

A Gender Analysis of Women in Public-Private-Voluntary Sector ‘Partnerships’

Abstract

The nature of work and traditional notions of the public sector have been changing with increasing collaborative governance and delivery of public services among public, private and voluntary sector organizations. In the UK, governments at national and devolved levels of government have adopted a collaborative governance approach to service delivery through various network and partnership arrangements. This paper explores these collaborative governance arrangements from a gender perspective, specifically the perceptions of women in public-private-voluntary sector partnerships. While previous research in this area have explored aspects of collaborative governance such as power, trust, accountability, decision making, performance, exchange of information and participation; there is very little research on women within these networks. The paper therefore provides a gendered analysis, disaggregating survey data to better understand the dynamics, for women, of collaborative governance and partnerships among public, private and voluntary sector organizations.

Keywords

gender, collaboration, partnerships, governance, networks

Introduction

During the 1980s and 1990s there was a gradual shift from bureaucratic, hierarchical control and command public service delivery to markets, with scholars describing this as New Public Management (Hood, 1991; Massey and Pyper, 2005). Recently, we can observe more collaborative forms of service delivery through a combination of public, private and voluntary sector organizations. Public service delivery through collaboration is now so pervasive that O’Flynn (2009) argues there is a ‘cult of collaboration.’ Scholarly debate has followed suit with myriad of terms for collaboration such as partnerships, co-governance, co-production, co-design, co-implementation, network governance, horizontal governance, etc. (see Voorberg et al, 2015; Carey and Dickinson, 2015). According to Cornforth et al (2015) collaborative governance is a formalized, joint-working arrangement between organizations that remain legally autonomous while engaging in on-going, coordinated collective action to achieve outcomes that none would have achieved independently. The definitions cover the spectrum of ‘working together’ (see Keast et al, 2012) with various co-productivities and partnership working among governmental and non-governmental sectors.

Scholars often employ network, resource dependency and institutional theoretical perspectives to explain collaborative organizational relations (Sowa, 2009). Network theorists argue that trust, reciprocity, the level of interdependence, shared norms, power, and leadership are important factors for successful inter-organizational working (Gazley, 2010). Resource dependency theorists would argue that collaboration stems from environmental constraints (ibid). In other words there is a need to secure resources to ensure that uncertainty and risk is reduced through collective inter-organizational working and sharing of resources

(ibid). Institutional theorists argue that collaboration stems from the need to develop shared response to problems facing an organization and the need to sustain the organization (ibid). However, there is seldom a gender perspective of collaborative governance. Indeed, Carey and Dickinson (2015) in their review of scholarly research of gender in public administration note a lack of attention paid to the issue and call for research in this area particularly with emerging discourse of greater inter-organizational working in an increasingly pluralist state. This paper will address the scholarly deficit and argue that collaborative governance, far from being collaborative, reinforces gender roles and patterns of behaviour through institutional isomorphism.

A Gender Perspective

Although there are various explanations for the under-employment and under-representation of women and paucity of female careers; much of the under-valuing of women in organizations can be traced to prejudicial sex-type roles assigned during socialisation (Nicolson, 1996). The social construction of male and female as biological sex categories results in gender categorisations of masculine and feminine in society (Nicolson, 1996). Gender is the way in which society organises lives in predictable patterns of behaviour such as division of labour (e.g. men being in paid employment as the provider and women as domestic and child carers), designation of resources, roles in public and private spheres, values and norms (Lorber and Farrell, 1991). Societal norms stratify male and female roles with men playing a more dominant role with resultant patriarchy (Walby, 1989). Gender relations are power relations through which masculine norms have superordinate status over feminine norms, and socialisation into gender roles is integral to the maintenance of patriarchal power structures (Nicolson, 1996). Patriarchy and gender norms are present in

organizations as a microcosm of society. Organizations are structured along gender norms with practices and policies that perpetuate unequal power, rewards and opportunities, and interpersonal interactions that confirm and recreate gendered patterns of behaviour (Acker, 1998).

In society and organizations the sexual division of labour results in men being associated with power, reason and gendered masculine norms such as dominance and assertiveness (Duest-Lahti and Kelly, 1995). Men are therefore associated with masculism and in the sexual division of labour are associated with ‘power duties’ and benefit from more social power than females (ibid). Women, socialized as feminine, are stereotyped as caring, unassertive, interested in appearance, dependent, illogical, and home and family focused (Nicolson, 1996). The manifestations of masculine and feminine norms in organizations results in men being considered more suitable for managerial and leadership positions, i.e. positions of power. Rank in organizational hierarchies influences ideas of leadership with the highest levels occupied by men often displaying masculine qualities (Eagly and Carli, 2007). Male managers and leaders consider agentic traits such as assertiveness, competitiveness, drive, decisiveness, achievement and action orientation to be requirements for success (ibid). By contrast, women face prejudice which flows from the mismatch of the social construction of femininity where women are expected to be nurturing, caring, communicative, ‘soft’, nice, kind and emotional (ibid). Thus, women are often perceived to have emotional intelligence, empathetic, cooperative and interdependent (ibid). Women who display masculine norms often face sanctions and discrimination from those within organizations (Duest-Lahti and Kelly, 1995; Eagly and Carli, 2007; Rhode, 2003). Thus, the path to managerial and leadership positions traverses gender norms and women often face a fraught trajectory to

reach senior levels in organizational hierarchies. This is commonly referred to as the 'glass ceiling' with a vertical occupational gender segregation present in most organizations (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Davidson and Cooper, 1992).

When women enter paid employment and seek careers within organizations there are prejudices, sexual discrimination and harassment (Kelly, 1995), and the manifestation of sex roles with women assigned to stereotypical feminine roles (McTavish and Miller, 2006). Women are often concentrated in stereotypical feminine roles and professions such as nursing, education, care and voluntary (unpaid) work (Guy and Newman, 2004; McTavish and Miller, 2006; Beattie et al, 2005). This is referred to horizontal occupational gender segregation with a tendency for men and women to work in different occupations (Blackburn, Browne, Brooks and Jarman, 2003). Emotions are a mainstay of health and human service professions, public education, paraprofessional jobs, and most support positions such as administrative assistants, receptionists, clerical staff, and secretaries (Guy and Newman, 2004). Female employees are often expected and required to engage in emotional work to a greater degree than men, and women often respond to occupational expectations (Meier et al, 2006). The perception is that women, because of the social construction of gender, are most likely to be required to provide emotional labour in an organization (Guy and Newman, 2004). Guy and Newman (2004) argue that emotional labour is a missing link in the chain of events that produces lower wages for jobs held primarily by women. Thus, there is a conflation of gender roles with emotional labour that involves caring and results in work skills and abilities that are taken for granted, undervalued and not compensated (ibid). One can observe the horizontal occupational gender segregation has links to emotional labour because many female-dominated occupations (e.g. health and social care) are expected to

employ emotional skills to bring about organizational ends, whereas male-dominated occupations are not (Meier, et al., 2006).

Evans et al (2014) in their research found that the cultural biases of women being primary carers for families results in organizational biases that favour those without family commitments. This results in organizational gender biases which assumes that women with children choose between families and careers (ibid). Women also have to fit into prevailing organizational culture particularly in 'male-streamed' government department (Evans et al, 2014:505). Evans et al (2014:506) also found that for women navigating to senior positions there was a masculine mobilization bias: a preference to 'clone people like us' which was reflected in perceptions of subjective recruitment practices; the perpetuation of 'boys' clubs' and limited support for women through government department networks; stereotyping women with children by assuming they are less committed and less reliable; intolerance for family-friendly work practices; and a disorted belief about women's capabilities.

Organizations place different expectations on men and women with those women who reach managerial and leadership positions often navigating masculine and feminine norms (Proudford, 2007). Proudford (2007) found that women employ a number of strategies to navigate their advancement within patriarchal organizational cultures. First, women have a tendency to downplay status differences preferring to focus on connectedness since emphasising status difference may appear arrogant or boastful (Proudford, 2007:435). Second, women's interpersonal relationships tend to be developmental, showing concern for others, establishing and maintaining mutuality in relationships (Proudford, 2007:436). A third distinction is women tend to focus on interpersonal relationship building while men emphasize the task at hand (Proudford, 2007:437). Thus, for men being perceived as

competent, influential and powerful is highly desirable while for women being seen as likeable, nice and helpful is perceived to be valued (Proudford, 2007:438). The way in which men and women perceive they will be evaluated by the organization reinforces gender stereotypes of women being communal (Eagly and Carli, 2007) with emotional labour expectations (Guy and Newman, 2004). When women do display masculine norms such as assertiveness, this is often followed with criticism (Eagly and Carli, 2007), organizational sanctions and personal derogation (Heilman, 2001). Consequently women learn to follow a dominant organizational paradigm which reinforce gender roles (Bryans and Mavin, 2003). Thus, women conformed to the prevailing masculine organizational culture with unconscious organizational biases causing continued disadvantage for women (Evans et al, 2014)

There are various organizational barriers to female employment and career progression such as prejudice, work-life balance, career breaks, part-time employment, performance evaluation, role expectations, etc. (see Kanter, 1977; Rhode, 2003; Karsten, 1994; Kellerman and Rhode, 2007; Heilman, 2001). The perception that women are not effectively networked as men reflects the dual role of women in paid employment as well as domestic roles. Women often have to balance work and life beyond work with caring responsibilities presenting obstacles to women in their careers and ability to build social capital (Eagly and Carli, 2007). Thus women rarely go after work for drinks or join in the weekend events particularly if they have domestic and child-care responsibilities (ibid). Networks, like organizations, tend to be male dominated with women usually having less legitimacy and influence and therefore may benefit less than men from participating in these networks (ibid). Social capital within networks enables men, relative to women, to develop their knowledge and better understanding of the organization and so navigate its norms, structure, culture and power relations for advancement (ibid). In the Evans et al (2014) study over half the women

in male dominated government departments felt excluded from networks which they acknowledged was important to their career progression. Thus, within the organizational context there is an unconscious mobilization bias against women and is reflected in dominant norms and values that advantage men with the requisite attributes.

The next section of the paper turns the attention to collaborative governance to explore the gender dynamics which exist within networks of public, private and voluntary sector partnerships in the UK.

Collaborative Governance in the UK

In the UK recent government policy has attempted to engage local communities in a collective action with public organizations to achieve policy objectives (Bailey and Phil, 2015). The UK with a devolved political architecture has varied configurations of collaborative governance within each region. In England Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) aim to engage local government, business and third sector stakeholders in partnerships towards local economic development (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, 2010:5). One-hundred and fifty-three health and well-being boards were established in England with the aim to integrate health and social care through partnerships of local government, National Health Service (NHS), social care, children's services and community stakeholders (see Health and Social Care Act, 2012). In Wales there is an integration of public services through partnerships of public, private and voluntary sector organizations (Welsh Government, 2012). At local government level twenty-two local service boards were established to ensure joined-up service delivery among local government, other public bodies, and the voluntary and business sectors (Welsh Local Government Association, 2014).

In the Welsh health sector, community health councils were established with the NHS, local government and voluntary and business sector stakeholders working in partnership to improve health outcomes (Welsh Government, 2007). In Scotland community planning partnerships, thirty-two in total, were configured in 2003 to ensure that local services are provided through governmental and non-governmental organizations with the aim of partnership working to provide better public services (Scottish Government, 2003). In 2014, health and social care were integrated in the form of a partnership between NHS Scotland, local government and voluntary and business sector stakeholders. Northern Ireland too has health and social care partnerships responsible for assessing and planning health and social care needs (Health and Social Care Northern Ireland, 2014). Since 2015 Northern Ireland has been reforming its local government to reflect partnership arrangements among various public and third sector organizations. Collaborative governance is observable throughout the UK and although there is variance in size, composition and statutory obligations; there are similarities with the involvement of public, private and voluntary sector organizations through networks to co-govern and co-produce public services.

Research Design and Methods

An online survey was disseminated to local government and health sector partnerships as the unit of analysis. The survey was sent to comparable partnerships: England LEPs (N=39) and health and wellbeing boards (N=153); Scotland community planning partnerships (N=32) and community health and care partnerships (N=31); Wales local service boards (N=22) and community health councils (N=8); and Northern Ireland health and care boards (N=5). Partnerships in Northern Ireland local government sector were not sampled at the time of the research as it was undergoing reform and being restructured. The survey was sent to the

chairs or secretariats of the partnerships since they were more readily contactable (not all members of all partnerships were publically listed), and are at a more strategic decision making level of the partnerships. A total of 270 partnerships were sampled from a population of 290. The research involved randomised sampling, using Excel software, of community planning partnerships (n=28), local enterprise partnerships (n=38), health and wellbeing board (n=140) and local service board (n=20). It was decided to select the population, given the low number, of health and care board (N=5), community health and care partnerships (N=31) and community health councils (N=8). The overall research response rate was 56.2%. The selection of comparable partnerships throughout the UK and response rate provided sufficient data for statistical analysis.

The survey included forty-four questions with the first eight questions involving discrete profile questions (e.g. gender, age, qualifications, sector and regional location of partnership). The next thirty-five questions explored collaborative governance with questions drawn from a review of literature with the conceptualisation of collaborative governance involving: working together, trust, interdependence, autonomy, shared purpose, and exchange of resources. The survey included five-point Likert scale questions to measure the extent of collaborative governance characteristics (see Appendix 1). The data was analysed, using SPSS, to disaggregate male and female responses and to conduct a cross-tabular and Pearson's correlation analysis of responses. There were 123 useable responses where respondents provided their sex categorisation with 38% and 62% of respondents being women and men, respectively.

There are limitations to the study that will have to be considered for future research. Firstly, the survey is based on a review of extant Anglo-Saxon literature of collaborative governance.

Relatedly, the research was conducted in the UK with a particular polity context of devolved and collaborative governance in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Future research should explore the applicability and external validity of the research to other contexts. Indeed a comparative study of other countries and even between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland would be a valuable addition to scholarship of gender in public administration. A second limitation is that the research is mostly based on quantitative data. A qualitative study would enrich the research in this area and explore personal experiences of women and men within collaborative governance and how women navigate networks and organizational biases. Another limitation of the research was that the survey was disseminated to chairs or secretariats of partnerships. Future research should explore the experience of all members of collaborative governance to further investigate the gendered patterns of behaviour.

Research Findings

The gender disaggregation by sector of employment shows that most respondents were employed within the public sector (see Table 1). Irrespective of gender identification, the respondents tended to be predominately from the public sector. A second observation is that since the surveys were disseminated to chairs or secretariats of partnerships, one could conclude that 62% of men occupy this leadership role within the inter-organizational network.

[Insert Table 1: Gender Profile by Sector about there]

A correlation analysis (Pearson's correlation coefficient; 0.01 alpha level; 2-tailed) of the data reveals statistically significant results. There were correlations between the variables of gender and trust among stakeholders in the partnership ($r=.266^{**}$; 0.01); information sharing among stakeholders ($r=.214^{**}$; 0.01); freedom to express opinion ($r=.244^{**}$; 0.01); collective decision making ($r=.266^{**}$; 0.01); belief that decisions within partnerships will benefit the community ($r=.222^{**}$; 0.01); belief that the performance of the partnership is monitored by government ($r=.235^{**}$; 0.01); risk to users of the service if the partnership fails to deliver ($r=.253^{**}$; 0.01); the partnership provides a better understanding of how to improve policy ($r=.237^{**}$; 0.01); participation adds legitimacy to decisions ($r=.220^{**}$; 0.01); and potential to make a difference in improving service delivery ($r=.232^{**}$; 0.01).

The correlation analysis taken in conjunction with the cross-tabulation from Tables 2 to 14 provide some observations about the dynamics of gender roles within partnerships. Table 2 reveals that there is a tendency for women, relative to men, to disagree that there is a high level of trust among stakeholders in the partnership and Table 6 shows that men are more likely to trust partners to deliver upon decisions. Women tend to disagree that they feel free to share information among stakeholders in the partnership (see Table 3). However, women tended to agree that they feel free to express their opinion in the partnership forum (Table 4), but tended to disagree that there was collective decision making in the partnership forum (Table 5). Women also disagreed that partnerships were efficient in terms of saving time by involving all stakeholders from the start of the process (Table 7). In addition, women tended to disagree with the statement that, 'I feel every stakeholder in the forum tries to make decisions which benefit the community /the public in general' (Table 9).

[Insert Tables 2 to 9 about here]

Male respondents felt that partnership forums allowed for opportunities to network and build relationships with partners (Table 8). Men tended to agree with the statement that, ‘I feel the performance of the partnership forum is monitored by government’ (Table 10). They also tended to agree that: there is a high risk to users of the service if the partnership fails to deliver services (Table 11); the partnership forum has given them a better understanding of how to improve policy and service delivery (Table 12); their participation in the partnership adds legitimacy to decisions made by the forum (Table 13); and they feel that they make a real difference to improving the delivery of services in my community (Table 14).

[Insert Tables 10 to 14 about here]

Discussion

The research found that it is mostly men who hold leadership positions within the collaborative governance networks. This is consistent with extant research of the dominance of masculinity within organizations and men in leadership positions (Duest-Lahti and Kelly, 1995; Eagly and Carli, 2007; McTavish and Miller, 2006; Nicolson, 1996; Walby, 1989). This is despite the fact that in the UK women constitute 53% of civil servants, the majority of women are in administrative positions, with 36% of senior managers being women, and a significant number of female employees in part-time in the civil service (20% compared to 4% of men) (Office of National Statistics, 2013). In local government in the UK, in 2010, there was 2,244,400 staff employed in the 375 local authorities in England and Wales with 75.1% of women being employed within the sector and 53.5% working on a part-time basis (Local Government Group, 2010). Yet only 24% of women are local government chief

executives (Centre for Women and Democracy, 2014). In the NHS, 77% of the workforce is women with 41% of chief executives being female (NHS Employers, 2014). In the UK women constitute 68% of the voluntary sector workforce (National Council for the Voluntary Sector, 2012). Thus, despite the high number of female employees within the public and voluntary sectors of the UK, even within networks of collaborative governance, women do not hold leadership positions of these partnerships.

Thus, we can observe that despite the high proportion of female employment in the public sector and the relatively high rate of public sector representation in these partnerships, it is still men who hold leadership positions within these networks. The research also revealed gendered patterns of employment with relatively more women representing the voluntary sector in the partnerships. Thus one can observe horizontal occupational gender segregation within collaborative governance with women assuming emotional labour roles (Guy and Newman, 2004) concentrated in stereotypical feminine professions such as health and social care. The research reveals both horizontal and vertical occupational gender segregation within the inter-organizational networks. Although partnerships offer the opportunity for respective organizations to nominate employees to represent the organization in the collaborative governance arrangement, it appears that collaborative governance mirrors the organizational gendered patterns and biases with men assuming power duties within these networks. The partnerships therefore represent an institutional isomorphism of the original organization within collaborative governance.

Male respondents felt that could make a real difference to improving services to communities. This is consistent with observed gendered male norms within organizations such as displaying agentic behaviours of influence, assertion, control, self-confidence (Eagly

and Carli, 2007) and being the benevolent provider (Nicolson, 1996). Men also felt more responsibility for risk and responsiveness to government. This may once again refer to agentic behaviours of men responding to organizational expectations of performance and achievement orientation.

There were statistically significant differences between men and women on trust. There appears to be less trust of partnerships by women than men. For example, women tended to disagree that there is trust; sharing of information within the partnerships; collective decision-making; and that stakeholders within the partnership make decisions to benefit the community. Whereas men were more likely to trust partners to deliver upon decisions made within the partnership forum. Once again it could be argued that men are assuming agentic roles or assertive behaviours that decisions as decided by the leadership would be implemented. A possible explanation for the findings of trust is that gender norms manifest in women trusting the male dominated partnership less. The research by Proudford (2007) on how women navigate the gender norms within organizations may account for this finding. Women may be less trusting of the male dominated partnerships. They may have to employ strategies such as status deference, mutuality working and interpersonal relationship building, which are often not reciprocated (Proudford, 2007) to navigate collaborative governance and consequently may be less trusting of men in these partnerships. Thus, women are conforming to the prevailing masculine organization culture (Evans et al, 2014) and organizational expectations (Meier et al, 2006) within these partnerships, which for women is causing a level of distrust.

Yet women did feel free to express their opinion within the partnership, but disagreed that there was collective decision making. A possible explanation is that women are employing communal and interpersonal skills (Eagly and Carli, 2007), but that their input may not necessarily be taken on board in collective decision-making given the male dominance of the partnership. It would be assumed that communal and interpersonal skills would be valuable in the network of joint working, but appears not to be the case. The finding supports Guy and Newman's (2004) research that emotional labour is under-valued in organizations. Interestingly, women tended to disagree that partnerships were efficient in terms of saving time by involving all stakeholders from the start of the process. The extant research does not offer an explanation for this and further research, preferably qualitative, would add value to understanding this finding. A possible explanation is that women may believe, given the low levels of trust, that public sector hegemony of the partnership may render the inclusion of stakeholders, particularly from the voluntary sector with a high level of female employment, tokenistic. Some qualitative statements in the survey responses hint to this. For example, a female respondent stated that: 'Community reps often feel their presence is tokenistic due to lack of knowledge of topics covered, lack of knowledge of processes involved...Community reps usually have limited knowledge of council, government processes due to being from outside the "professional" organizations involved.'

Male respondents felt that partnerships offered an opportunity to network and improve their understanding of the policy process. Furthermore, male respondents felt that their participation added legitimacy to the partnership. These findings are consistent with Eagly and Carli (2007) research that men have a greater opportunity to build social capital and contribute to their knowledge of the organization creating more opportunities for legitimacy and influence (ibid). Thus, within a network of collaborative governance gendered patterns of

behaviour persist with men, relative, to women gaining more advantage from networked interactions.

The research presents a number of implications for the lack of representation of women in public administration and collaborative governance. Firstly, it erodes notions of representative governance. If an organization, particularly one which is involved in public policy and public service provision is not considered to be representative of the population it serves, it undermines notions of legitimacy and democratic principles. Citizens may have a legitimate concern that partnerships which are not representative of the population it serves could be trusted to deliver upon policy decisions and public services in the interests of society as a whole. A second implication is that if collaborative governance is not representative of the population, then societal interests would not necessarily be included in a policy process. Thus, there is an input deficit in collaborative governance which would affect the quality of policy decision making.

The lack of female representation and voice in collaborative governance has implications for the quality of decision making as well as the performance of the partnership organization. There is empirical evidence that more representative public administrations are better performing organizations. Pitts (2005; 2009) found that more representative bureaucracies had higher levels of job satisfaction which impacted upon organizational performance. Andrews, Ashworth and Meier (2014) found that more representative UK fire authorities tended to be more effective organizations. Peters et al (2015) also found that a representative bureaucracy improved quality of organizational output. This is explained by the fact that diverse bureaucrats contribute a diverse set of skills, knowledge and experience to the organization (ibid). Peters et al (2015) argue that there is a positive association between

workforce diversity and overall organizational performance. A longitudinal study by Fernandez and Lee (2016) of the South African national public administration departments from 2006 to 2013 found that public organizations, which were more representative of the population in a post-apartheid dispensation, achieved a higher percentage of organizational goals. They found empirical evidence that more representative public administrations were more effective organizations (ibid). Similarly, Riccucci (2002) and Bradbury and Kellough (2008) argue that more representative bureaucracies tended overall to be better performing organizations. More representative public administrations have improved service delivery outcomes for the public it serves (see Brudney, Herbet and Wright, 2000; Dolan, 2000; Hindera, 1993; Keiser et al, 2002; Meier, 1975; Riccucci, 1987; Thielemann and Stewart, 1996; Weldon, 2002; Wise, 2003). For example, Meier, Wrinkle and Polinard (1999) found that in 350 school districts in the US both minority and non-minority students perform better in the presence of a representative bureaucracy. Research by Wilkins (2006) and Wilkins and Keiser (2004) found that female child support enforcement supervisors represented female clients who directly benefitted from increased child support collections. Meier and Nicholson-Crotty (2006) in their research on the representation of women in police forces found that female police officers represented women as victims of sexual assaults. The police forces with higher rates of female representation saw a higher rate of arrests for sexual assaults (ibid). Meier and Nicholson-Crotty (2006:858) concluded that women shared a set of values about the seriousness of sexual assaults because they had a common set of gender related experiences. A similar study by Andrews and Johnston Miller (2013) empirically proved that where there were higher levels of female representation in English police forces there was a higher arrest rate for domestic violence. Collectively the research on representative bureaucracies demonstrated that the more representative the public organizations, the higher the possibility of improved service delivery, particularly for

unrepresented or minority groups. Thus, unrepresentative collaborative governance similarly would have implications for the quality of decision-making and level of organizational performance.

Collaborative governance demonstrates a trajectory of a plural or pluralist state (Osborne, 2010). In the UK recent policy developments such as increasing the role of LEPs in public service delivery at local level (PWC and Smith Institute, 2015) with an increased allocation of funding to these partnerships (from 2014 to 2015 LEPs have been allocated £7.6778 billion from the UK government Growth Fund in addition to €6.6544 billion from the EU funding). This represents a considerable amount of investment in the local economy through collaborative governance. Yet there remains lack of representation of women in these partnerships. The implication of which is not only women's exclusion from collaborative governance, but as beneficiaries of public services as well. What is at stake is a shift of public services to collaborative governance with a considerable amount of public funding, yet women remain unrepresented.

A number of propositions can be drawn from the study and explored for future research. The first proposition is that within networks and collaborative governance gendered patterns of behaviour and biases persist. The second proposition is that these gendered patterns of behaviour are present, beyond the just the UK, in an international context as well. A third proposition is collaborative forms of governance will increase with the rise of pluralist state (see Carey and Dickinson, 2015) reinforcing gendered patterns of behaviour. A fourth proposition is qualitative research will also reveal the unconscious mobilization bias against women in collaborative governance (see Evans et al, 2014). A final proposition is that the

lack of female representation in collaborative governance and input in policy decisions will impact upon the quality of public service delivery.

Conclusion

The study addresses a research deficit of exploring gender relations within collaborative governance, which has become an increasing feature or a 'cult of collaboration' of public service delivery. The research revealed that existing gendered patterns of behaviour and biases within organizations manifest in networks. Thus, we can observe norms of masculinity and femininity with agentic and communal behaviours, respectively, within the partnerships and an unconscious organizational bias against women. This is unsurprising, but revealing that despite the fact that collaborative governance offers the opportunity within a network for respective organizations to nominate representatives, vertical and horizontal occupational gender segregation persists. The findings suggest that these collaborations are far from collaborative or indeed partnerships. The collaborative governance is an isomorphism of the organizations and perpetuates gendered biases, values and behaviours. Thus, rather than being a new way to deliver public services or opportunities for increased representation and inclusion, collaborative governance continues the patterns of organizational biases with male dominance and female subordination. It remains questionable whether collaborative governance is truly taking place within these networks since there is a lack of equal representation and influence among all stakeholders in the delivery of public services. This has implications for the quality of policy decision-making within partnerships and improved service delivery.

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Table 1: Gender Profile by Sector

Women	N	% within Sample	% within Gender
Public Sector	29	24%	62%
Private Sector	3	2%	6%
Voluntary Sector	12	10%	26%
Non Response	3	2%	6%
Total	47	38%	100%
Men			
Public Sector	50	41%	66%
Private Sector	11	9%	14%
Voluntary Sector	10	8%	13%
Non Response	3	2%	4%
Individual citizen	2	2%	3%
Total	76	62%	100%

Table 2: There is a high level of trust among the stakeholders in the partnership forum

		No Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No response	Count	2	0	1	0	1	1	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within There is a high level of trust among the stakeholders in the partnership forum.	7.7%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	1.6%	9.1%	3.3%
Female	Count	15	0	7	16	21	0	59
	% within Gender	25.4%	0.0%	11.9%	27.1%	35.6%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within There is a high level of trust among the stakeholders in the partnership forum.	57.7%	0.0%	53.8%	44.4%	32.8%	0.0%	38.8%
Male	Count	9	2	5	20	42	10	88
	% within Gender	10.2%	2.3%	5.7%	22.7%	47.7%	11.4%	100.0%
	% within There is a high level of trust among the stakeholders in the partnership forum.	34.6%	100.0%	38.5%	55.6%	65.6%	90.9%	57.9%
Total	Count	26	2	13	36	64	11	152
	% within Gender	17.1%	1.3%	8.6%	23.7%	42.1%	7.2%	100.0%
	% within There is a high level of trust among the stakeholders in the partnership	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

	forum.							
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Table 3: I feel free to share information with stakeholders in the partnership forum

		No Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No response	Count	2	0	0	1	1	1	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within I feel free to share information with stakeholders in the partnership forum.	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	1.1%	5.0%	3.3%
Female	Count	15	0	4	3	31	6	59
	% within Gender	25.4%	0.0%	6.8%	5.1%	52.5%	10.2%	100.0%
	% within I feel free to share information with stakeholders in the partnership forum.	57.7%	0.0%	66.7%	27.3%	35.6%	30.0%	38.8%
Male	Count	9	2	2	7	55	13	88
	% within Gender	10.2%	2.3%	2.3%	8.0%	62.5%	14.8%	100.0%
	% within I feel free to share information with stakeholders in the partnership forum.	34.6%	100.0%	33.3%	63.6%	63.2%	65.0%	57.9%
Total	Count	26	2	6	11	87	20	152
	% within Gender	17.1%	1.3%	3.9%	7.2%	57.2%	13.2%	100.0%
	% within I feel free to share information with stakeholders in the partnership forum.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4: I feel free to express my opinion in the forum

		No Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No response	Count	2	0	1	0	1	1	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within I feel free to express my opinion in the forum.	7.7%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	1.5%	2.9%	3.3%
Female	Count	15	0	4	2	30	8	59
	% within Gender	25.4%	0.0%	6.8%	3.4%	50.8%	13.6%	100.0%
	% within I feel free to express my opinion in the forum.	57.7%	0.0%	44.4%	14.3%	44.1%	23.5%	38.8%
Male	Count	9	1	4	12	37	25	88
	% within Gender	10.2%	1.1%	4.5%	13.6%	42.0%	28.4%	100.0%
	% within I feel free to express my opinion in the forum.	34.6%	100.0%	44.4%	85.7%	54.4%	73.5%	57.9%
Total	Count	26	1	9	14	68	34	152
	% within Gender	17.1%	0.7%	5.9%	9.2%	44.7%	22.4%	100.0%
	% within I feel free to express my opinion in the forum.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5: There is collective decision making in the forum

		No Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No response	Count	2	0	0	1	1	1	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within There is collective decision making in the forum.	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	1.4%	8.3%	3.3%
Female	Count	15	0	6	13	22	3	59
	% within Gender	25.4%	0.0%	10.2%	22.0%	37.3%	5.1%	100.0%
	% within There is collective decision making in the forum.	57.7%	0.0%	50.0%	41.9%	31.4%	25.0%	38.8%
Male	Count	9	1	6	17	47	8	88
	% within Gender	10.2%	1.1%	6.8%	19.3%	53.4%	9.1%	100.0%
	% within There is collective decision making in the forum.	34.6%	100.0%	50.0%	54.8%	67.1%	66.7%	57.9%
Total	Count	26	1	12	31	70	12	152
	% within Gender	17.1%	0.7%	7.9%	20.4%	46.1%	7.9%	100.0%
	% within There is collective decision making in the forum.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6: I trust partners to deliver on decisions made by the forum

	No	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly	Total
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		Response	Disagree				Agree	
No response	Count	2	0	1	0	2	0	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within I trust partners to deliver on decisions made by the forum.	7.4%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	3.3%
Female	Count	16	0	3	20	18	2	59
	% within Gender	27.1%	0.0%	5.1%	33.9%	30.5%	3.4%	100.0%
	% within I trust partners to deliver on decisions made by the forum.	59.3%	0.0%	27.3%	50.0%	27.7%	25.0%	38.8%
Male	Count	9	1	7	20	45	6	88
	% within Gender	10.2%	1.1%	8.0%	22.7%	51.1%	6.8%	100.0%
	% within I trust partners to deliver on decisions made by the forum.	33.3%	100.0%	63.6%	50.0%	69.2%	75.0%	57.9%
Total	Count	27	1	11	40	65	8	152
	% within Gender	17.8%	0.7%	7.2%	26.3%	42.8%	5.3%	100.0%
	% within I trust partners to deliver on decisions made by the forum.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7: Partnerships are efficient and save time as it involves stakeholders from the start of the process

	No Response	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total

No response	Count	2	0	1	2	0	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within Partnerships are efficient and save time as it involves stakeholders from the start of the process.	6.5%	0.0%	2.9%	3.6%	0.0%	3.3%
Female	Count	18	14	9	17	1	59
	% within Gender	30.5%	23.7%	15.3%	28.8%	1.7%	100.0%
	% within Partnerships are efficient and save time as it involves stakeholders from the start of the process.	58.1%	53.8%	25.7%	30.9%	20.0%	38.8%
Male	Count	11	12	25	36	4	88
	% within Gender	12.5%	13.6%	28.4%	40.9%	4.5%	100.0%
	% within Partnerships are efficient and save time as it involves stakeholders from the start of the process.	35.5%	46.2%	71.4%	65.5%	80.0%	57.9%
Total	Count	31	26	35	55	5	152
	% within Gender	20.4%	17.1%	23.0%	36.2%	3.3%	100.0%
	% within Partnerships are efficient and save time as it involves stakeholders from the start of the process.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8: Forums allow for opportunities to network and build relationships with partners

		No Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No response	Count	2	0	0	1	1	1	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within Forums allow for opportunities to network and build relationships with partners.	6.5%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	1.3%	3.6%	3.3%
Female	Count	18	1	1	1	25	13	59
	% within Gender	30.5%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%	42.4%	22.0%	100.0%
	% within Forums allow for opportunities to network and build relationships with partners.	58.1%	50.0%	100.0%	10.0%	31.3%	46.4%	38.8%
Male	Count	11	1	0	8	54	14	88
	% within Gender	12.5%	1.1%	0.0%	9.1%	61.4%	15.9%	100.0%
	% within Forums allow for opportunities to network and build relationships with partners.	35.5%	50.0%	0.0%	80.0%	67.5%	50.0%	57.9%
Total	Count	31	2	1	10	80	28	152
	% within Gender	20.4%	1.3%	0.7%	6.6%	52.6%	18.4%	100.0%
	% within Forums allow for opportunities to network and build relationships with partners.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9: I feel every stakeholder in the forum tries to make decisions which benefit the community /the public in general

	No	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly	Total
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		Response	Disagree				Agree	
No response	Count	2	0	0	1	2	0	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within I feel every stakeholder in the forum tries to make decisions which benefit the community /the public in general.	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	3.1%	0.0%	3.3%
Female	Count	18	1	9	9	18	4	59
	% within Gender	30.5%	1.7%	15.3%	15.3%	30.5%	6.8%	100.0%
	% within I feel every stakeholder in the forum tries to make decisions which benefit the community /the public in general.	56.3%	20.0%	64.3%	34.6%	28.1%	36.4%	38.8%
Male	Count	12	4	5	16	44	7	88
	% within Gender	13.6%	4.5%	5.7%	18.2%	50.0%	8.0%	100.0%
	% within I feel every stakeholder in the forum tries to make decisions which benefit the community /the public in general.	37.5%	80.0%	35.7%	61.5%	68.8%	63.6%	57.9%
Total	Count	32	5	14	26	64	11	152
	% within Gender	21.1%	3.3%	9.2%	17.1%	42.1%	7.2%	100.0%
	% within I feel every stakeholder in the forum tries to make decisions which benefit the community /the public in general.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10: I feel the performance of the partnership forum is monitored by government

		No Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No response	Count	2	0	1	1	1	0	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within I feel the performance of the partnership forum is monitored by government.	6.1%	0.0%	5.9%	2.9%	1.7%	0.0%	3.3%
Female	Count	18	1	10	12	17	1	59
	% within Gender	30.5%	1.7%	16.9%	20.3%	28.8%	1.7%	100.0%
	% within I feel the performance of the partnership forum is monitored by government.	54.5%	20.0%	58.8%	34.3%	29.3%	25.0%	38.8%
Male	Count	13	4	6	22	40	3	88
	% within Gender	14.8%	4.5%	6.8%	25.0%	45.5%	3.4%	100.0%
	% within I feel the performance of the partnership forum is monitored by government.	39.4%	80.0%	35.3%	62.9%	69.0%	75.0%	57.9%
Total	Count	33	5	17	35	58	4	152
	% within Gender	21.7%	3.3%	11.2%	23.0%	38.2%	2.6%	100.0%
	% within I feel the performance of the partnership forum is monitored by government.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11: There is a high risk to users of the service if the partnership fails to deliver services

		No Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No response	Count	2	0	1	0	2	0	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within There is a high risk to users of the service if the partnership fails to deliver services.	6.3%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%	3.3%
Female	Count	18	0	8	11	20	2	59
	% within Gender	30.5%	0.0%	13.6%	18.6%	33.9%	3.4%	100.0%
	% within There is a high risk to users of the service if the partnership fails to deliver services.	56.3%	0.0%	57.1%	34.4%	32.3%	18.2%	38.8%
Male	Count	12	1	5	21	40	9	88
	% within Gender	13.6%	1.1%	5.7%	23.9%	45.5%	10.2%	100.0%
	% within There is a high risk to users of the service if the partnership fails to deliver services.	37.5%	100.0%	35.7%	65.6%	64.5%	81.8%	57.9%
Total	Count	32	1	14	32	62	11	152
	% within Gender	21.1%	0.7%	9.2%	21.1%	40.8%	7.2%	100.0%
	% within There is a high risk to users of the service if the partnership fails to deliver services.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 12: The partnership forum has given me a better understanding of how to improve policy and service delivery

	No	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly	Total
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		Response	Disagree				Agree	
No response	Count	2	0	0	1	2	0	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within The partnership forum has given me a better understanding of how to improve policy and service delivery.	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	2.8%	0.0%	3.3%
Female	Count	18	1	3	15	19	3	59
	% within Gender	30.5%	1.7%	5.1%	25.4%	32.2%	5.1%	100.0%
	% within The partnership forum has given me a better understanding of how to improve policy and service delivery.	56.3%	50.0%	37.5%	50.0%	26.4%	37.5%	38.8%
Male	Count	12	1	5	14	51	5	88
	% within Gender	13.6%	1.1%	5.7%	15.9%	58.0%	5.7%	100.0%
	% within The partnership forum has given me a better understanding of how to improve policy and service delivery.	37.5%	50.0%	62.5%	46.7%	70.8%	62.5%	57.9%
Total	Count	32	2	8	30	72	8	152
	% within Gender	21.1%	1.3%	5.3%	19.7%	47.4%	5.3%	100.0%
	% within The partnership forum has given me a better understanding of how to improve policy and service delivery.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 13: My participation adds legitimacy to decisions made by the forum

		No Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No response	Count	2	0	0	0	3	0	5
	% within Gender	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within My participation adds legitimacy to decisions made by the forum.	6.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%	3.3%
Female	Count	18	1	3	14	19	4	59
	% within Gender	30.5%	1.7%	5.1%	23.7%	32.2%	6.8%	100.0%
	% within My participation adds legitimacy to decisions made by the forum.	54.5%	100.0%	33.3%	50.0%	28.8%	26.7%	38.8%
Male	Count	13	0	6	14	44	11	88
	% within Gender	14.8%	0.0%	6.8%	15.9%	50.0%	12.5%	100.0%
	% within My participation adds legitimacy to decisions made by the forum.	39.4%	0.0%	66.7%	50.0%	66.7%	73.3%	57.9%
Total	Count	33	1	9	28	66	15	152
	% within Gender	21.7%	0.7%	5.9%	18.4%	43.4%	9.9%	100.0%
	% within My participation adds legitimacy to decisions made by the forum.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 14: I feel that I make a real difference to improving the delivery of services in my community

		No Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No response	Count	3	0	0	0	2	0	5
	% within Gender	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within I feel that I make a real difference to improving the delivery of services in my community.	8.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	3.3%
Female	Count	18	2	2	15	17	4	58
	% within Gender	31.0%	3.4%	3.4%	25.9%	29.3%	6.9%	100.0%
	% within I feel that I make a real difference to improving the delivery of services in my community.	52.9%	100.0%	16.7%	46.9%	28.3%	36.4%	38.4%
Male	Count	13	0	10	17	41	7	88
	% within Gender	14.8%	0.0%	11.4%	19.3%	46.6%	8.0%	100.0%
	% within I feel that I make a real difference to improving the delivery of services in my community.	38.2%	0.0%	83.3%	53.1%	68.3%	63.6%	58.3%
Total	Count	34	2	12	32	60	11	151
	% within Gender	22.5%	1.3%	7.9%	21.2%	39.7%	7.3%	100.0%
	% within I feel that I make a real difference to improving the delivery of services in my community.	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

