of the group" she advised. "If a collaborative idea is a new one, you need to explain and teach. People need to learn new ways of thinking about how to address pressing public policy problems."

Another urged collaborators to demonstrate that they are empathetic and curious, "listening with a beginners mind. I tell possible collaborators to 'scrape your mind clean' and remain open to new ways of doing things."

The language used in these processes is important in a variety of ways. A key thinker in a collaboration involving the Canterbury District Health Board said, "We rarely say Canterbury District Health Board or CDHB anymore. Instead, we refer to 'Our Health System' to reinforce our collaborative identity." Another South Island collaborator emphasised the importance of using language differently: "If you are pitching

economies of scale, don't talk economics when people just want to be able to drink the water." Yet another interviewee cautioned to avoid jargon, acronyms, and code words.

Other tips from New Zealanders with experience in collaborating include:

- Develop a protocol – a way of operating – jointly with other collaborators
- Ask for continuity of people representing organisations so you are not continually re-educating collaborators
- Get to know one another: Build relationships. "No one likes a stranger telling them what to do"
- Build the trust needed to solve problems
- Begin by sharing what you and your organisation bring to the table: "We are all torches illuminating different parts of the problem," said a Wellington local government public servant.
- Acknowledge conflict
- Only record decisions (not the conversations that led up to the decisions – to free collaborators to brainstorm and try out possible high-risk ideas)
- Allow workshops to be called concerning topics and areas where the group's knowledge is incomplete
- Invite specialists to consult with the group
- Listen and engage, even though you disagree
- Sit down with your "enemies" and discuss issues face-to-face
- Develop a process for times when the group needs to agree to disagree: opposition statements and the ability to go to court are two examples.
- Make sure those at the top of the participating organisations are aligned
- Hold public meetings in a variety of places; go where the opponents are
- Take the time to do it right
- Strive to make decisions by consensus (defined as "everyone can live with this"). If you vote, someone will hold a grudge.
- Use facilitators who do not have a stake in the outcome.
- Make recommendations not confined by law: Brainstorm freely, but "keep lifting your head up" to see how far you may have drifted [e.g., from the Resource Management Act]
- Tell reluctant collaborators: "If you do not get involved, you are leaving the decision up to clowns like me."
- Meet face-to-face a lot: it moves the process along better than meeting virtually.
- When brainstorming yields inconsistencies (e.g., with the law), have a committee examine the deeper problem. Let those with similar responsibilities sort out the details and present options to the larger group.
- Pay attention to cultural and generational issues. Be aware of, and respect, the ethnic background of potential collaborators.

3   CHALLENGES TO COLLABORATION IN NEW ZEALAND

The language of collaboration is not new to New Zealand. Documents on central government websites show a consciousness of the need to collaborate under appropriate conditions more than a decade ago. While there have been some successes in collaboration in New Zealand (See Chapter 1 for examples), progress has not been as rapid as one might predict. Al Morrison, Deputy Commissioner for State Sector Reform at SSC, recently wrote:

> A review of activity across the system reported in February, 2014, suggests that agencies are increasingly attuned to the problem solving and opportunities created from collaborative endeavour, but that we are some distance yet from the system as a whole operating that way as a matter of course.[45]

This chapter addresses some of the inhibitors of collaboration in New Zealand through my eyes as an outsider to New Zealand. I report only those challenges that emerged either during my discussions with individuals or in my analysis of government documents. Ideas fell into twelve themes: 1) History and culture, 2) 101 definitions of collaboration, 3) Delivering the message, 4) Long-term versus short-term, 5) Central + Local and Central + NGOs, 6) Risk, fear, and trust, 7) Funding, 8) People, personalities, and relationships, 9) The media, and 10) How do we do collaboration? Each is discussed in this section.

History and Culture

New Zealand is famous for its reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, often called the New Public Management (NPM). Government visitors still travel from foreign lands to New Zealand to learn about NPM. There have been hundreds of works written about NPM including scholarly articles, books, chapters, government reports and case studies.[46] The merits and weaknesses of NPM have been discussed and debated at academic conferences for decades. Jonathan Boston summarises the goals of NPM reforms in New Zealand as follows, noting that not all the goals received equal weight:

- Improving allocative and productive efficiency, and enhancing the effectiveness of government services;
- Improving both managerial and political accountability;
- Reducing the level of government expenditure and the size of the core public sector;
- Reducing the range of state functions under direct ministerial control, and minimising opportunities for the non-transparent use of public power;
- Minimising the risk of bureaucratic, provider or regulatory capture;
- Improving the quality of the goods and services produced by public agencies; and

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[45] Morrison (2014) p. 47
[46] For a good overview of the New Public Management in New Zealand see Boston 2012.

- Making public services more accessible and responsive to consumers, as well as more culturally sensitive.[47]

By most accounts, New Zealand was successful in increasing efficiency and effectiveness, creating in large part the vertically streamlined government it wanted. Yet Boston cites several of the NPM "goals that received little or no weight"[48] including:

- Developing new forms of governance for the handling of complex and controversial policy issues, such as joined-up governance, collaborative governance and co-management;
- Enhancing horizontal coordination across governmental organisations and more joined-up service delivery; and
- Increasing the role of citizens, as opposed to consumers, customers and clients, in the design, delivery, oversight and control of public services.

Boston goes on to lament the design principal behind some of the reforms that "all state organisations should, at least ideally, have only one main function." This led to much decoupling and institutional fragmentation that hinders collaboration today.

Tied in with this, there have been unanticipated consequences of the NPM reforms that serve as impediments to, and inhibitors of, collaboration. As Alan Schick expressed with concern in the often cited 1996 *The Spirit of Reform* which evaluated the country's reforms, New Zealand may have focused on accountability at the expense of personal responsibility, a phenomenon that inhibits collaboration.

> [T]he words [responsibility and accountability] lead down very different managerial paths. Responsibility is a personal quality that comes from one's professional ethic, a commitment to do one's best, a sense of public service. Accountability is an impersonal quality, dependent more on contractual duties and information flows. Ideally a manager should act responsibly, even when accountability does not come into play. As much as one might wish for an amalgam of the two worlds, the relentless pursuit of accountability can exact a price in the shrinkage of a sense of responsibility. Responsibility itself is not sufficient assurance of effective performance; if it were, there might have been no need to overhaul public management. Yet something may be lost when responsibility is reduced to a set of contract-like documents and auditable statements.[49]

How to Succeed in the Business of Government

One chief executive (CE) I interviewed expressed his view that the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s have been successful in creating a solid business centre, but with other unanticipated consequences. Some career public servants have become "company men and women" who are loyal to their own organisations described as "hunkered down silos". The way to succeed for many has been to devote their lives to one organisation, master its subject matter (only) and then go on to lead another organisation. As Al Morrison explains:

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[47] Boston (2012) p. 7
[48] Boston (2012) p. 8
[49] Schick (1996) pp. 84-85

The main criticism to emerge from the reforms is around the way agencies have developed into silos and become overly protective of their policy, information, and operations. What gets lost in the fragmentation is the collective action required to deliver the common good.[50]

Tied in with this, CE contracts until 13 December 2013 have not formally emphasised leading across boundaries, but generally have concentrated on managing and leading within one's own organisation.[51] This has yielded a very narrow "great man theory of leadership", with one feature being a unitary focus on one's organisation. Again, this makes collaboration difficult.

Morrison traced the history of reforms in New Zealand concentrating especially on current efforts like the Better Public Services programme which seek to reform the public services "to think and operate across the whole government system and beyond to effectively address complex issues that have been holding New Zealand back, and create opportunities through collaborative endeavour".[52] Especially significant are two changes to the State Sector, Public Finance and Crown Entities Acts passed by Parliament in 2013 that seek to make it easier for collaboration across state sector agencies. Also significant are innovations such as the "five results areas"[53], functional leads, heads of profession, shared services, and sector group cross-cutting initiatives.

Yet despite all these innovations, Morrison concludes that:

While these are all good in themselves and achieving worthwhile results, there is little evidence that they are transforming the way agencies think about work and operate as a matter of course. For the most part, agencies have been able to comply without fundamentally changing the way they operate or give up significant benefit to the greater cause. The quick wins from simple forms of collaboration are important and relevant. But the real challenge lies at the ambitious end of the spectrum where complex social, environmental and economic issues demand levels of collaboration that confront and challenge the institutional culture and arrangements of the last two to three decades.[54]

Indeed, the remnants of these institutional reforms endure today. One mid-level manager told me that he has shied away from collaboration because of his bosses' "excessive focus on accountability and too much performance measurement. The transaction costs are too high. It [collaboration] is lots of work, there are no templates or examples, there is no leadership, there is no time, and there is a great fear that collaboration will not yield better outcomes."

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[50] Morrison (2014) p.5

[51] One former CE pointed out that in the past joint performance indicators were often supplemental to contracts but were nonetheless the subject of discussion in performance reviews.

[52] Morrison (2014) p. 3

[53] Ten Best Public Service Results were agreed by Cabinet in 2012. The Results were clustered into five result areas, with a Minister and chief executive assigned responsibility for each area. The Results specify government priorities in areas that matter to citizens – welfare dependence; better health, education and welfare services for vulnerable children; boosting skills and employment; reducing crime and re-offending; and making government interaction with business and citizens easier, particularly online. The full set of BPS Results, and progress towards achieving them, can be found at http://www.ssc.govt.nz/better-public-services.

[54] Morrison (2014) p. 3

"Collaboration will mess up my performance metrics" said another manager. When asked why he did not advocate a change in how to measure performance to his superior, the response was, "I am sure you understand the concept of knowing one's place in one's organisation."

A third manager said "As I read the 2004 State Services Commission document "Managing for Outcomes: Guidance for Departments", I must show a return on investment for all collaborative activity. There are opportunity costs of doing things differently. I have a family. I have a mortgage. I cannot take the risk."

A high-level SSC official who said he is "well aware" of the "silo mentality" put it this way:

> We grew up in this culture. Government workers in their 50s know nothing else. Despite discussion to the contrary, the reforms of 1980s and 1990s are still alive. Adjusting those reforms now for today's challenges and problems is a major concern. Despite dedicated individuals, agency culture can bring you down. The NPM may have created an organisation culture where it is not okay to try new things like collaboration for fear of failure.

101 Definitions of Collaboration

Consider the following excerpts from conversations I had with four very different thought leaders in New Zealand during the same week in June, 2014:

Conversation Number 1:

NGO Executive Director: "Isn't it great that there is a growing national, actually international, expectation that NGOs will collaborate with governments?"

O'Leary: "What do you mean by collaborate?"

NGO Director: "Developing policies and programmes in tandem with government."

Conversation Number 2:

One day later ...

Activist with the Land and Water Forum: "The central government cannot collaborate given the structure of New Zealand government."

O'Leary: "What do you mean by collaborate?"

Activist: "Addressing complex and intractable issues by bringing together the principal stakeholders to seek agreement on a way forward. It's on our website"

O'Leary: "Why do you think the central government cannot do this?"

Activist: "The reasons are numerous:
- New Zealand bureaucrats are "good at implementing orders." Results are needed too quickly which negatively affects innovation. There are too many political risks to collaborating.
- Ministers order specific outputs
- Public servants are beholden to ministers who are beholden to the Cabinet
- There is a perceived lack of transparency
- Bureaucrats protect their turf

- Each ministry or organisation would have to sign off on collaborative decisions, making changes difficult
- There is an unevenness in terms of competence and know-how; many public servants cannot see an advantage to collaborating
- There is a dearth of data making it virtually impossible to determine the long-term costs or effects of changes in public management"

Conversation Number 3:

One day later ...

O'Leary: "What is your reaction to the statement by one of the participants in the Land and Water Forum that given the New Zealand political process 'central government cannot collaborate'?"

High-ranking central government official: "I am shocked at that statement. What do they think we have been doing the last few years in the Land and Water Forum? They have received a million dollars a year from central government, a secretariat, and other resources. Representatives from several central government organisations participated. The Land and Water Forum would not have happened without the support of the central government. If that isn't collaboration, what is it? ... If they [environmental advocates] think they can participate in co-production, they are naïve. Co-production would be very difficult given the New Zealand dual political process."

O'Leary: "How are you defining co-production?"

High-ranking central government official: "Designing programmes and expecting us to rubber stamp them. Ministers do not like to be locked in. Their degrees of freedom decrease when they are locked in. The government cannot be held hostage."

Conversation #4:

Two days later:

O'Leary: "I'm researching collaboration in New Zealand"

High-ranking regional government official on the South Island: "Collaboration is what the [central government] ... stuffs up our noses. Have you read the RMA [Resource Management Act]?

O'Leary: "I define collaboration as 'Two or more organisations working together to accomplish something they cannot accomplish alone…Collaboration can include the public.'"

Regional government official: "That's your definition of collaboration? Oh, we do that all the time, but we don't use the word 'collaboration.'"

O'Leary: "What do you call it?"

Regional government official: "We call it 'working together.'"

These conversations are illustrative of the diverse definitions of, and perspectives on, the terms "collaborate", "collaborative", "collaboration", and "co-production" in New Zealand. These terms can mean different things to different people. A government official might not use them in the same way as a citizen, for example, and this can lead to misunderstandings. Citizens may feel they have been invited to play a role in

the business of government, and become disappointed or cynical when their expectations are not fulfilled. People start to think that 'collaboration' just means talk, not action, or that it is just another passing management fad.

In an effort to locate an official definition of each of these terms, I examined all documents on the State Services Commission website that contain the words "collaborate", "collaborative", "collaboration", or "co-production". (It should be noted that the SSC website contains documents from a wide variety of New Zealand government agencies.) Boxes 6, 7, 8, and 9 summarise what I found.

In all instances, these terms are defined less than one percent of the time they are used in items (documents, reports and webpages) on the SSC website. In some documents these terms are used to describe a public manager's 'toolkit' or 'strategies'. In others they are used to describe 'options' or 'choices'. Still others refer to collaborative networks as 'models' or 'structures' within which managers find themselves. Still others use these words to describe listening to the public or working with the public.

These words are used as verbs, nouns, adverbs and adjectives. They are used to explain approaches, locations, processes, results, systems, goals, and job duties. At times they are both instructions and a rallying cry.

Moreover, the unit of analysis varies: While some documents focus on a manager's (or his/her organisation's) individual choice to collaborate, others look at intentional collaborative collective design. Sometimes the focus is organisations, sometimes it is teams, and sometimes it is the public. In sum, the concepts lack common lenses or definitions.

Box 6

From the State Services Commission Website
http://www.ssc.govt.nz/

Term: Collaboration

Number of items using term: 660 (as of 6 July 2014)
Percentage of times "Collaboration" is defined: Less than 1%

Examples of the Variety of Uses of the term "Collaboration":

- "Collaboration is seen more as an approach to project than as a way of life for each agency." (PIF May 2014, page 12)

- "Leadership collaboration can be defined as forming and preserving those critical business relationships and interpersonal connections that are outside formal hierarchical systems. Collaborative activities lie on the continuum between providing information and devolved decision making. Collaboration can occur within agencies, between agencies and across sectors." (Leadership Success Profile, page 14).

- "The intended results for users from this integrated [CDHB Canterbury Health Systems collaboration] process mean that: "It should be seamless for the person...they have no sense of having been passed from one organisational structure to another...the services are just organised around them." (Designing and Growing Innovation Capability, pages 8 and 19.

- "A shared outcome is an outcome (a result experienced by the community from a combination of government interventions and other factors) that is common to two or more agencies. Managing for shared outcomes is therefore a form of inter-agency collaboration or joint working where the agencies involved share responsibility for, and actively collaborate to manage towards a common outcome." (Getting Better at Managing for Shared Outcomes)

- "Sector collaboration. How does the agency identify and pursue opportunities for shared outcomes, joint initiatives, shared services and collaborative work programmes across the sector?" (PIF Agency Self Assessment, page 41)

- "The State Services Commissioner and Public Service chief executives agreed that collaboration was required and determined a framework that would improve senior leadership development" [no definition provided] (Leadership Capability Profile- Summary of Research and Design, page 1).

Box 7

From the State Services Commission Website
http://www.ssc.govt.nz/

Term: Collaborate

Number of times items using term: 141 (as of 6 July 2014)
Percentage of times "Collaborate" is defined: Less than 1%

Examples of the Variety of Uses of the term "Collaborate"

- Agencies collaborate when they rise "to the occasion ... operating more as a system rather than as fragmented individual agencies." (World Leading Border Protection Service Recognised)

- "Collaborate to build and share a common purpose and direction − encourage debate and ideas from across the system, sector and beyond to develop strategy and policy collectively to address cost cutting issues, develop and generate common ownership of the strategy with sector ministers, sector and agency leadership and delivery partners, engage in leadership and followership as mutual activities of influence and counter influence." (Developing future leaders- senior leaders)

- "Promote, operate and support the use of shared workspaces to service levels agreed with agencies. Shared workspaces are a tool to allow specialist groups operated by central and local government agencies, and their partners outside government, to collaborate to achieve better outcomes by sharing information, expertise, experience and best practice" [no definition provided]. (SSC Annual Report 2007, page 51)

- "To be successful, [the Education Review Office] knows that it must build on its relationships with the community, and collaborate with education and Government agencies to achieve a common vision.(PIF review 2007, page 33)

Box 8

Term: Collaborative

Number of items using term: 441 (as of 6 July 2014)
Percentage of times "Collaborative" is defined: Less than 1%

***Examples** of the Variety of Uses of the term "Collaborative"*

- "Increasingly, the government is looking to better co-ordinate between agencies and deliver services in a joined up manner. The proximity of agencies to each other and the ability to share collaborative spaces will contribute to this co-ordination." (Cabinet Paper Functional Leadership Property, November 30, 2012, page 3.

- "1. Collaborative support initiatives: Where agencies are sharing or providing support services to other agencies or NGOs. 2. Collaborative service initiatives: Where agencies are providing services to other agencies, or all-of-government, or are collaborating to provide services to each other. 3. Collaborative delivery initiatives: Where agencies are collaborating with other agencies or NGOs to deliver core outputs. 4. Collaboration facilitating initiatives: Where agencies are facilitating collaboration, either internally, or with other agencies or organisations. 5. Collaborative review, reporting or planning initiatives: Where agencies are collaboratively reviewing, reporting or planning. (Collaboration Within the Public Sector, updated 25 March 2014, http://www.ssc.govt.nz/node/9352)

From the State Services Commission Website
http://www.ssc.govt.nz/

Term: Co-production or Coproduction

Number of items using term: 35 est. (as of 6 July 2014)
Percentage of times "Co-production or Coproduction " are defined: Less than 1%

***Examples** of the Variety of Uses of the term "Coproduction"*

- "Done well, taking users' voices into account when re-designing and improving services creates opportunity for a co-production approach, where both users and providers work together on improving delivery." (Better Public Services Advisory Group Report, November 2011, page 35.

- "Co-production – makes the most of available capability: The BPS Advisory Report argued that citizen/business participation is a powerful driver for delivering better services and value for money and that more use could be made of best-sourcing to drive improved performance in New Zealand state services. Christchurch provides practical examples of the value of co-production. (Demonstrating Better Public Services – Christchurch Innovations, Undated, page 4).

- The Shared Care Record View (eSCRV): co-production in action – The eSCRV is a secure on-line system for sharing patient information between health professionals. It is an example of collaboration-based innovation. The eSCRV was coproduced by the CDHB, Pegasus Health, the Canterbury Community Pharmacy Group, Nurse Maude and Orion Health. The eSCRV allows for an integrated approach to case management, better patient care, faster treatment and shorter waiting times. (Designing and Growing Innovation Capability, January 2013, page 19).

Delivering the Message

If 101 definitions of collaboration is not enough of a challenge, many public servants lamented the difficulty of communicating the importance of collaboration throughout the bureaucracy even with defined terms. "It [the central government] is like the Catholic church. What the people at the top think they are doing and what is actually happening is quite different. There are translation problems and transfer problems," said a high-level SSC official. The Catholic Church analogy arose again in speaking with an NGO advocate who said that "The CEs collaborate (and compete) and understand the importance of collaboration, but then as you go down the food chain less is done and less is understood."

A consultant expressed a different view concerning where the message about the need to collaborate was getting stuck: "The CE level is okay with collaboration, and the street level bureaucrats – those implementing programmes and working with the public – are okay with collaboration. It is the middle third [of the central government bureaucracy] where there is a collaboration performance gap" she said.

In the meantime, many middle managers weary of years of government reforms are asking, "Is collaboration just another management fad? Can I dig my heels in and sit this one out?" A scholar of New Zealand government conveyed his view to me that despite studies that point to a positive link between collaboration and performance, many New Zealanders remain sceptical. A high-level SSC official commented that this is a "translation problem."

Long-Term versus Short-Term

Many people I interviewed pointed out that New Zealand generally is quite good at dealing with emergencies, such as the Christchurch earthquake. Tied in with this, New Zealand bureaucrats take pride in responding quickly to Ministers. "New Zealanders are good at meeting the expectations of the government of the day," said one high-ranking SSC official, but longer-term issues are more difficult. "We are not as good at dealing with complex issues that need a long view and the collaboration of many entities and people."

One former high ranking career public servant jokingly described New Zealand government officials as like the dog in the movie *Up* that was constantly distracted by passing squirrels. "Your attention is constantly diverted to the Minister's crisis of the day. There is little reward for working on durable solutions to pressing public policy problems." A regional government official phrased the tensions between long-term and short-term pressures differently: "Central government public servants are forced in a hole: they must serve the Minister, so they cannot think for themselves. There is no time for the analysis and effort it takes to do collaboration well."

Central + Local; Central + NGOs

Many people I interviewed said that while collaboration is nearly always challenging, it is easier when it involves two or more central government agencies, as opposed to central government with local government, or central government with NGOs.

"We [central government] are not so good at partnering with communities and NGOs", said a high-level SSC official. A government consultant put it this way: "It is hard for central government to work with NGOs: Their contexts are different, their funding sources are different, their modes of dispute resolution are different, their levels of power are different. NGOs in New Zealand have little policy capability so most of the substantive knowledge tends to come from central government agencies."

Yet a retired CE commented that this is 'rubbish.' "Most NGOs in New Zealand are directed by former central government public servants. They know how government works, they know the rules, they know the people. This should make collaborating with NGOs easier, not harder. What is needed is slack in the central government system to allow collaboration with NGOs, the incentives to make it happen." A former high-level central government official who now heads a national NGO said that those who used to work for central government know how hard it would be to collaborate with them. "Many of us left [the central government] because it there was no room for creativity, no room for risk, no room to collaborate, no room to manoeuvre. I am open to collaborating with central government, but I am sceptical that true collaboration is really possible given the political and managerial constraints." The director of another NGO said they do not like to collaborate with the central government because "the best collaborations are local."

Another high-level SSC public servant commented that the combining in Auckland of the functions of the previous regional council and the region's seven city and district councils into one "supercouncil" or "supercity" (see Box 10) has created a situation where communities and NGOs in that area expect to collaborate with central government to design and form the new governmental entities and policies. "This is new territory for us, and poses interesting challenges," he said.

Complicating the landscape of collaboration in New Zealand is the fact that nearly every local government public servant I spoke with pointed out that, at the local level, they feel capable of collaborating among themselves without the central government. One South Island local government public servant phrased it this way: "Central government created regional bodies to distance themselves from communities. Central government is irrelevant here." Another said, "Don't tell us what is nationally important, we know what we want locally."

Another commented that a tough local government challenge arises when the collaborative ideas they brainstorm do not comport with central government laws. An example is the water standards issued by the central government the first week of July 2014 that were informed by the recommendations of the Land and Water Forum, as well as regional planning efforts, but did not accept all recommendations including regulating water standards to a "swimmable" level. "What do you expect in an election year?" sighed a local government official. "Central government is not going to take on the farmers in an election year, and that is reflected in the water standards."

Contrast this sentiment to that of a mid-level central government public servant in Wellington who quipped, "People outside of Wellington have little knowledge of how Central government works." These tensions can make it difficult to collaborate.

Even local governments collaborating with other local governments in the same region can be challenging. At a meeting of thirty-three local government officials on the South Island, it was pointed out that they have different legislative mandates, different organisation cultures, different levels of commitments, different governance structures, different visions for what is in the best interest of their communities and different levels of trust with each other. Some communities were eager to engage collaboratively, others were slow to engage and needed "a bite in the butt." Similar words were used by an Auckland foundation director to explain why combining the functions of the previous regional council and the region's seven city and district councils into one "supercouncil" or "supercity" was so critically important.

> Box 10
>
> Example of Collaborative Governance in New Zealand
>
> ### A Super City is Created in Auckland to Catalyse Collaboration
>
> Until 2010, the Auckland Region had seven "City/District" authorities, plus one "Regional" authority. Many expressed concerns that it was difficult to do business in Auckland as each local government entity had different standards, different ways of operating, and different politics. Some call this a time of "failed collaboration" as many of the authorities did not work well together.
>
> In the late 2000s, the central government, with support of some in Auckland, decided that a form of stronger regional government, or an amalgamation under one local council, would be beneficial. A Royal Commission on Auckland Governance was created. While not all the recommendations of the commission were implemented, a "super city" was created that includes the full metropolitan area under an Auckland Council with a single mayor and 20–30 local boards.
>
> Some are elated with the change. One foundation director said that this was a "no brainer" for the philanthropy world which previously had problems giving grants to organisations in the Auckland region because of the different local government requirements. Others lament the loss of "local flavour" and smaller communities. An NGO director commented that the combined city is so large that he no longer knows anything about the people who run for office, nor anything about what they accomplish once they are in office. "It is too soon to know whether any worthwhile economies of scale will come from this collaboration," he said.

Risk, Fear and Trust

Fear is an inhibitor of collaboration in New Zealand. Public servants, especially at the central government level, expressed a fear of loss of power, loss of credibility, loss of control, suboptimal outcomes, loss of resources personal loss and loss of authority. "I have everything to lose and nothing to gain by collaborating" a programme manager told me. "Collaboration is a risk." Another said, "with performance indicators, I have no incentive to take risks."

Tied with this is the idea that the principle-agent theory that undergirds many of the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s is perceived as communicating a lack of trust of public servants. "Trust is definitely an issue in collaboration" a policy analyst told me, "but it is also seen as an idea that cannot be quantified so no one wants to talk about it." Trust is an asset in collaboration,[55] and the remnants of the past based on a lack of trust slow some collaborative efforts.

Funding

The views expressed concerning the need for funding to support collaborative activities were diverse. The majority of individuals I interviewed said that money for

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[55] Milward and Provan (2006)

collaborative activities is absolutely essential and pointed with pride at the Functional Leadership and Better Public Service seed funds. Others supported this view by pointing to collaborations that failed because "money issues could not be solved."

Some local government officials lamented "the shift and the shaft" that comes when responsibilities are passed on to local governments from the central government without implementation funding. "These are forced collaborations between central and local governments," one long-time local government public servant told me, "and the local governments end up getting the shaft when there is no money given to them."

A seasoned central government official expressed how he struggled with the idea proposed by some of "better services for citizens through collaboration without any more money. I just don't see that happening."

Contrasted to this are the views of a former CE that the reality of the fiscal situation in New Zealand is that "there is no new money for collaboration, yet collaboration is our future. We need public servants with strong public service motivation who will take one for the team and collaborate when there is no fiscal payoff for them," he said.

Another former public servant commented that if there is no additional money for collaboration, the leadership will have to create slack in the system somehow. "If there is no slack in the system, if employees are stretched to the max 'playing tennis at the net' all day – responding to the needs of ministers and putting out fires, we're screwed. We have to create slack in the system to allow collaboration to flourish."

People, Personalities, and Relationships

People and their relationships have already been discussed in this report as catalysts to collaboration in New Zealand. The flip side of this issue is that people can, of course, inhibit collaboration. "I wish I had a button I could push that would make people leave their egos at the door," said a South Island NGO director. A local government manager lamented those people who cannot see collaborative advantage, who are afraid of collaboration, who are cynical, who may not have confidence in other people to collaborate, or worse, show up and bring "a pack of lies." A North Island NGO director expressed the view that "collaboration is driven by people who come together at a particular time and place, with a similar vision. But people move on, and when they do, the collaborative activity often collapses." Finally, an expert on local governments in New Zealand pointed out communities with a history of not collaborating for reasons as simple as being rugby rivals. At the same time, she also told the stories of local government officials from rival jurisdictions who collaborated behind the scenes but did not "advertise" their collaboration.

The Media

It seems to be unanimous: NGOs, representatives from the private sector, and public servants at central, regional and local government levels agree: the "sensationalist" media in New Zealand is an inhibitor of collaboration. "If we try and fail, it will be on the first page of the newspaper," lamented a CE. Another former CE agreed, but had a different perspective:

> We did this to ourselves. We created an accountability system where we set targets and we said, 'We will meet those targets'. When we don't meet the targets, we don't want to have to explain ourselves. This is a form of

arrogance. Private firms fail all the time, and explain why. Public servants have become risk averse because of the stringent accountability system created years ago.

Yes, Collaboration is Vital for Leadership Success, But How Do We Do It?

Every one of the 100 individuals I talked with agreed that collaboration is essential, but when pressed, most questioned whether they really knew how to do it. A consultant put it this way: "The idea of collaboration is somewhat new here. We are interested in it, but don't really know how to do it. That is why Guy Salmon's Land and Water Forum ideas from Scandinavia are so fascinating to us."

A South Island local government official told me that "people think collaboration is hard, largely because we don't really know how to do it." A local government consultant said that "there is an ignorance of how to make large-scale change happen." Another local government consultant said that there is "not much experience among local governments in working with the not-for-profit sector." At a conference of local government officials in Canterbury at which I spoke on the topic of collaboration, one participant turned to the audience and said, "Let's see a show of hands. How many of us in this room have received training in how to collaborate?" Four out of 33 participants raised their hand.

This is not solely a New Zealand phenomenon. More than 90 per cent of global executives who were surveyed by the Center for Creative Leadership said that collaboration is vital for leadership success. But when the follow-up question was asked, "Are the leaders of your organisation good at collaboration?", less than 50 percent of the respondents said that their leaders were good at collaboration.[56] Hence, there are many times when collaboration is needed, but often one does not know how to do it or do it well.

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[56] Martin (2007)

4   INSIGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

There are many lessons learned from the New Zealanders who shared their insights with me about the catalysts to and inhibitors of collaboration. Five are discussed here: 1) Culture was changed before. Can it be changed again? 2) Need for a consistent understanding of the term collaboration. 3) Expand the analysis: Some factors to consider before collaborating, 4) New ways of leading in a world of shared problems. 5) Cultivating the collaborative mind set.

Culture Was Changed Before. Can it be Changed Again?

Many of the impediments to collaboration in New Zealand can be traced to the ghosts of the management culture deliberately cultivated in the 1980s and 1990s. If the working cultures of New Zealand governments were changed before, can they be changed again?

The literature is replete with theories concerning organisation change, including but not limited to evolutionary, teleological, life cycle, dialectical, social cognition, and cultural models, and theories that combine multiple models.[57] From this vast literature, I have chosen three theories that I find offer the most useful lenses through which to examine the possibility of creating a culture that supports collaboration in New Zealand.

Lewin's Theory of Change

"The fundamental assumptions underlying any human system are derived originally from Kurt Lewin," writes Edgar H. Schein.[58] Likewise, Fernandez and Rainey[59] note that many of the one million articles relating to organisation change are grounded in the work of Lewin. Hence, Lewin's theory of change is the very best place to start when trying to understand organisation culture.

Lewin put forth a three-stage model of change that he described as unfreezing the present level, moving to the new level, and freezing group life on the new level. His view was that "a change toward a higher level of group performance is frequently short lived: after a 'shot in the arm,' group life soon returns to the previous level".[60] Therefore, under his conceptualisation, for organisational change to occur, behaviour at the present level must be "unfrozen" (what Lewin described as creating a motivation to change), then the change needs to occur in the form of moving to the new level, and then the new behaviour needs to be "frozen," or reinforced, on the new level.

Organisation theorists such as Cyert and March,[61] Emery and Trist,[62] Katz and Kahn,[63] Thompson,[64] Lawrence and Lorsch,[65] and Aldrich[66] all maintain that

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[57] For good explanations of these typologies, see Kezar, 2001
[58] Schein (2004) p. 319
[59] Fernandez and Rainey (2006)
[60] Lewin (1947) p. 344
[61] Cyert and March (1963)
[62] Emery and Trist (1965)
[63] Katz and Kahn (1978)
[64] Thompson (1967)
[65] Lawrence and Lorsch (1969)

organisations both are shaped by and seek to shape their environments. Yet Lewin[67] argued that a profound impediment to change in human systems is the presence of a "force field" that resists organisational change and tries to maintain equilibrium in the ever-changing environment described by classic organisation theorists. This force field is comprised of driving forces and restraining forces that must be altered for change to occur. In order to move the equilibrium, the organisation's restraining forces must be removed or reduced. Those restraining forces are very difficult to get at because they often involve group norms or personal psychological defences embedded in an organisation's culture and are not easily understood.

Schein's Theory of Change

The second theory of change that might guide management culture change in New Zealand was developed by Edgar Schein. Schein is considered one of the top organisational theorists in the world, known especially for his model and empirical studies of organisational culture. Among his many theoretical contributions, Schein extended Lewin's model of change by unpacking the concept of unfreezing, honing and refining Lewin's work within the context of organisation change and culture. Culture is to an organisation what personality is to the individual; hence every organisation has a unique culture. Culture is the underlying set of values, beliefs, understandings, and norms shared by employees. It is manifest in a variety of ways, primarily through basic assumptions, values and beliefs, and artefacts.[68] Khademian[69] explains:

> ...[B]asic assumptions...capture fundamental notions of how the organization and its members relate to the environment, time, space, reality, and each other. Basic assumptions are taken for granted and [are] below the level of consciousness for most members of the organization. This is the heart of culture and motivates behaviour. ...[V]alues and beliefs...[are] what members believe "ought to be" in the work of the organization. Ideologies, attitudes, and philosophies are found within this layer. ...[A]t the most visible level are cultural artifacts – the language used, stories told, ceremonies performed, rewards given, symbols displayed, heroes remembered, and history recalled.

Schein[70] theorised that unfreezing, as essentially motivation to change, consists of three processes, each of which must be present to some degree for change to be generated. The first part of unfreezing concerns disconfirmation within the human system. Schein maintained that all forms of change start with some form of dissatisfaction or frustration generated by data that refute reigning expectations or hopes. Just the presence of disconfirming information is not enough, however, because workers "can ignore the information, dismiss it as irrelevant, blame the undesired outcome on others or fate, or, as is most common, simply deny its validity".[71]

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[66] Aldrich (1972)
[67] Lewin (1943)
[68] Schein (2010)
[69] Khademian (2002) pp. 18-19
[70] Schein (2010)
[71] Schein (2010)

Schein maintained that such disconfirmation must arouse the second step of unfreezing – "the connection of the disconfirming data to important goals or ideals, causing anxiety and/or guilt".[72] What he calls "survival anxiety" is the sense that if the organisation does not change, it will fail to achieve its goals and ideals. In order to experience survival anxiety and move to this stage of unfreezing, the disconfirming data must be accepted as valid and relevant. What typically prevents this stage from occurring is denial and a different kind of anxiety, "learning anxiety": the feeling among members of the organisation that if they admit to themselves and others that something is wrong, they will lose their effectiveness, their self-esteem, and perhaps even their identity. Learning anxiety and denial are the fundamental restraining forces on an organisation which can controvert the effects of disconfirming information, leading to the maintenance of the status quo equilibrium. Furthermore, Schein[73] argues that survival anxiety must exceed learning anxiety, and that change depends on reducing learning anxiety (not increasing survival anxiety).

Schein's third step to unfreezing behaviour is creating some degree of "psychological safety for workers that helps them see a possibility of solving the problem and learning something new without loss or identity or integrity".[74,75,76] Schein theorised that unless sufficient psychological safely is created, the disconfirming information will be denied, ignored, or otherwise countered, and no change will take place. The key for change in an organisation becomes balancing the threat posed by disconfirming data with enough psychological safety to allow those averse to change in the organisation to accept the information, sense survival anxiety, and become motivated to change.

Once an organisation is motivated to change, Schein notes that reframing or "cognitive redefinition" is needed. This occurs by adopting the new information and yields, among other things, new standards of judgment or evaluation, which must be congruent with the rest of the organisation culture. If organisation members do not find the new standards plausible and sensible, this will set off new rounds of disconfirmation that often lead to unlearning. At the same time, for refreezing to occur, changes to old norms and behaviour must be embedded throughout the entire organisation, and rewards must buttress the new desired behaviour.

Kanter's Theory of Change

The third theory of change that has application to the managerial culture of New Zealand comes from Rosabeth Moss Kanter. Kanter studied corporations and compared those organisations that were able to change successfully with those that were not able to change successfully.

Kanter outlines five forces that must converge in order for major change to occur. Force 1 is "grassroots innovations," which Kanter defines as positive departures from tradition, or new ways of thinking in the organisation. These "aberrations" pop up in an organisation often by accident or, if deliberate, are seen initially as insignificant or

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[72] Schein (2004) p. 320
[73] Schein (2010)
[74] Schein (2004) p. 320
[75] Schein (1999)
[76] Schein (1980)

non-threatening. These are "'unplanned opportunities' that permit entrepreneurs to step forward… they may work best at the periphery, in 'zones of indifference' where no one else cares enough to prevent a little occasional deviance".[77] Force 2 is a "crisis or galvanizing event." The event might be a lawsuit, a change in the economy, or an announcement that "business as usual" will not be tolerated. Kanter, Stein and Jick[78] explain:

> The event or crisis seems to require – even demand – a response. If the crisis is defined as insoluble by traditional means, if traditional solutions quickly exhaust their value, or if stakeholders indicate that they will not be satisfied by the same old response, then a nontraditional solution may be pushed forward. ...In effect, variations from tradition create potential, but until the system has enough of a "crack" in its shell, they are not able to penetrate.

Notably, a crisis need not be exogenous to constitute a force for change. That is, a crisis may be precipitated by the organisation's own actions, and yet still demand response.

Forces 1 and 2 in combination set the stage for change, but neither new ideas nor crisis alone guarantees change without two other conditions: explicit strategic decisions in favour of change, and individuals with enough power to act as "prime movers" for its implementation. Force 3, then, is "change strategists and strategic decisions." This is where most change management or strategic planning literature begins: Leaders enter and develop strategies that use Force 1 to solve the problems inherent in Force 2. "A new definition of the situation is formulated, a new set of plans, that lifts the experiments of innovators from the periphery to centre stage, that reconceptualises them as the emergent tradition rather than as departures from it".[79]

Force 4 is "individual prime movers," which Kanter defines as people able to push the new organisational reality, often by empowering the champions or advocates of change. Prime movers may sell the new strategy in many ways: by repetition (mentioning the new idea or new practice on every possible occasion), by making clear that they believe the new vision, by visiting subordinates to answer their questions about the new vision, by developing slogans that communicate a new way of operating, by changing the agenda at staff meetings, by demanding that new items be contained in reports, and by concentrating on symbolic management. The point is to change the organisation's culture and direction through "signposts in the morass of organisational messages".[80]

According to Kanter, one last Force (#5) is needed for true organisational change to occur: "action vehicles." Action vehicles transform abstract notions of change into reality – ideas become actual procedures, structures, or processes. They are important because, in order for change to take hold, change recipients need to know what the change means for their own unique activities. Changes need to be written into the fabric of the organisation – into job descriptions, work processes, contracts, and so forth. On top of this, individuals need to be convinced that using the new practices clearly creates benefits for them so that they will use them, and incentives must

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[77] Kanter (1983) p. 291
[78] Kanter, Stein and Jick (1992) p. 499
[79] Kanter (1983) p. 294
[80] Kanter (1983) p. 298

support desired actions. Employees are also encouraged to look for broader applications of the new ideas. Ultimately, the goal is to create momentum and critical mass. "…[M]ore and more people use the new practices, their importance is repeated frequently, and on multiple occasions. It becomes embarrassing, 'out-of-sync,' not to use them".[81] Kanter further argues that when organisation change efforts fail, it is often because of a weak Force 5, rather than an inherent problem with the innovative ideas themselves.

Box 11 weaves together Lewin's, Schein's, and Kanter's theories of change, and distils from all three the necessary ingredients for successful organisational change. Box 12 includes specific challenges to the needed causal factors in New Zealand.

The lessons for New Zealand are many. Conditions that hinder culture change toward an environment in which collaboration is seriously considered as a management and leadership strategy include the stifling of grassroots innovation; programmes that are stripped down to their basics with managers "playing tennis at the net" all day without time to get off the court and think about new ways of serving the public; lack of shared understanding concerning the meaning of the words collaboration, collaborate, collaborative and co-production; a culture where risk is discouraged and public servants fear deviating from standard operating procedure; and the fact that prime movers of collaborative ideas leave when room to manoeuvre closes down.

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[81] Kanter (1983) p. 301

Box 11	
Organisational Change Criteria **(combined from Lewin, Schein and Kanter)**	
Phase of Change	**Required Causal Factors**
Unfreezing	Grassroots innovations are present
	Crisis or galvanising event occurs
	Disconfirming information is present
	Restraints of group norms and psychological defences are reduced
	Survival anxiety drives acceptance of disconfirming information
	Psychological safety permits motivation to change
Change	Cognitive redefinition
	New standards of judgment and evaluation are developed
	Change strategists exist and make explicit strategic decisions in favour of change
	Prime movers sell change strategy and empower change advocates
Refreezing	Action vehicles transform abstract ideas into reality
	Rewards buttress new desired behaviour
	Changes to old norms and behaviour are embedded throughout the organisation

Box 12	
Organisational Change in New Zealand	
Phase of Change	**Conditions in New Zealand That Hinder Organisation Change**

Unfreezing	**Grassroots innovation stifled:**
	    Workers report having to collaborate under the radar. When collaboration rises up from underground, it is often cut off as not complying with standard operating procedure
	Crisis or galvanising event occurs:
	    No crisis or galvanising event. Business as usual reinforces behaviour as usual. The exception is the Christchurch earthquake which catalysed collaboration.
	Disconfirming information present but rejected:
	    BPS increased the awareness of areas where performance is low. Leaders sent message: you can evolve or leave. Government sees opportunity, not just risk, but bias by some in the trenches is to dismiss collaboration.
	Restraints of group norms and psychological defences are reduced:
	    Workers weary of reforms and fearful of new reforms seek to maintain current equilibrium
	Schedule pressure thwarts survival anxiety:
	    Public servants often have enormous responsibilities. Dealing with the concerns of the government of the day keep public servants putting out fires. Yet the complexity of new challenges and changes has begun to raise survival anxiety
	Learning anxiety is profound:
	    Characterisation of accountability targets that "we will meet" makes it hard to admit weakness or failure.
	Psychological safety absent:
	    Some have it, some don't. Many "hunker down" as "failure is not an option" is deeply engrained in culture.

Change	**Cognitive redefinition undermined:**
	    Change agenda superseded by responding to government of the day; Message not getting through bureaucracy
	New standards of judgment are not stabilized:
	    101 definitions of collaboration create uncertainty. Leadership instability through high turnover undermines initial efforts to evaluate and change culture
	Change is more tactical than strategic:
	    Change targets are typically technical in nature and narrowly construed. Some official pronouncements do elevate and enhance the message of collaboration
	Prime movers do not persist:
	    Prime movers leave when room to manoeuvre closes down. Leadership changes, as well as unclear understandings of when and how to collaborate undermine stability of message

Refreezing	**Action vehicles create new structures and processes:**
	    Lack of attention to collaborative structures and processes. Leaders struggle with finding the "glue" to make the message about collaboration stick. Collaboration just beginning to be written into job descriptions, work processes, individual performance agreements and contracts.
	Rewards buttress actions:
	    Few rewards for durable solutions to long-term problems. View that there are few rewards for collaboration, only negatives such as loss of budget, loss of time, or loss of authority.
	Changes to old norms and behaviour are embedded throughout the organisation:
	    Continual restructuring makes new behaviours difficult to freeze. Employees not encouraged to look for broader applications of collaboration. Collaboration seen as deviant behaviour or admitting weakness rather than a savvy management or leadership strategy. Strategic collaboration is the exception, not the rule.

Widespread change within a bureaucracy is difficult to enact and typically can take up to ten years to accomplish. Here are some concrete steps that can be taken to jump-start changes in the culture of the New Zealand bureaucracy with the goal of creating opportunities for collaborative advantage:

- Make clear what will be monitored and controlled. If you monitor only unilateral activities within silos, you will get unilateral activities within silos.

- Pay attention to the language that you use. An over-emphasis on accountability might decrease personal responsibility.

- React appropriately to critical incidents and organisational crises. There will be failed collaborations. Private businesses fail all the time, evaluate the failure, and move on. Think about the message you want to send when collaborations fail. Your employees will be watching.

- Practice deliberate role modelling and coaching. Collaborate with other managers and leaders. The Brackenridge Declaration[82], co-authored by the SSC senior leadership team is one example. (See Box 13)

- Initiate collaborative programmes. Develop logos and symbols to represent the collaborations. Be the sources of collaborative ideas. Establish clear criteria for rewards and punishments. Those criteria should include collaboration.

- Coordinate organisational designs and cultural messages to emphasize that collaboration is here to stay.

- Coordinate organisational systems and procedures with cultural messages to emphasize that you are serious about collaboration as a management and leadership strategy.

- Design physical space to communicate an organisation culture that embraces collaboration.

- Employ stories about events and people who initiated collaborations in order to better serve the public. Celebrate successes through rituals and ceremonies. Give awards for exemplary collaboration. Your employees will be watching to see what happens when someone succeeds.

- Develop formal statements of organisation philosophy that includes collaboration as a management and leadership strategy.

- Approach transformation as comprehensive organisation change. Analyse the forest, but don't forget the individual trees.

- Coordinate cultural leadership and change with strategic planning. Empower those employees who "get it" by letting them design and lead strategic planning efforts.

- Coordinate cultural change with technology, structure, and design. Take a systems approach to better understand how the pieces of the puzzle fit together. Pay attention to physical symbols.

- Pay attention to the informal organisation. While the formal organisation might state a commitment to collaboration, the informal organisation might be

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[82] Morrison (2014)

passively aggressive toward the idea. Formal leaders can attempt to change or manage culture, but organisations also will be influenced by informal opinion leaders.

Box 13

THE BRACKENRIDGE DECLARATION

WE are the leadership team of the State Services:

Our purpose is:

Collective leadership for a better New Zealand

Towards this we will:

- Be collectively ambitious for New Zealand, by focussing on the needs of our customers
- Mobilise our people and resources to ensure those leading complex system-wide issues are successful
- See past any barriers and make what needs to happen happen
- Champion state sector reform in our organisations
- Support each other as a team "out together, back together", pick up the phone
- Collectively and individually support and implement the work of functional leaders
- Own and champion decisions of the State Sector Reform Leadership Group
- Prioritise our biannual State Services Leadership team meetings.

27 March 2014

Need for A Consistent Understanding of the Term "Collaboration"

Collaborative governance is an idea that resonates with many, yet the terms used often are not defined or lack common understanding. There are seemingly "101 definitions of collaboration". While this is the case in New Zealand, this is not exclusively a New Zealand problem. Rather, the literature and thinking in this area are relatively new and lack much in the way of a consistent use of terminology.

One simple yet important lesson from this study is to define what one means by collaboration, collaborative, collaborate, co-production and other similar words. Be consistent in one's use and make sure there is shared understanding. Memoranda of agreement where terms are defined and specified are one way of moving toward greater clarity and understanding of terms. Explicitly stating definitions and meanings on official websites would be useful.

Tied in with this is the need to reorganise the SSC website. Labelling documents and pages on the website as "historical" and "current" would go a long way toward sorting out the barrage of seemingly unfiltered information about collaboration that one is presented with. This is needed primarily to send a consistent message to the

bureaucracy and cement the message about the need to collaborate. Also, duplicative entries need to be deleted.

One caveat must be mentioned. New Zealand is a country lauded for its transparency. Researchers and citizens alike praise government websites for easy access to government documents through the internet. This availability and transparency, of course, should not be compromised in an effort to make sense of the plethora of documents about collaboration.

Expand the Analysis: Some Factors to Consider Before Collaborating

Collaboration for public managers can be complex. There are no one-size-fits-all recipes for a successful collaboration, as managers need to balance many factors. Some of the most important factors beyond traditional cost-benefit analyses that affect collaborations are presented in this section.

Context

Context matters. All collaborations are embedded in a specific policy context, and the behaviour of collaborators is influenced by that context.[83] There are hundreds of possible variations in contextual factors. Examples include political interest or scrutiny, government regulation, potential litigation, statutory and court mandates, and unionisation, all of which interact with organisational culture and management practices. A collaboration that works in one context may be unsuccessful in another. Potential collaborators need to study the contextual setting to ascertain whether collaboration is the right tool to use in this circumstance.

Purpose or the Mission of the Collaboration

Collaborations serve a variety of purposes. The interests of collaborators may conflict with each other, but collaborators must agree on the overall purpose of the collaboration to work together. Numerous studies conclude that among the success factors in collaboration is a clearly mutually agreed upon purpose or mission.[84,85,86,87,88,89] One factor to weigh when considering collaborating is whether one's organisation's mission is compatible with the purpose or mission of the collaboration.

Member Selection and Capacity Building

Those who collaborate bring their unique skills, resources, expertise, experience, perspectives, knowledge, diverse educational and cultural backgrounds, as well as values to collaborative endeavours. Capacity is the ability of a member organisation to secure the human, technological, political, or other necessary resources that allow it to participate in collaborative activities.[90] A collaborating group's "representativeness"

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[83] Isett, Mergel, LeRoux, Mischen, and Rethemeyer (2011)
[84] Agranoff & McGuire (2003)
[85] Bryson, Crosby, & Stone (2006)
[86] Page (2008)
[87] Ingraham & Getha-Taylor (2008)
[88] Provan, Kenis, & Human (2008)
[89] McGuire and Silvia (2010)
[90] Gazley (2008)

could suffer if participants lack sufficient competence to participate effectively.[91] Communication, training, and a diverse selection of participants with multiple (representative) perspectives often are needed for building capacities. Further, as individuals collaborate, they most likely will learn from other individuals and there typically will be a generation of social capital.[92,93] and shared meaning.[94]. Capacity building often increases the likelihood of success in collaborations and could help in developing an inter-organisational mission and a collaborative culture. Hence, among the factors to consider when weighing whether to collaborate or not is how members will be selected, who will participate, and how or if collaborative capacity can be built.

Motivation and Commitment of the Collaborators

Individuals and organisations come together to collaborate for a wide array of reasons including economic, social, organisational or political, to address cross-sector failure,[95] to leverage resources and knowledge,[96] for more efficient delivery of services,[97,98] to seek visibility or legitimacy, and to build collaborative relationships. Before one agrees to collaborate, one should weigh the motivation and commitment of other collaborators.

Structure and Governance of the Collaboration

Among the factors that may affect the success or the failure of a collaboration are "the structure of the collaborative effort and how … [it] will be governed".[99] Structure in part delineates authority and responsibilities within the collaboration. Collaborators face a paradox of flexibility-stability here. Collaboration is often preferred over bureaucratic structures because it may be more flexible. But it can also be unstable, and may make accountability difficult. A centralised structure tends to yield coordination and efficiency to the collaborative arrangement.[100] Governance as it is used in this context is the activity of making joint decisions and rules to govern the collaboration. These might include rule making and agreements concerning how collaborators will interact, communicate, and work within the collaborative structure in order to achieve the outcomes. O'Leary and Bingham[101] provide a nine-step process for building a collaborative governance structure with the aim of trying to prevent conflict through forethought and adaption to the needs of the collaborators, resource and power distribution, communication, context, and the degree of flexibility required for the collaboration to progress. See Box 14.

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[91] Leach (2006)
[92] Agranoff and McGuire (2003)
[93] Waugh and Streib (2006)
[94] Gray (2000)
[95] Bryson et al. (2006)
[96] Graddy and Chen (2009)
[97] Agranoff and McGuire (2003)
[98] Bardach (1998)
[99] McGuire (2006) p. 38
[100] Milward and Provan (2003) p. 8
[101] O'Leary and Bingham (2007) p. 27

Box 14

A Step-by-Step Model for Building Agreement on the Governance Structure of a Network

- Identify network members whose agreement is necessary
- Identify the scope and jurisdiction of the network
- Address issues of the network's legitimacy
- Negotiate the ground rules
- Negotiate the processes governing exchanging views
- Discuss administration and allocation of responsibilities
- Negotiate the decision rules for closure on an issue
- Identify a system for resolving impasse
- Identify a decision process for ending the network

O'Leary and Bingham (2007)

Power in Collaborations

Power imbalances within collaborations may result in conflict and co-optation, and may affect the success of the collaboration. Structure and governance mechanisms can be both a source of and a remedy to power imbalances as they delineate the power-sharing arrangement and authority among collaborators. Collaborators with more resources may have stronger bargaining power. Sometimes the reputation of the collaborators may also be source of power. Government officials may be able to exercise power over the other collaborators because they represent the government. Agranoff[102] concludes that a legal mandate will increase authority and power and will tend to increase the likelihood of success of a collaboration. Hence, when considering whether to collaborate or not, one should analyse sources of power as well as possible power imbalances.

Accountability

Accountability in collaborations has been defined as "ensuring that collaborators work together in ways that accord with the intent of voters and public officials who authorise their joint efforts".[103] Collaborations often address policy problems that cross jurisdictional and sectoral boundaries. Solutions require the collaboration of multiple stakeholders, such as national, regional, and local government actors; non-profit organisations; and the private sector. Private organisations that work in collaborations, in particular, have a unique responsibility to citizens. Collaborative networks tasked with carrying out the business of government have received criticism for perceived problems with accountability and, tied in with this, a lack of transparency. Unlike an agency that acts alone in a traditional bureaucratic way, a

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[102] Agranoff (2006)
[103] Page (2008) p. 138

network may not present a clear chain of command of clearly identified responsibility. Network meetings may not always be open to the public. And yet, collaborative public management networks often are carrying out the essential missions of governance: They are making, implementing, and carrying out public policy. Before agreeing to a collaborative arrangement, it is important to determine if and how a collaborative group will be held accountable to citizens and public officials.

Communication

Information exchange, dialogue, sharing ideas, brainstorming, articulating and asserting views, negotiations, bargaining, deliberations, problem solving, conflict management, and conflict resolution are important for collaborations.[104] Deliberation and dialogue allow collaborators to brainstorm, critically examine each other's arguments, identify common interests, and build a base of shared knowledge and social capital.[105,106,107] Those who are weighing whether to collaborate or not should make sure that communication channels are inclusive, transparent, and regular. These can be formalised in governance mechanisms.

Perceived Legitimacy

Legitimacy is a generalised perception that the actions of a collaborating entity are desirable, proper, or within some system of norms, beliefs, and definitions. For a collaboration to exist, work, and achieve its purpose, collaborators should consider how they will build and manage legitimacy.[108] Legitimacy may help in securing political and financial resources, as well as assuring the perpetuation of organisation activity.[109] Legally required collaborations have a certain degree of granted legitimacy. Legitimacy can also be built through trusting previous relationships, and by conforming to the norms of the institutional environment.[110] One factor to consider before collaborating is what is the perceived legitimacy of the collaborating group.

Trust

Many scholars maintain that trust is critical for building relationships and sustaining a collaboration.[111,112,113,114,115,116] Cummings and Bromiley analyse trust as keeping commitments, negotiating honestly, and not taking undue advantage of individuals or groups.[117] Some collaborators prefer to work with others with whom they have a previous history of relationships or associations, as an element of trust is already built

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[104] Bingham, O'Leary and Carlson (2008)
[105] Creighton (2005)
[106] Leach (2006)
[107] Roberts (2002)
[108] Milward and Provan (2006)
[109] Alexander and O'Leary (2009)
[110] Bryson et al. (2006)
[111] Bardach (1998)
[112] Gray (1985)
[113] Huxham (2003)
[114] Huxham (1996)
[115] Milward and Provan (2006)
[116] Van Slyke (2007)
[117] Cummings and Bromiley (1996)

in between them.[118] Trust can be developed among new collaborators, however, through clear communication, reciprocity, goal alignment, transparency, information and knowledge sharing, and by demonstrating competency, good intentions, and follow-through. Before agreeing to a collaboration, ask if there is trust among those who might be collaborating, or if trust may be built.

Information Technology

Some collaborations have transgressed geographical borders to become virtual organisations and networks almost limitless in their scale, scope, and structure. Integrated information networks can now link all major components of organisations, management information systems, geographic information systems, intranet, and internet. Communication technologies, social media, and other technological innovations have led to a more intricate, integrated, and interactive form of e-governance. Collaborators must understand how best to harness the potential of information technology but should also be cautious of the challenges it poses. Those contemplating a collaboration should fully understand the need, role, and nature of the technology required to participate fully in a particular collaboration, as well as their own capability to manage the information technology needed for effective collaboration.[119,120]

New Ways of Leading in a World of Shared Problems

Leadership is critical to developing and sustaining a collaborative culture that will encourage and support working across political and organisational boundaries. The word "leadership" in network or collaborative settings is very different from that in hierarchical settings. Section 1 discussed some of the processes and structures central to leading in collaborative networks.

The contemporary leadership literature points out the limits of the "great man", heroic, and "leader as sage" perspectives. The biggest problem with these traditional views of leadership is that it they are concepts that reside exclusively in the individual. Tied in with this, the perspective is often narrowly locked into a leader-follower-shared goals triad.[121]

Leadership in collaborative networks is contrasted to these traditional views of leadership in Box 15. Lester Salamon[122] observed that collaboration and collaborative governance shift the emphasis from the control of large bureaucratic organisations and the bureaucratic way of managing public programmes to enablement skills. These enablement skills are used to bring people together, to engage partners horizontally, and to bring multiple collaborators together for a common end in a situation of interdependence. Examples include negotiation, facilitation, collaborative problem solving, and conflict management.

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[118] Tschirtart, Amezcua, & Anker (2009)
[119] Pardo, Gil-Garcia, & Luna-Reyes (2010)
[120] Rainey (2013)
[121] Drath, McCauley, Palus, Van Velsor, P. O'Connor, and McGuire (2008).
[122] Salamon (2002)

Collaborations and networks dedicated to the type of large-scale public policy problems facing developed countries like New Zealand usually do not emerge spontaneously:

> Someone has to call the initial meeting and decide who should attend. The group needs to figure out how to organize its work, perhaps seek out new members, decide what it will do collectively, and most importantly find resources to get initial efforts going, even if the resources are something as simple as finding meeting space and getting permission to perform these new activities as part of regular job duties. Network members do not automatically embrace the idea of giving up autonomy or willingly embrace the need to work together, and often are reluctant to subsume their goals to those of the larger network. Participating in a network may carry risks and certainly imposes costs on participation. Accordingly, network governance has a distinctly emergent character, and requires a requisite amount of *collaborative leadership* on behalf of the whole network to initiate processes that inspire, nurture, support, and facilitate communication and involvement by members (e.g., individuals and organizations) in governance processes.[123]

As a collaborative network evolves, leadership roles will evolve. Rather than one individual leading the network at all times, it is typical to see different organisations and different individuals stepping forward to fulfil different leadership roles at different times. See Box 16. "Thus, collaborative leadership is 'decentered' with the roles for leaders distributed widely across the network."[124]

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[123] Imperial, Ospina, Johnston, O'Leary, Williams, Johnson, and Thomsen (forthcoming)
[124] Ibid.

Box 15

Traditional (Bureaucratic) versus Collaborative Leadership[125]

Traditional	Collaborative
Vision is possessed and articulated by the leader	Helps craft collective vision
Leader frames the problem and solution for followers	Helps others frame a collective definition of the problem and appropriate solutions
Leader has to have followers to lead	Leader is simultaneously a follower
Unilateral decision-making based on hierarchy, formal position, or legal authority	Shared decisions and values
Communication within a single organisation or homogeneous group with shared interests or values	Communication across diverse groups with competing interests and values
Working within boundaries (e.g., programme, organisation, jurisdiction)	Working across boundaries
Focus on certainty	Tolerates and embraces ambiguity and complexity
Leader directs action	Leader facilitates and coordinates shared action
More closely aligned with transactional theories of leadership	More closely aligned with charismatic or transformational theories of leadership

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[125] Imperial, Ospina, Johnston, O'Leary, Williams, Johnson, and Thomsen (forthcoming)

Box 16

Collaborative Leadership Roles as Network Governance Evolves[126]
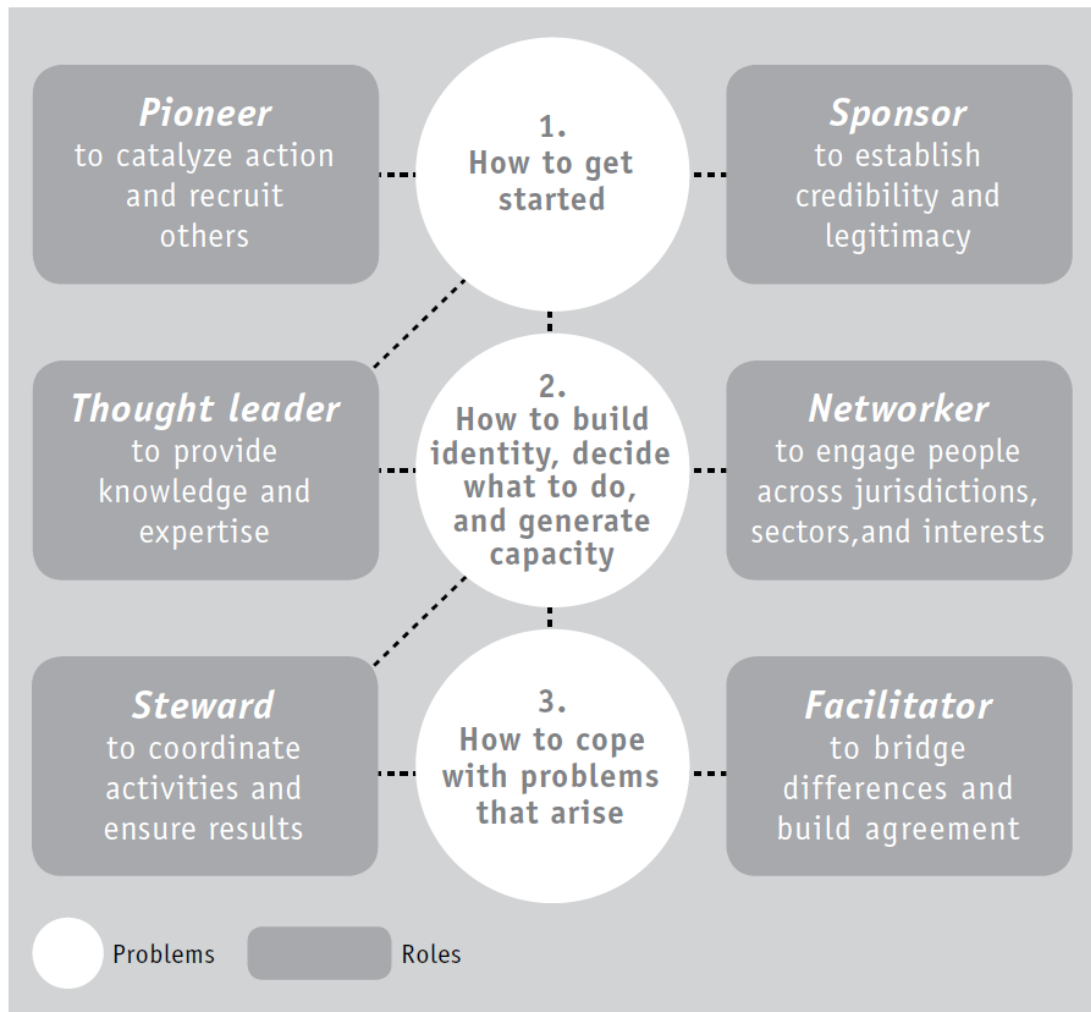
A move from a traditional leadership culture where individual accountability reigns supreme to a collaborative culture where leadership is emergent and shared, will not be easy for some in New Zealand. But there are enough people who see the need for increased collaboration under the right circumstances, who want to move forward to better serve the people of New Zealand, that the odds of success are promising.

Cultivating the Collaborative Mind Set

Collaboration is deeply dependent on the skills of officials and managers. Important is who is representing an organisation, agency, or jurisdiction at the table, whether they can see collaborative advantage, and whether they have the necessary skills to be an effective collaborator. In 2012, O'Leary, Choi and Gerard[127] surveyed 304 members

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[126] Imperial, Ospina, Johnston, O'Leary, Williams, Johnson, and Thomsen (forthcoming)
[127] O'Leary, Choi, and Gerard (2012)

of the US Senior Executive Service (SES) and asked them the question, "What is the skill set for the successful collaborator?" In addition to strategy and technical knowledge (considered baseline or entry-level skills by respondents), the most frequently mentioned answers to the question dealt with personal attributes and interpersonal skills, followed by group process skills.

The most frequently mentioned *personal attributes* were (in order): open minded, patient, change oriented, flexible, unselfish, persistent, diplomatic, honest, trustworthy, respectful, empathetic, goal oriented, decisive, friendly, and a sense of humour. The most frequently mentioned *interpersonal skills* were good communication, listening, and the ability to work with people. Tied with this were *group process skills*, mentioned third in importance as part of the skill set for the successful collaborator. These included facilitation; interest-based negotiation; collaborative problem solving; skill in understanding group dynamics, culture and personalities; compromise; conflict resolution; and mediation. Taken as a whole, O'Leary, Choi and Gerard call this "the collaborative mindset."

The collaborative mindset can be acquired by most and collaborative problem solving can be learned. (See Box 17.)

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Box 17

How to Do Interest-Based Collaborative Problem Solving

- Define the issue and frame it as a joint task to meet both parties' needs
- Educate each other about your interests (disclose and listen)
- Look for ways to expand the pie (create value before you claim value)
- Generate multiple options for settlement; if you get stuck, go back and review what people's interests are
- Evaluate the options (how well do they meet needs)?
- Select/modify options based on which ones meet needs most
- Use objective criteria to resolve impasses.
- Develop a plan to implement the agreement including monitoring.

O'Leary and Bingham (2007)

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Public managers in New Zealand would benefit from training in collaboration as a management and leadership strategy, including the skills mentioned above. I close this section with recommendations based on the expert insights of New Zealanders who participated in my research, as well as my own consulting experience. See Box 18.

Box 18

Recommendations to Agency Heads to Create a Collaborative Environment

- Accept ideas from people and places you would never think of. Learn from others.

- Bring in thought leaders who might create a spark of an idea in your employees.

- Seek people with strong public service motivation, dedicated to the overall wellbeing of New Zealanders.

- Seek people who will think widely about options.

- Seek people willing "to play outside their comfort zone."

- Seek people comfortable with acting "transformationally" rather than staying in an old "transactional" mode

- Seek people who can see collaborative advantage.

- Seek people with exemplary collaborative skills such as negotiation, conflict resolution, collaborative problem solving, facilitation, and strategy. If your employees do not have these skills, obtain training for them.

- Provide an enabling environment to buffer short-term factors that undermine success

- Empower network members to enable participation.

- Frame problems and solutions to create the space needed for collaborators to find productive ways to work together.

- Educate employees about the importance of the strategic use of individual attributes, interpersonal skills, and group process skills while collaborating.

- Incentivise and reward collaboration among individuals and organisations.

- Embed collaboration in performance evaluation and core competencies.

- Document and share how collaborations are working so that managers can learn from successful and failed experiences.

- Reshape management and leadership education to include intensive self-assessment and emotional intelligence development.

- Address challenges to data sharing and incompatible technologies that block inter- and intra-agency collaborative work.

- Address structural barriers to interagency work.

5   CONCLUSION: IMPORTANT CHOICES AHEAD FOR NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand's challenges, as in all countries, are not getting any easier. Global climate change, immigration, pollution problems, housing, child poverty, public health, disaster response, and reducing crime are only a few of the examples of cross-boundary challenges that could benefit from collaborative approaches.

New Zealand has taken positive steps in recent years to encourage collaboration across boundaries. The Better Public Services programme currently being implemented is the latest in a long line of efforts to catalyse public servants to think and operate collaboratively. Especially significant are changes to the State Sector, Public Finance and Crown Entities Acts passed by Parliament in 2013 which knocked down legal impediments to collaboration. Stewardship is now mentioned in legislation and in discussions. Also significant are innovations such as the "five results areas", functional leads, heads of profession, shared services, and sector group cross-cutting initiatives.

Many local and regional governments in New Zealand are doing significant work in the area of collaboration. I saw creative collaboration both with the public and among government entities in the meetings I observed in Otago, Canterbury, Wellington, and Auckland. I witnessed collaboration in human services jump-started by co-location in most communities I visited.

There are important lessons to learn from successful or promising collaborative efforts such as the Land and Water Forum, Canterbury Health, Auckland Marine Spatial Plan, the Student Volunteer Army, Environment Canterbury, and a whole host of successful collaborations in New Zealand. And there appears to be a significant amount of collaboration "under the radar", driven by people who are passionate about issues. As Bill Ryan put it:

> There are pockets of [collaborative] innovation to be found in many places in ... New Zealand ... Some of these initiatives are big, on-the-surface and proclaim their features (especially about partnership, collaboration and networks). Some are small, under the radar and doing 'what needs to be done' with little fanfare ... I suggest that they are signs of the future.[128]

Collaborative governance in New Zealand is not just about getting the job of government done. It is about larger issues such as control and liberation, opportunity and constraint, and creativity and conflict.[129] New Zealand is like a group of swimmers perched at the edge of a new lake, deciding whether to dive in. Some have dipped their toes into the water of collaboration but only a few have taken the plunge to fully explore collaborative potential. There is a healthy scepticism about collaboration and New Zealanders rightly are weighing on a case-by-case basis whether to collaborate or not.

Collaboration is hard, and it is not always wise. There is no magic formula or magic elixir that can be used to solve all public problems collaboratively, and there will always be tensions between the vertical and the horizontal. Collaboration in New

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[128] Ryan (2011)
[129] Dickinson and Sullivan (2014)

Zealand does not mean tossing out all the good that came from the New Public Management reforms; rather it means building on these reforms to better serve the public in those areas that can best be addressed horizontally.

New Zealand is a country with a great history of innovation and is more "nimble" in enacting reforms than most countries. Sufficient political will is needed to change the bureaucracy to incentivise collaborative approaches. If any country is up for the challenge, New Zealand is.

There is a compelling case that the time is right to commit to organisation culture change as well as the training of New Zealand public servants to enable collaboration when appropriate. The world is growing more complex. Collaboration across boundaries is needed to better serve New Zealanders now and in the future.

Some Questions to Ask Before You Collaborate:

- Is this the right issue, time, and place for a collaborative approach?
- Will this approach help you reach pivotal performance objectives and better serve the public?
- Is the process being proposed or developed likely to be fair and effective?
- Are you and your organisation suited for participation (mission, expertise, time)?

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