

Evaluating the Performance of Collaborative Environmental Governance

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The Problem We Face

Collaboration has increasingly replaced other forms of environmental governance

- Such as centralized planning and regulation
- This may be a good thing...

But we have very little knowledge about the environmental outcomes of collaboration

- Collaboration appears to be good for social outcomes (like social capital)
- But it may be bad for the environment

What is Collaborative Governance?

- ◆ Multiple governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders working together to develop and advance a shared vision

Research Questions

Is collaborative governance good for the environment?

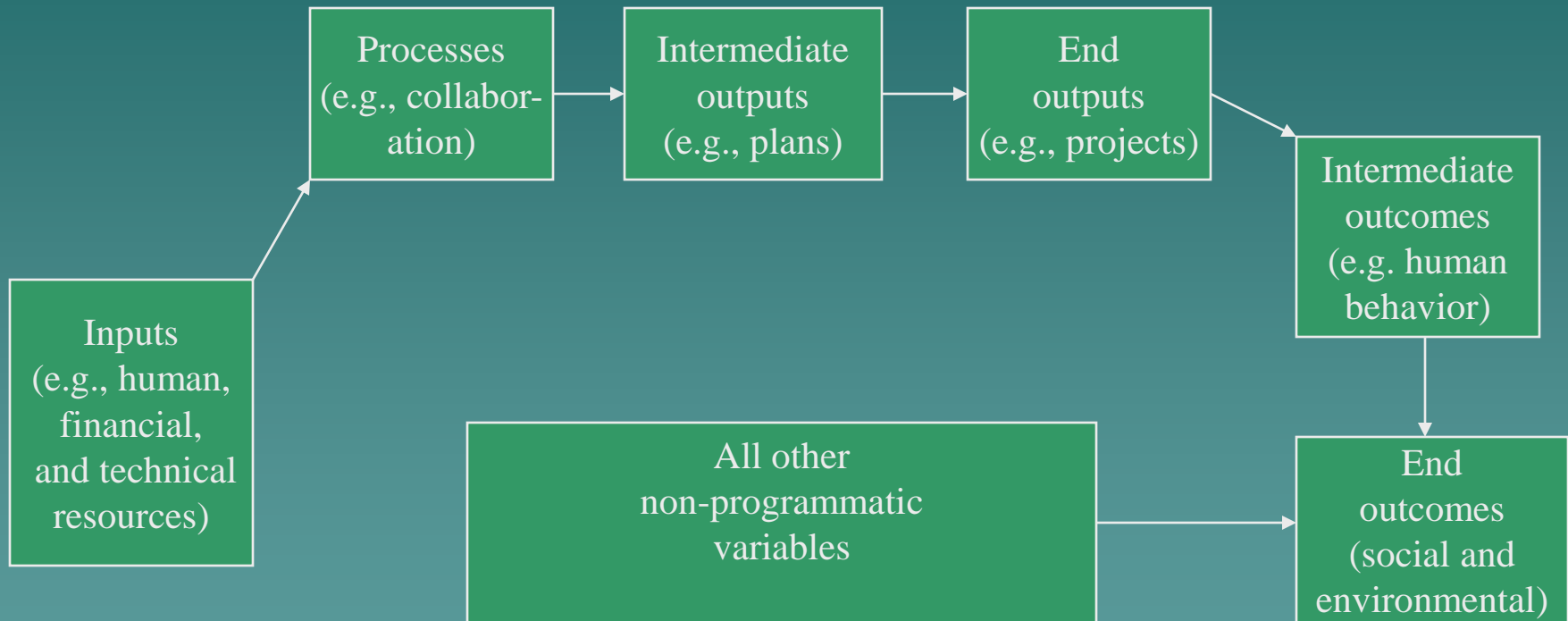
Does collaborative governance produce better environmental outcomes than other forms of governance (such as centralized planning or regulation)?

How Collaboration Might Affect the Environment

Negatively: Lower common-denominator solutions during policy adoption

Positively: More durable solutions during implementation

Basic Logic Model



State of the Literature on Collaborative Environmental Governance

Empirical research has focused on:

- Inputs (e.g., human, technical, financial)
- Processes (e.g., consensus, ADR)
- Outputs (e.g., plans, permits, projects)
- Social outcomes (e.g., trust, social capital)

Very little research on environmental outcomes

Recent Empirical Claims about Environmental Outcomes

Leach and Sabatier (2005) measure participant *perceptions* of environmental change

Others use outputs as proxies for outcomes (either intentionally or carelessly)

- Salmon recovery plans; farmland preservation; Superfund projects; "choices"
- Beware: outputs may not be good proxies for outcomes, due to intervening variables

Possible Research Designs

- ◆ Experimental
- ◆ Quasi-experimental
- ◆ Statistical
- ◆ Case Studies

Experimental Methods

◆ What

- Randomized trials
- With focus on collaboration as a management intervention

◆ Feasibility

- Very low
- Primarily due to long time horizons for environmental change

Quasi-Experimental Methods

◆ What

- Also focus on collaboration as a management intervention
- But w/o randomized controls or other features of classic experimental design

◆ Feasibility

- Easy to find natural experiments
- Harder to find matched-case controls (using most-similar comparative methods)
- Harder to find valid longitudinal data

Statistical Methods

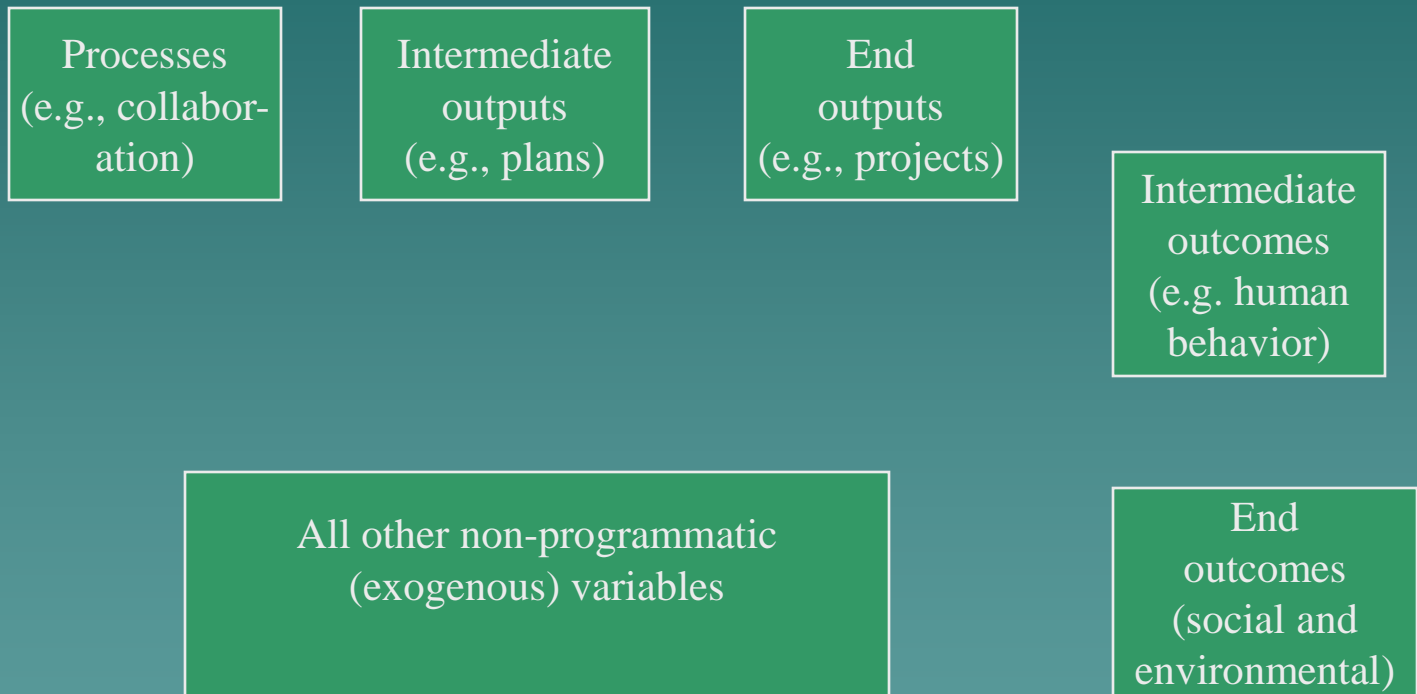
◆ What

- Analyzes correlations among variables
- to test probability of causal effects (not causal mechanisms)

◆ Feasibility

- High for existing data sets
 - ◆ e.g., PART (with caveat)
- Harder to find valid longitudinal data

Experimental, Quasi-Experimental, and Statistical Methods



Case Study Methods

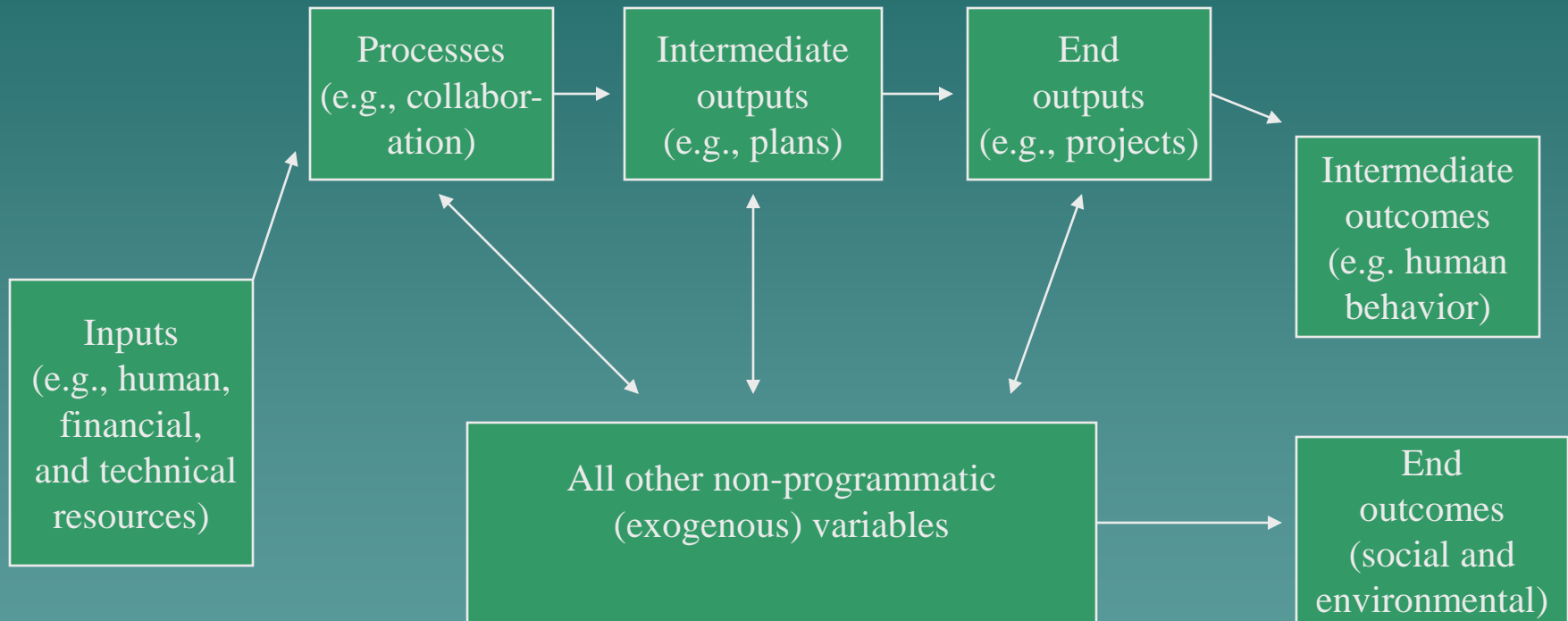
◆ What

- Emphasizes process tracing in causal sequences
- Searches for causal mechanisms, not just causal effects

◆ Feasibility

- High
- But requires careful use of counterfactuals, congruence with theory, and controlled comparisons (holding other variables constant)

Case Studies



Accountability for Performance

- ◆ Collaboration should be held to the same performance standards as other forms of governance
- ◆ Collaboration may be quite complementary to developing performance mgt systems
 - Incentives for partners to monitor, gather information, develop metrics for success
- ◆ But how can we do it from a methodological perspective?

Our Research Agenda

In process

- Case studies of public sector collaborative efforts
 - To show links from processes through to outcomes
- Coding PART reports
 - Matched case comparisons for statistical analysis: collaborative v. non-collaborative cases within programs
 - But many outputs/outcomes are miscoded
- Link to theory for generalizability

Future Research

- Quasi-experimental method
 - Using remote sensing data, water quality reports, etc.
 - Ideas for comparative cases, anyone?
- How do perf. mgt. systems get started?

Conclusion

- Is collaborative governance good for the environment?
- Does collaborative governance produce better environmental outcomes than other forms of governance (such as centralized planning or regulation)?

These are very important (and too often unasked) questions

But they are difficult to answer

And they will keep us busy for a long time