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Religious Tolerance and Government Collaboration with Faith-based Organizations

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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

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Abstract

Collaboration between faith-based organizations and local governments provides an opportunity for projects to be fulfilled when budgets fall short of meeting all of a community's demands. Concerns arise, however, regarding the working relationships of government entities and faith-based organizations, when cosponsoring organizations include participants of various belief systems. The purpose of this case study was to explore participants' perceptions of toleration levels regarding their spiritual beliefs while working within a collaborative setting of mixed faiths. The conceptual framework consisted of Gajda's collaboration theory that states that collaboration is an imperative; is known by many names; is a journey, not a destination; requires the personal to be as important as the procedural; and develops in stages. Two collaboration events were studied, with 5 volunteers from each of the 2 cosponsoring organizations, for a total of 10 participants. The interview questions were written to explore participants' perceptions of tolerance levels regarding their spiritual beliefs during the collaboration events and to identify factors related to these beliefs that may have either fostered or hindered the work environment. Focused coding was first used to code the data, followed by in-vivo coding to foster emerging patterns. The coded data revealed 2 well organized, goal oriented, and task-driven events that were conducted in a religiously tolerant environment. Key factors that contributed to the success of these events include transparency, preparedness, focus on the common goal, and a deliberately fostered sense of unity among all participants. There are numerous positive implications for communities to incorporate these best practices in their own collaboration efforts.

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Dedication

I thank God, first and foremost, for blessing me with the opportunity to pursue this degree while raising children and building my career. I dedicate this work to God and all of the people who always believed in me and supported me throughout this process. My husband, James "Rickey" Nelson, could not have been more supportive. Thank you, Rickey, for your support, patience, and never-ending love. You have always worked so hard for our family which made it possible for me to pursue my own dreams. My children have also always supported my seemingly never-ending quest for higher education and learning. Thank you Lachanda, Loni, Andrew, and Alex for never making me feel selfish for following my heart, even if it took away from some of my "mom" duties. My sisters, Janine Bleicher and Melissa McLean, have always cheered me on to accomplish great things. Thank you for always accepting me for who I am, flaws and all, and for always being by my side. For my mom, Janice Rigg, thank you for always being proud of me, even in my darkest moments. I hope I always make you proud. Finally, to my many friends who have provided countless pep talks and encouragement to never give up. Thank you all for standing by me throughout this journey. Without such a strong and loving support system of family and friends, this journey would have been very difficult. You all helped make it worth every step.

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Completing this dissertation proved to be more challenging than I had anticipated. Dr. Gordon and Dr. Hacker helped me navigate this process, and I am incredibly grateful. When I doubted you, I learned that my best interests were always the motivating factor of your perspectives. When the "big picture" finally came together, I realized that the journey was as important, if not more so, than the outcome, with the required steps proving to be more than a means to an end. Knowing this, you both guided me along the path and helped to ensure that each milestone was educational and productive. My appreciation for you both is heartfelt and deep.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Collaboration between faith-based organizations (FBOs) and government agencies can be beneficial to provide social services to local communities. In the United States, collaboration between faith-based organizations (FBO) and government agencies to provide social services dates back to the birth of the nation (Carlson-Thies, 2004). These collaboration efforts have diminished, however, as government restrictions have prevented needed funding, and people who fear that such collaboration serves to promote faith-based agendas have aggressively advocated for a complete separation of church and state (Carlson-Thies, 2004). The city in the study has relied upon collaborative efforts with faith-based organizations to overcome situations in which tax dollars were insufficient to complete various community projects. The purpose of the research was to explore collaboration between FBOs and local government to determine how comfortable participants of varying spiritual beliefs were working together to accomplish a common goal, when the collaboration was organized by a single-denomination religious organization. A review of the history and literature and an analysis of participants' perspectives revealed networking management techniques that either fostered or impeded the success of these collaborative efforts.

Background

Collaboration between faith-based organizations and local governments has been an integral part of community development and progress for centuries. Governments have

collaborated with FBOs in the United States since the colonial era (Carlson-Thies, 2004). However, the effects of the Great Depression led to the implementation of numerous government programs that sidelined many nongovernmental organizations and resulted in the beginning of the American welfare state (Carlson-Thies, 2004). By the 1960s, nongovernmental organizations had, once again, taken on numerous community outreach and social services collaboration with government, and, according to Carlson-Thies (2004), now deliver the vast majority of social services that are government funded. In fact, a study of 16 American communities revealed that 65% of the nonprofit human service organizations had been created between 1960 and 1982 (Salamon, 1994). Additionally, this increase in nonprofit organizations has led to an increase in collaboration with local government to such a great extent that the efforts have come to be known as third-party-government (Salamon, 1994), or government-by-proxy (DeIulio, 2003).

As limited city budgets prevent government leaders from addressing all of the vast needs and desires of local communities, nongovernmental organizations are relied upon to fill the gap. Confidence and reliance on government alone continues to decline and has fostered the proliferation of nonprofit organizations, local governments, and community members to find alternative means to address community needs (Salamon, 1994). Forrer, Kee, and Boyer (2014) referred to these arrangements as cross-sector collaboration (CSC), and noted that they are able to provide additional resources, varying perspectives, and expertise to address the increasing demand for public services. To

varying degrees, these collaborations have been relied upon by state and local governments for many decades (Carlson-Thies, 2009).

The issue of faith-based organizations collaborating with government organizations includes the concern of separation of church and state. Known as the Establishment Clause, the first amendment of the Bill of Rights states,

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. (U.S. Constitution.)

Various interpretations of this amendment have caused some to argue that there is no place for faith-based organizations in public service. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black clarified his interpretation of the establishment clause in the 1947 Everson vs. Board of Education case, when he wrote, "No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion" (p. 330 U.S. 16). This and other similar interpretations have caused some faith-based organizations to shy away from collaborative efforts, as the environment was prone to uncertainty and hostility (Carlson-Thies, 2004).

Despite the potential conflicts that may arise, many faith-based organizations and local governments recognize the value of collaboration to address community needs and

carry out community projects. Doing this in a manner that neither thwarts the free speech of faith-based organizations nor serves as a platform for proselytizing to unsuspecting community volunteers is key to successful collaboration. Legal boundaries have been outlined in the Charitable Choice provisions of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, to ensure that FBOs are given the same opportunities as other organizations when competing for funds to help implement social programs. Outlined in the regulation is the clarification that FBOs have the right to preserve their own religious character, which includes the explicit right to display their religious symbols and art and preserve their religious standards for leadership requirements and hiring practices (Winston, Person, & Clary, 2008). On the other hand, if direct funding is involved, FBOs are not allowed to use any of the funding for inherently religious activities, such as proselytizing, worship, and religious teachings, nor can they discriminate against anyone due to his or her religion or lack of religion (Winston, Person, & Clary, 2008).

Although many FBO and government collaborations do not involve public funding, these guidelines can serve to increase community participation and ensure optimal outcomes. Roberts (2012) noted that there is no evidence that bureaucracies are becoming less complicated and that the result is an increasing reliance on third parties to address community issues. Where the literature falls short is with specific cases of FBO/government collaboration efforts and the religious toleration levels perceived by their participants. Carlson-Thies (2009) noted that state and local governments are not

required to report the outcomes of such collaborations, even when funding is provided by the federal government, which makes tracking success and shortcomings very difficult. However, academic literature does reveal that collaboration with faith-based organizations is an important option for communities that are interested in maximizing community resources and outcomes, while promoting a tolerant, if not harmonious, environment with people from diverse backgrounds and belief systems working toward a common goal. Therefore, continued research is necessary to bridge this gap.

Problem Statement

Unlike many other cosponsoring organizations of collaboration efforts, government entities and faith-based organizations are faced with unique challenges. When a cosponsoring organization is faith-based, the collaboration environment may be affected by varying tolerance levels for sharing spiritual beliefs, as well as not wanting to share spiritual beliefs. The importance of these collaboration efforts, however, is well documented.

Allocating limited resources is a basic function of every city government in the United States, as funds are finite. A municipality's operating budget is a legal document that serves as the reference point of a community's obligations, priorities, policies, and objectives (MRSC, 2015). With limited revenues, not every community project will receive adequate funding. This requires project organizers to either abandon their projects or seek outside resources to further their objectives. Often, faith-based organizations are willing and able to provide community services by coordinating collaborative events,

providing funding, and recruiting volunteers. However, how much support and what kind of services can be provided are questions that arise, due to concerns about the Establishment Clause in the U.S. Constitution and community perceptions on the proper role of faith-based organizations in city issues. Further, questions may arise regarding transparency, resulting in nonmembers of the FBO being hesitant to participate in a collaborative event that is not coordinated by the FBOs with whom they identify themselves.

The city in the study is a fairly new city, having only been incorporated a little more than a decade ago. Like countless other cities, this city has a long history of relying upon FBOs to assist with providing community outreach projects, emergency preparedness programs, cleaning and refurbishing endeavors, and other various community undertakings. Without these collaborations, numerous community services would have been reduced in scope and effectiveness, postponed, or abandoned altogether. Hill and Lynn (2003) noted that collaboration can lead to higher community utility within a given budget. Many people, however, still believe that FBOs have no place in government activities or the delivery of social services (Harinath & Matthews, 2004). One problem that collaboration organizers face is the differences of opinions regarding an FBOs place in participating community activities. Tadros (2011) noted that, although there are members of FBOs that believe that it is appropriate to use their funds for community projects, there are also members who believe that the funds should only be used to further the goals of the organization and assist members within the organization.

Another reason for the lack of overwhelming support for such collaboration is due to the difficulty to accurately assess the success of the outcomes. Monsma and Smidt (2013), for example, noted that the enormous differences in size and scope of FBOs make it difficult for collaboration efforts to be conducted and evaluated in a uniform manner. Additionally, Monsma and Smidt (2013) noted that not enough research has been done to demonstrate whether or not the collaboration efforts between FBOs and government agencies are any more effective or successful than the efforts by the government agencies alone.

A case study was needed to determine if collaborative efforts can be conducted in a manner that does not compromise the personal beliefs of the members of the participating FBOs. It was also important to determine if these collaborations could be conducted within an environment that is considerate of all spiritual beliefs, regardless of the prescribed doctrines of the participating FBOs.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study was to evaluate participants' perspectives of religious tolerance in a collaborative setting between faith-based organizations and government agencies. Obtaining participants' perceptions of religious tolerance may foster an understanding of whether faith-based organizations and local government organizations are able to cosponsor collaborative events that are not hindered by religious intolerance. Equal numbers of members and nonmembers of the faith-based organizations who volunteered in the collaboration events were recruited to participate in the study.

Research Questions

Evaluating perceptions of religious tolerance in a collaboration event between a faith-based organization and a local government organization was the basis of this study. Two perspectives were evaluated. One perspective was from members of the faith-based organization, where the mere association with the FBO categorizes them as subscribers of the beliefs of the particular organization. The other perspective was from the volunteers who were recruited from the community at large by members of the cosponsoring government organizations. These volunteers had no known association with a faith-based organization; therefore, their religious affiliation was unknown. The questions were refined to evaluate how comfortably the varied groups were able to work together toward a common goal, in an environment where there were clear religious differences and/or affiliations.

RQ1: What are the perceptions of participants of faith-based organization and government organization collaborations regarding how comfortably they were able to participate in a manner that neither promoted nor stifled the spiritual beliefs of both the members and nonmembers of the faith-based organizations?

RQ2: From the perspectives of the research participants, what factors either fostered or hindered a harmonious and productive work environment regarding tolerance, acceptance, and unity among volunteers with varied belief systems?

Theoretical Framework

Collaboration and the theories that attempt to guide them have become increasingly common among federal, state, and local governments. In fact, their role in community development, social services, and program evaluation have become imperative in fostering outcomes that would not be obtainable if left to the sole responsibility of a single entity (Gajda, 2004). To ensure that a collaboration effort was conducted systematically and efficiently, as well as in a manner that fosters an accurate outcome evaluation, Gajda's (2004) theory of collaboration was utilized as the framework of the research. Gajda (2004) noted that collaboration theory is comprised of five accepted principles and abstractions that are observed facts regarding the development of strategic alliances, and include:

- Collaboration is an imperative
- Collaboration is known by many names
- Collaboration is a journey, not a destination
- With collaboration, the personal is as important as the procedural
- Collaboration develops in stages

These five principles and abstractions by Gajda (2004) emphasize the importance of collaboration. Kotter (1990) also emphasized the importance of collaboration to promote useful change, establish direction, align people to achieve desired results, and inspire people to welcome change. Most important for effective collaboration is that

people have good working relationships (Kotter, 1990; Weare, Lichterman, & Esparza, 2014).

Of equal significance for this study was the concept of religious toleration. Leiter (2008) identified two classes of arguments in support of religious toleration: moral and epistemic. The moral argument focuses on the premise that people have an inherent right to hold their own beliefs and engage in their beliefs' practices (Leiter, 2008). Based upon the concept of equal liberty, and not specific to religion, the argument supports the liberty of conscience that supports the right to free thought and self awareness (Leiter, 2008). The moral argument, according to Leiter (2008), is based upon the private space argument that contends that people live a better life if they are able to choose what to believe and how they should live. Conversely, life is worse when people have to live according to how they are told to live and what to believe (Leiter, 2008). The epistemic argument for religious toleration focuses on its contribution to knowledge, and, even more important, leads to the knowledge of the truth (Leiter, 2008). These perspectives were supported by John Stuart Mill, whose well-known works on freedom of thought advocated for religious tolerance for two important reasons. First, supporting the moral perspective, Mill noted that religious tolerance leads to the discovery of truth (Mill, 1858) Second, supporting the epistemic perspective, Mill suggested that the truth can only be discovered by allowing the uninhibited expression of opinions, even if the opinions are only shared by one person among a group of people (Mill, 1859). Mill (1859) made it clear that by not allowing differing opinions, people are claiming infallibility of their own

opinions, which does not allow for human's natural infallibilities to be revealed (Mill, 1859). For the good of the entire society, Mills (1959) wrote, individual ideals and the free expression of them is of utmost importance, as the worth of a country is a direct reflection of the combined worth of the people who compose it. It should be noted that Mill was not a proponent of free thought as an inherent right for the benefit of the individual, but, rather, that it fostered the knowledge of truth for all mankind (Lichtman, 2010).

The need for collaboration to meet societies' needs and the importance of free thought to foster moral utility and enhance mankind are not mutually exclusive. Further, comfortable work relationships are necessary to foster effective collaborative efforts. Therefore, it is imperative to have an understanding of the degree to which participants from all sectors of a community are able to comfortably work together in an interfaith collaboration. For this study, the perceived level of religious tolerance was addressed, with an emphasis on determining what factors fostered a harmonious and productive work environment among the members of the FBOs and participants of other faiths.

The Nature of the Study

The study followed a case study design. Case studies enable the researcher to examine the human perspective on a particular phenomenon (Trotter, 2012). The researcher examined participants' perceptions of their experiences during collaboration efforts that took place between members of local faith-based organizations, various city leaders, members of the local school district, and numerous community volunteers. These

projects included the cleaning and restoration of city parks to enable them to be reopened to the public and the restoration and beautification of a badly deteriorating elementary school. Various participants were interviewed to determine their perspectives on the collaboration in which they participated, including FBO members, city leaders, school district leaders, and community volunteers. The interviews were structured to reveal personal perspectives regarding the level of tolerance, comfort, acceptance, and unity that all involved parties experienced during the preparations and completion of the collaboration between an FBO and a government organization that has no religious affiliation.

Definition of Terms

Affiliated participants: Religious beliefs of the volunteers are assumed to reflect those of the cosponsoring FBO. This group of participants represent the sample drawn from the cosponsoring faith-based organizations. (This is the author's term for identifying participants, based upon which of the two types of organizations they represented.)

Collaboration: Chrislip and Larson (1994) noted that collaboration is a beneficial partnership between at least two parties for the purpose of achieving common goals by sharing authority, as well as the responsibility and accountability for achieving mutually beneficial results. Tomasello et al. (2012) wrote that collaboration, in fact, dates as far back as the beginning of human civilization, whereby hunters and gathers benefited from the cooperation of others to foster survival. For the purposes of this study, a collaboration

is a cosponsored event between a faith-based organization and a local government organization to meet these objectives.

Faith-based organization: Although there are various definitions of faith-based organizations, for the purpose of this study faith-based organizations were created by people of particular religious beliefs for the purpose of carrying out events that promote those beliefs (The Faith Based Nonprofit Resource Center, 2017). To qualify as a faith-based organization, for tax purposes, Title 26 Internal Revenue Code requires the following criteria.

> Corporations, and any community chest, fund, or foundation, organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary, or educational purposes, or to foster national or international amateur sports competition (but only if no part of its activities involve the provision of athletic facilities or equipment), or for the prevention of cruelty to children or animals, no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual, no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation (except as otherwise provided in subsection (h)), and which does not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office. (26 USC §501c)

Government Organization: According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2013), a government is an organized unit that greatly manages its own affairs and is unique in its administrative structure as compared to other governmental entities.

Toleration/Tolerance: The Metaphysics Lab, Center for the Study of Language and Information, Stanford University (2016) defined toleration as, "the conditional acceptance of or non-interference with beliefs, actions or practices that one considers to

be wrong but still “tolerable,” such that they should not be prohibited or constrained." For the purpose of this study, the terms tolerance and toleration are used interchangeably.

Unaffiliated participants: Religious beliefs of the volunteers are unknown. This group of participants represents the sample drawn from the cosponsoring government organizations and the community volunteers that were recruited by them. (This is my own term for identifying participants, based upon which of the two types of organizations they represented.)

Assumptions

Assumptions are a part of any research project. Simon and Goes (2018) noted that assumptions are beliefs that cannot be proven, but they are necessary. Four fundamental assumptions were made about the potential participants for this study. First, the participants who attended these events did so on a volunteer basis as representatives of their faith-based organization. Therefore, it is assumed that the volunteers from the faith-based organizations subscribe to the known beliefs of the organizations of which they are affiliated. Second, it was assumed that the volunteers recruited by the government organizations represented either various religious affiliations or have no religious affiliation. This assumption is supported by the fact that every person has a belief of some sort, whether religious or not. Since the government organizations have no religious affiliation, the religious beliefs of the volunteers recruited are unknown and represent various beliefs. The third assumption was that volunteers worked together in mixed groups, rather than in homogenous groups of only members from their respective

organizations. When these events were organized and implemented, people were not assigned to working groups based upon organization affiliation. Rather, all volunteers worked together. Finally, the fourth assumption was that volunteers would be honest about their perspectives. Every participant was assured that their participation and responses are confidential. They were also assured that they were able to exit the study at any time and for any reason.

There were also assumptions based upon the researcher's perspectives. The first assumption was that a religiously tolerant environment fosters productivity. The second assumption was that it is morally correct to ensure a religiously tolerant work environment. The third assumption was that religious tolerance is not just important for people who identify with a particular religion or spiritual belief, but also for those who don't identify with any particular set of beliefs. Finally, the fourth assumption was that a collaboration between a faith-based organization and a government entity should not serve to promote a religious agenda, but, rather, should only focus on the collaboration's goals and objectives.

Scope and Delimitations

Every researcher must identify the scope and delimitations of a study. According to Simon and Goes (2018), the scope requires the outlining of parameters for a study which identify exactly what will be included in the study. By establishing what will be included, the scope also clarifies what will not be part of a study. This case study solely evaluated the religious tolerance perspectives of volunteers in two specific collaboration

events between faith-based organizations and local government organizations in one city. This narrow scope focused on as many participants as possible until saturation was achieved.

Once the scope of a study is identified, the delimitations must be addressed. Delimitations, according to Simon and Goes (2018), are a result of the specified scope and identified limitations of a study and involve specific choices regarding objectives, methodology, the paradigm, theoretical framework, theoretical perspectives, and the deliberate choice of participants. The scope and delimitations of this study required that only people who were involved in these collaboration events were asked to participate. The objective of the study was solely focused upon the phenomenon perceived by the participants regarding religious toleration among a specific group of people. The methodology, paradigm, and theoretical framework and perspectives were derived from the scope and delimitations, resulting in the decision that the best fit for this study was a case study that was intended to gather data from a deliberately chosen group of people who have a unique experience to study. Their personal experiences, although unique to the participants' interactions with people of both similar and different religious beliefs in a collaboration setting, provided an insight into potential scenarios in other similar collaboration events. Therefore, although the dynamics of the individuals' interaction are unique, the transferability of the study to similar collaboration events is possible.

Limitations

Weaknesses and limitations must be identified and addressed by researchers both prior to the data collection process and during the execution of the study. Anosike, Ehrich, and Ahmed (2012) noted that limitations of a study reflect any inherent reservations, identify probable weaknesses, and reveal the shortcomings of results. Simon and Goes (2018) noted that limitations are mostly beyond the researcher's control, but they can affect a study's outcome. For this study, a limitation was the short duration of the collaboration events. Each event lasted only one day, which provided a limited amount of time for participants to interact with one another. Another limitation of the study was that the events took place more than two years ago. The concern was that it may be difficult to locate volunteers. However, this turned out to not be the case, and a sufficient number of participants were located. Another concern was that the volunteers who were located may not be able to recollect all of their experiences in full detail. This, also, turned out to be an unfounded concern, as the participants were able to recall their experiences during the events, very clearly. Since the target population was in a relatively small community and there were cooperative organization leaders who were willing to help locate event participants, the first limitation was easily overcome. As noted, the suspected limitation of participant recollection of experiences was unfounded, in part because the interview questions were written to prompt detailed responses. Further, thick, rich details were encouraged during the interviews, while not using leading questions that had the potential to alter responses. Overcoming these limitations was a concerted effort

during both the recruitment and the data collection process, and they proved to be merely speculative.

The author is not personally affiliated with any of the organizations that participated in the events that were studied. However, the author's different religious affiliation was considered as a possible limitation. Therefore, the author made a concerted effort to not share any spiritual beliefs or religious affiliations with anyone in the study until after the interviews had been completed.

All case studies have limitations. Generality cannot be assumed. Behaviors observed or identified in one group or situation may not reflect the behaviors of groups in similar organizations or entities (Simon & Goes, 2018). For this study, the findings are presumed to reflect only these collaborations, as the situations, settings, and myriad variables are unique to only these collaboration events. However, the findings may be suggestive of phenomenon that could be found in similar organizations, but further research would be necessary to determine generality (Simon & Goes, 2018).

Significance of Study

Significance to Practice

The locations of the collaboration events were in a young city, which make them prime candidates for a case study on FBO/government collaboration. Although its history goes back to the late 1800s, the city has seen considerable growth in population over the previous two decades. With new cityhood status and rapid population growth, the needs of the community continue to increase, while the presence of a template for successful

FBO/community collaboration is lacking. A case study that reveals the processes, considerations, and planning that contributed to various highly organized and productive FBO/community collaboration is beneficial to current and future leaders of the city, as well as other cities.

Significance to Theory

As previously noted, collaboration with FBOs is hindered by concerns about separation of church and state issues. Further, concern for the free speech of members of the FBOs and comfort levels of community volunteers who are not members of the FBOs minimizes the frequency of FBO/community collaboration. However, the value of collaboration is well grounded in theory and well documented in practice. Successful collaboration serves to bring together expertise and resources that individual entities lack on their own. To ensure a successful and effective collaboration, Austin (2000), for example, noted that the cosponsoring organizations must consider the following questions:

- To what extent are individuals personally and emotionally connected to the social purpose of the collaboration?
- Have individuals been able to touch, feel, and see the social value of the collaboration?
- What level and what quality of interaction exist among senior leaders?
- To what extent do personal connections and interactions occur at other levels across the partnering organizations?

- How strong are interpersonal bonds? (pp. 174-175)

What these questions do not address is religious toleration in settings where one of the cosponsoring organizations is a faith-based organization. This study that directly addresses the issue of religious toleration can help other communities and organizations considering FBO/government collaboration by helping to fill gaps regarding religion in current theories of collaboration.

Significance to Social Change

Contributing to positive social change is the goal of research in the social sciences. This is, certainly, true for researchers affiliated with Walden University. Walden University's 2017-2018 Catalog states:

> We believe that knowledge is most valuable when put to use for the greater good. Students, alumni, and faculty are committed to improving the human and social condition by creating and applying ideas to promote the development of individuals, communities, and organizations, as well as society as a whole. (2017, p. 1)

Communities can benefit from successful collaboration. Budgets are limited, but community members still want their local governments to meet the community's needs. Chrislip and Larson (1994) claimed that collaboration fosters the development of civic culture in a manner that strengthens communities and makes them more effective. In fact, Chrislip and Larson (1994) contended that successful collaboration leads to new norms and networks that contribute to increased civic engagement and a broader concern

for the community as a whole. Further, Tomasello et al. (2012) noted that humans tend to imitate others, so altruist actions by people in groups result in other group members to think and act more altruistically. Tomasello et al. (2012) also noted that this is an evolutionary behavior that has developed over time from people being solely concerned about themselves and their immediate family members to learning the value of working together with outside groups for mutual benefits. This leads to a new mindset whereby collaboration is both normal and expected (Tomasello et al., 2012).

Collaboration with faith-based organizations is a proven option for bridging gaps where budgets and available personnel fail to meet the plethora of desired community projects. This study, that evaluates the level of religious tolerance in three of these types of collaboration efforts, can help other community leaders assess whether such a collaboration would be possible in their own communities. With a better understanding of the levels of religious tolerance experienced in a FBO/government collaboration, community leaders and faith-based organization leaders may be more inclined to participate in a collaboration in their own communities.

Summary

Collaboration between faith-based organizations and local government organizations are sometimes the only options for communities to complete programs that failed to acquire sufficient government funding. The Establishment Clause (U.S. Constitution.), however, has served to hinder such collaboration, as some people have had concerns about being able to express their faith in such an environment, while others

may have been concerned about being judged for not sharing the religious beliefs of the cosponsoring FBO. This case study is structured to evaluate the religious tolerance levels perceived by participants of three such collaboration events. The findings shed light on this issue and provide insight for other communities who may be considering a FBO/government organization collaboration. The next chapter provides a comprehensive literature review of faith-based organization and government organization collaboration.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Collaboration between faith-based organizations and local government organizations are sometimes the only options for communities to complete programs that failed to acquire government funding. The Establishment Clause (U.S. Constitution.), however, has served to hinder such collaboration, as some people have had concerns about being able to express their faith in such an environment, while others may have been concerned about being judged for not sharing the religious beliefs of the cosponsoring FBO. This case study was structured to explore the religious-tolerance levels perceived by participants of two such collaboration events. The findings provide insight for other communities who may be considering a FBO/government organization collaboration. The literature provides an in-depth review of the historical roots, the evolution of perspectives, and the current standpoints of the benefits and concerns that must be considered by community leaders and FBO leaders before employing such a collaboration.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review search strategy involved locating documents that illustrated current scholarly perspectives of community collaboration efforts. It was also done with an attempt to locate literature that established a historical perspective of the foundation of such endeavors and their progression throughout the history of the United States.

The majority of the literature used is peer reviewed, scholarly articles. This information was complimented by books, conference papers, government websites, and research organizations' websites. Walden University databases were used, including Political Science Complete, SAGE Premier, Academic Search Complete, and Google Scholar. Search terms used for these searches included collaboration; collaboration, theory; community, collaboration; community, faith-based organizations; community, FBO; community, FBO, collaboration; community, public policy, collaboration; FBO, collaboration; FBO, government; FBO, government, collaboration; faith based organization; faith based organization, collaboration; faith based organization, government, collaboration; faith based organization, government, collaboration, theory; public policy, faith-based organizations; public policy, FBO; public policy, FBOs, religion, collaboration; religion, collaboration, public policy; religion, public policy. Reference lists of relevant peer-reviewed articles were also used to locate more articles.

Theoretical Frameworks and Evaluation

Collaboration and the theories that attempt to guide them have become increasingly common among federal, state, and local governments. Their role in community development, social services, and program evaluation has become imperative in fostering outcomes that would not be obtainable if left to the sole responsibility of a single entity (Gajda, 2004). Collaboration has become commonplace among organizations in both the public and private sectors, in an effort to address common problems with joint solutions (Agranoff, 2007; O'Leary & Bingham, 2009). In fact,

Conner et al. (2016) noted that the time committed to multi-organizational efforts has continued to increase across various policy areas.

To ensure that a collaboration effort is conducted systematically and efficiently, as well as in a manner that fosters an accurate outcome evaluation, Gajda (2004) suggested six questions of relevance, listed below, that were considered throughout this case study.

1. How can it be determined if partnerships have been strengthened or if new linkages have been formed as a result of this strategic alliance?
2. How can a community-wide infrastructure be described and its development be measured and/or characterized over time?
3. What does it mean to "link" agencies?
4. Is the strategic alliance becoming increasingly seamless or collaborative over time?
5. What level or breadth of collaboration is needed to achieve particular outcomes?
6. What is the point at which efforts to increase collaboration are simply a waste of resources, without increasing desired outcomes?

The theory of collaboration presented by Gajda (2004) was utilized as the foundation for this proposal. Collaboration theory, Gajda (2004) noted, is comprised of five accepted principles and abstractions that are observed facts regarding the development of strategic alliance. First, collaboration is an imperative, which means that it is necessary (Gajda, 2004). Second, collaboration is known by many names (Gajda,

2004). Whether parties refer to them as collaborations, partnerships, alliances, cooperative endeavors, or group efforts, the basic premise is that two or more organizations are working together toward a common goal. Third, collaboration is a journey, not a destination (Gajda, 2004). This principle reveals the importance of the process of collaboration, rather than remaining solely focused on the outcomes. Fourth, with collaboration, the personal is as important as the procedural (Gajda, 2004). Accounting for and addressing personal concerns is no less important than doing so for details and mechanics. Fifth, collaboration develops in stages (Gajda, 2004). Unpredictable developments and interactions make it impossible to foresee every potential setback, intended outcome, or unintended outcome of a collaboration.

Collaboration with faith-based organizations is hindered by concerns about issues related to the U.S Constitution. Further, concern for the free speech of members of the FBOs and comfort levels of community volunteers who are not members of the FBOs minimizes the frequency of FBO/community collaboration, as it relates to each of the collaboration theory's principles and abstractions. This case study assessed if these concerns had merit within the population sampled and if such collaborative efforts are possible without infringing on people's spiritual belief systems or on infringing on the separation of church and state.

Serving as the theoretical foundation for this case study, Gajda's (2004) five principles and abstractions were used to assess the spiritual tolerance levels experienced during these three collaboration efforts from the perspectives of the FBOs, the

government agencies, and the community volunteers. Notably, the degree to which participants from all sectors felt that they were able to comfortably participate in interfaith collaboration were evaluated. The issue of religious tolerance was addressed. In particular, the case study focused on determining what factors were perceived to either foster or inhibit a harmonious and productive work environment among the members of the FBOs and participants of other faiths.

To increase the understanding of cross-sector collaboration, numerous holistic theoretical frameworks have been published. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) identified cross-sector collaboration as organizations in two or more sectors that share resources and information, in an effort to accomplish things that they would not be able to accomplish individually. Following is a summary of many of these publications, beginning with Follett whose community work and insightful publications in the early 1900s were barely noticed for decades (Fox, 1968).

Follett's contributions to collaborative thoughts and actions have been considered ahead of her time (Fox, 1968). It was groundbreaking when Follett noted that different congregations of people served very different purposes, even though it was not fully recognized for many years to come. Quite notably, Follett's examination of crowds vs. groups illustrated vast differences. When taken into careful consideration, this information enables public administrators to better analyze people and utilize them in collaborative efforts for positive community outcomes. Follett had a keen insight into human behavior, from both a sociological and a psychological perspective. Members'

modes of association, Follett (1918) claimed, served to differentiate crowds from groups, with crowds being driven by concurrent and contagious emotions and groups being driven by purposeful thought. Crowds and groups have numerous distinct characteristics. Follet (1918) suggested that crowds are subject to emotions and suggestibility and lack discipline, individual thought, and restraint, which often results in failure to achieve objectives. Groups, on the other hand, are more likely to stimulate individual thought, generate collective decisions, work in harmony, and promote progress (Follet, 1918).

Another of Follett's many innovative perspectives is clear with her stance on integrating various community sectors to further understand the situations at hand. Follett (1924) noted that simply observing situations from the outside looking in fails to provide an understanding that can be realized by being a participant observer. The connecting of experts with stakeholders of particular activities, Follett (1924) wrote, is at the root of democracy. Further, Follett (1924) asserted that even situations that involve opposing interests can be resolved in a mutually beneficial manner, so long as both sides work together to integrate interests rather than choosing between them. In fact, Follett (1924) believed that it was impossible for situations to consist of simply subject/object relationships, but, rather, are continually engaged in circular responses that have an interlocking of a stimulus/response process that evolves into something that is both unique and mutually beneficial. As a result of this evolutionary process, people with varying interests, stakes, and goals not only work together to support one another, but actually begin to identify with and assume those interests, stakes, and goals as their own.

Follett (1925) is often cited for her community work that she based upon the "law of the situation" (p. 89). Her work to open schools to host evening events marked the transition from communities filled with independent-minded and seemingly unrelated community organizations to the pooling of community resources to work toward a common goal. Fox (1968) noted that Follett's ideas exemplified how combining resources and expertise led not only to getting juveniles off the streets, but also resulted in team building, group experience, and learning to self govern. Although not fully receiving proper credit for years to come, Follett's work bringing various community resources together to foster both explicit and implicit outcomes continues to serve as a framework for public administrators who understand the importance of collaborative efforts.

Technology has aided in collaborative efforts. Dawes (1996) asserted that the information technologies that proliferated in the 1990s greatly influenced organizations' ability to gather and share data more quickly and efficiently. This, Dawes (1996) claimed, enabled organizations to cross-evaluate common issues, cases, and clients, in an effort to avoid duplicate efforts and provide more comprehensive services and resources. Dawes (1996) noted three categories in which interagency collaboration and information sharing can benefit organizations: technical, organizational, and political. Sharing information, according to Dawes (1996), is the most important tool for agencies involved with collaborative problem solving, as it contributes to the increased quality, quantity, and availability of relevant data. In addition to improving the accuracy and validity of the shared data, a more comprehensive picture of the issue at hand can be created for all

involved agencies (Dawes, 1996). Unfortunately, issues of turf, bureaucracy, and power can inhibit information sharing (Dawes, 1996). There are various benefits and barriers of information sharing, according to Dawes (1996), that serve to either foster or inhibit collaborative efforts. Information sharing can benefit the organizations by providing a streamline for data management, contributing to the information structure, supporting problem solving, expanding networks, improving accountability, and fostering programs and service (Dawes, 1996). However, it can also result in incompatible technologies, inconsistent data structures, organizational self-interest, external influences over decision making, and power of agency discretion (Dawes, 1996). Textbook descriptions of policymaking generally involve voters, legislators, and some form of central leader (Page, 2013). On the contrary, much of local, state, and federal policymaking and program delivery involves multiple actors from various sectors of the community. Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) noted that public management has made great strides in evolving from simply steering the proverbial boat to being more aware of who actually owns it, which is whom public managers are hired to serve. This new direction, Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) argued, is important because it serves to address the negative association of bureaucracy, hierarchy, and control that has become all too common. Rather, the trend within public administration has become that of service, inclusion, concern about public-choice perspectives, and collaboration among diverse stakeholders (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000).

This diversity, according to Agranoff (2007), serves to increase the expertise and resources available to public officials to improve policy performance. These collective actions, according to Page (2013), fall into two categories: policy authorization and policy implementation. Ostrom (2000) stated that collective choice (policy authorization) establishes law and allocates resources, while operational choice (implementation) is the application of the laws and resources. Both collective choice and operational choice help to illustrate governance. Collective choice, according to Ostrom (2000), stems from legislative decisions, stakeholders' movements, court rulings, ballot initiatives, and decisions made by collective governance bodies. On the other hand, operational choice, according to Ostrom (2000), involves the processes that deliver public goods and services that have been established by the collective choice decisions. Further, Salamon (2000) noted that these processes involve the administration and execution of policies that include private-public partnerships, external contractors, citizen co-production, and various other government tools.

Studies of governance and the key variables that guide participants' involvement in collaborative efforts are often in dispute. The term itself is difficult to grasp, according to Gajda (2004), as the term is an overused catchall that does not have a consistent definition. Regardless, collaboration has increasingly become a component of the formation and implementation of public policy in communities throughout the United States. How these strategic alliances are approached, however, varies both theoretically and practically. Lynn, Heinrich, and Hill (2003), for example, stated that rational choice

and sociological institutionalism, although considered to be very useful theories for examining governance, hold differing assumptions regarding policy authorization and implementation. Four broad schools of thought differentiate approaches to studying governance processes. The two broad domains of collective action—policy authorization and policy implementation—are examined under rational choice institutionalism (see Table 1) and sociological institutionalism (see Table 2).

Coined respectively as collective choice and operational choice by Ostrom (1990), policy authorization and policy implementation are subject to dispute regarding the key variables that shape how coalition participants steer their way through these processes. As outlined in Tables 1 and 2, these schools of thought differ in three main areas: (a) the organizational structures and protocols; (b) the motivations and expectations of participants; and (c) the relationships formed among actors (Page, 2013). Under Rational Choice Institutionalism, policy authorization (Public Choice Theory) focuses on how coalitions are formed and how actors relate to one another; contends that personalities result in leadership roles that directly affect policy outcomes; and views coalitions as politically weak and not stable in the long run (Page, 2013). On the other hand, policy implementation (Principle Agent Theory) focuses on the hierarchical structure of policy formation (Page, 2013); the requirement for leaders to continually monitor and direct participants (Page, 2013); and the premise that there are numerous and conflicting agendas and expectations (Bertelli & Lynn, 2004; Waterman & Meier, 1998).

Under sociological institutionalism, policy authorization (policy networks) focuses on the interdependence of participants and their shared norms, beliefs, and guidelines; contends that participants form subgroups of like-minded individuals, yet both support and compete with one another to acquire satisfying policy; and view the subgroups as slow to change and relatively stable (Page, 2013). On the other hand, policy implementation (implementation networks), under sociological institutionalism, focuses on the interactions of the participants who deliver public policy; contends that factors such as policy mandates, resource dependency, industry similarities, and perceived gains in power motivate parties to form coalitions with each other and local citizens to implement policy (Feldman & Khademian, 2000; Sandfort & Milward, 2008); and view partnerships as horizontal and reliant upon positive relationships to be successful (Jones, Borgatti, & Hesterly, 1997; Thomson & Perry, 2006).

Table 1

Policy Authorization and Policy Implementation as a Subset of Rational Choice Institutionalism

Policy Authorization (Public Choice Theory)	Policy Implementation (Principle Agent Theory)
Focuses on how coalitions are formed, how participants relate to one another, and how these relationships evolve to form policy (Page, 2013).	Focuses on how policy authorizers and policy implementers work together to move from policy formation to policy implementation in a hierarchal manner, with top-down directives between three working groups: (a) legislatures and administrative agencies; (b) managers and line staff within agencies, and (c) public agencies and outside contractors (Page, 2013).

Contends that interests diverge and dominant participants assume a stronger role in deciding policy outcomes that result in compromised policy designs (Page, 2013).	Contends that interests diverge throughout the policy implementation process, which requires policy makers to monitor implementers and provide incentives to carry out their directives as the policy makers would prefer (Page, 2013).
Approaches coalitions as politically weak and unstable, with the expectation that the duration of the group is limited. (Page, 2013)	Approaches coalitions as having multiple authorizing participants, which makes it difficult for implementers to satisfy conflicting agendas and expectations. (Bertelli & Lynn, 2004; Waterman & Meier, 1998)

Table 2

Policy Authorization and Policy Implementation as a Subset of Sociological Institutionalism

Policy Authorization (Policy Networks)	Policy Implementation (Implementation Networks)
Focuses on the interdependence of participants, as related to policy issues and programs, and examines shared beliefs, norms, understandings, and guidelines (Ostrom, 1990).	Focuses on relationships and interactions among the various parties involved in delivering public policies (Page, 2013).
Contends that participants in the coalition both support and compete with one another to influence public policy outcomes (Laumann, Knoke, & King, 1985), while forming sub-groups of even more like-minded individuals who advocate for their shared concerns and interests (Page, 2013).	Contends that joint problem-solving opportunities, policy mandates, resource dependency, industry similarities, and perceived gains in power and legitimacy are motivating factors to form coalitions with each other and citizens to implement policy (Feldman & Khademian, 2000; Sandfort & Milward, 2008).
Approaches the sub-groups as relatively stable and slow to change, due to shared values and expectations (Sabatier, 1988).	Approaches the coalitions as horizontal partnerships that rely upon relational contracts that can either foster or hinder working relationships, shared values, and reciprocated information (Jones, Borgatti, & Hesterly, 1997; Thomson & Perry, 2006).

Collaboration involves people from various industries, levels of expertise, and collaboration experience. Further, personal interests and expectations can vary from one group to the next. For this reason, communication between involved parties is crucial. Gajda and Koliba (2007) noted that adapting, growing, and successfully changing occurs best when multiple communities of practice (CoP) engage in high-quality interpersonal communication. Although referencing intra-organization improvements, the basic foundation of collaboration referred to by Gajda and Koliba (2007) involves multiple actors with varied specialties who come together to accomplish what even the most experienced and knowledgeable participants cannot accomplish alone. In fact, conducting a collaborative effort, noted Gajda (2004), is the primary method for achieving both short-term and long-term goals for groups that would be unable to attain them working independently.

Quick and Feldman (2011) also used the phrase *communities of practice* when they described how, in addition to participants in collaborative efforts working toward achieving a tangible outcome, being engaged in practice also results in creating community. By simply being active and engaged, participants learn tacit and explicit practices that serve to strengthen their identification within the community. Further, Quick and Feldman (2011) noted that communities of practice rely upon both participation and inclusion, which, although often used interchangeably, are two different concepts with different collaboration outcomes. Participation, they noted, serves to increase input for decisions, while inclusion involves making connections among a

network of people who will remain connected and address numerous issues over a long span of time (Quick & Feldman, 2011). A long-term, continuing ethnographic project in Grand Rapids, Michigan was the setting for Quick and Feldman (2011) to examine participation and inclusion in communities of practice. Their research revealed that more satisfaction and approval resulted in situations where processes with high inclusion were employed than in processes that focused on high participation (Quick & Feldman, 2011). Further, inclusion also resulted in less burn out and ill will, as well as positively correlated to the public's perception of the processes' legitimacy and its outcomes (Quick & Feldman, 2011). Once again, the work of Follett can be incorporated with this modern perspective. As previously noted, Follett (1918) asserted that belonging to a crowd is not the same as belonging to a group. Similar to the assertion that people resent being used as part of a crowd, and, therefore, tend to leave them, Quick and Feldman (2011) claimed that people who perceived themselves as simply participants, rather than truly included members, experienced more negative feelings and less commitment to projects. Inclusion, as outlined by Quick and Feldman (2011), and the dynamics that tend to comprise groups, as described by Follett (1918), offer great insight for public administrators when designing and implementing successful collaborative efforts.

An example of a highly successful collaboration initiative involved multiple governments, two universities, and several nongovernmental organizations that evolved into a community of practice model that included a diverse network of people who came together to address a shared interest. The American Planning Association and the

Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) conducted a survey of their members and discovered that a surprisingly high number of respondents were not familiar with distributed energy production or biomass (Schweitzer, Howard, & Doran, 2008). Rather than a decision-making entity, the CoP focused on enhancing participants' collaboration skills. The three primary objectives were to: (a) form content knowledge; (b) teach students how to manage relationships, multiple roles, and various levels of accountabilities; and (c) foster the students' abilities to utilize networks to create resources (Schweitzer et al., 2008). The researchers reported that the issue of power was of vital importance. Rather than having any form of divisible power structure, it was observed that the most successful collaboration occurred when both the students and instructors were able to assume various roles, ranging from learner to teacher to listener to speaker to learner to teacher, and so forth (Schweitzer et al., 2008).

The role of antecedents and processes in a social services collaborative network in Los Angeles, California was explored by Chen (2010). Further, the independent contributions of antecedent preconditions and processes to perceived collaboration outcomes were assessed by Chen (2010) and were followed by an examination of the extent to which different process variables mediate relationships between antecedents and perceived outcomes. Chen (2010) discovered that goal achievement, interactions, and interorganizational learning could all be predicted by the level of antecedents to collaboration which included resource acquisition, organizational legitimacy, partner characteristics, and supply-side characteristics. Further, Chen (2010) evaluated five areas

of collaborative processes, including joint decision making, joint operation, sharing resources, building trust, and organizational autonomy, and then measured perceived collaboration outcomes. Chen (2010) found that joint decision making supported goal achievement, resource sharing significantly predicted all of the positive collaboration outcomes, the level of resource exchange was directly correlated to the perception of positive collaboration outcomes, and trust as a process was directly related to the perceived collaboration outcomes of goal achievement and increased interactions. With few exceptions, independent contributions of antecedent preconditions and processes to perceived collaboration outcomes were found to be directly related to perceived positive collaboration outcomes.

In an attempt to learn what factors either fostered or hindered a collaborative process, Berardo, Heikkila, and Gerlak (2014) examined a 5-year time frame of coded meeting minutes of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Program Task Force, which is a collaborative arrangement to restore and recover the Florida Everglades that includes 14 federal, tribal, state, and local agencies. What was revealed was that the ability to ensure a process of engagement, particularly for those who may have the least amount of technical knowledge, was directly related to the collaboration's performance and effectiveness (Berardo et al., 2014). The issue of power, or perceived power, has been addressed by numerous researchers. When there is an imbalance of power, collaboration efforts experience disengagement (Gray, 1989; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Schweitzer et al., 2008; Berardo et al., 2014). Therefore, as Berardo et al. (2004) noted,

collaboration efforts should be constructed with great attention paid to providing opportunities for all participants to engage in dialog and learning.

Policymaking and Implementation via Community Organization and Collaboration

Community organization is not a new concept in the United States. There is, however, one person who has been called the founder of community organization in the United States. Day (2012) contended that this person is Saul Alinsky who was known for his passion for universal human rights and his belief that communities have an inherent capacity for self-determination. Born in 1909, in Chicago, Illinois, Alinsky grew up during the rise of industrial capitalism that greatly influenced the organization and growth of labor unions. Through organized protests and confrontational tactics, laborers soon discovered that they had power in numbers to demand fair wages and safer work environments (Alinsky, 1971). While working as a union organizer, Alinsky began to take note of local communities as social networks with numerous shared interests and concerns, but without any mechanisms in place to work together to demand or implement positive social changes for themselves. In fact, Alinsky believed that communities were often stifled by both complacency and ignorance, rather than being able to flourish, which led him to start organizing citizens to identify and address these obstacles through what became known as the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) (Alinsky, 1971). Drawing upon his experience as a union organizer, Alinsky successfully worked to bring communities together in an effort to confront local leaders about community shortcomings and demand positive changes that would benefit the citizens as a whole.

Further, Alinsky (1971) spent hundreds of hours on college campuses listening to the concerns of students across America, where he discovered that people were both willing and able to organize in a manner that promoted positive social change.

Since that time, community involvement has proliferated in various contexts and has included a range of public, private, for-profit, nonprofit, secular, and religious organizations. There has been a wide range of both successful and unsuccessful results, which has led to considerable multidisciplinary research, including areas of religion, public administration, public policy, business administration, psychology, sociology, communication, and community development. In fact, public administrators today are not only encouraged to, but are expected to work with nonhierarchical structures and develop relationships with the private sector, including faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, voluntary-membership organizations, and local businesses, as strategic alliances have become imperative when addressing community issues (DeHoog, 2015). Khan (2015) emphasized this position, as he noted that faith-based organizations serve to strengthen civil society by invoking trust, encouraging charitable giving, providing social capital, and fostering community networks.

The literature supports the overwhelming importance of combined efforts among public and private organizations to successfully address numerous local issues including crime, educational shortfalls, hunger, homelessness, unemployment, the environment, and infrastructure. Huxham and Vangen (2005) noted that public officials rely upon outside organizations and settings to enhance public policy, as resources are often not

fully available to address all of the needs of the community. Marek, Brock, and Savla (2014) echoed this sentiment when they stated that there are numerous reasons for the current reliance on collaboration, including benefits of innovative solutions, creating higher quality programs, and increasing social capital for individuals and communities.

Cultural biases, norms, and values are deeply rooted in societies. Bao, Wang, Larsen, and Morgan (2012) emphasizes the importance of understanding the influence of history, social institutions, and culture on the common good, whereby multiple stakeholders, jurisdictions, and structures of authority work together to foster an environment that is sensitive to the stakeholders who have a wide range of values, concerns, and expectations. Promising measures have been taken in the United Kingdom to reform areas that have been perceived to be ineffective for all of its citizens, which can serve as examples for policy makers in the United States. For example, new negotiated agreements, policy instruments, and performance measures have been implemented in an effort to treat government performance as a process of political mediation rather than a mere set of planned objectives that may not effectively deliver educational, social, medical, and justice services to people at the local level (Bao et al., 2012). To do so, the public good must be viewed as the responsibility of public, private, and nonprofit sectors working together to meet the needs of and take into account the uniqueness of local communities (Bao et al., 2012). Relying solely on hierarchical structures to create and implement public policy fails to account for specific cultural norms, differing religious practices, various personal values, and overall leadership expectations. To more

effectively account for these variations, a leadership structure that fosters inclusion among the local citizenry is both efficient and necessary. Fostering collaboration efforts that serve to carry out public policy can enhance and embrace diversification and foster unity in a community.

The effects of the Great Depression led to the implementation of numerous government programs that sidelined many nongovernmental organizations and resulted in the beginning of the American welfare state (Carlson-Thies, 2004). By the 1960s, nongovernmental organizations had, once again, taken on numerous community outreach and social services collaborations with government, and, according to Carlson-Thies (2004), now deliver the vast majority of social services that are government funded. In fact, a study of 16 American communities revealed that 65% of the nonprofit human service organizations had been created between 1960 and 1982 (Salamon, 1994). Additionally, this increase in nonprofit organizations has led to an increase in collaboration with local government to such a great extent that the efforts have come to be known as third-party-government (Salamon, 1994), or government-by-proxy (Dilulio, 2003). As limited city budgets and staff prevent government leaders from addressing all of the vast needs and desires of local communities, nongovernmental organizations are relied upon to fill the gap. Forrer, Kee, and Boyer (2014) referred to these arrangements as cross-sector collaboration (CSC), and noted that they are able to provide additional resources, varying perspectives, and expertise to address the increasing demand for public services. Regardless of the term used to describe it, the message is clear:

confidence and reliance on government alone continues to decline and has fostered the proliferation of nonprofit organizations, local governments, and community members to find alternative means to address community needs (Salamon, 1994). This perspective was echoed by Weare et al. (2014) who noted that collaboration has become increasingly important in providing local services and governance, as organizations acting alone are often unable to successfully achieve their goals.

One of the reasons for the increased need for collaboration is due to what DeHoog (2015) attributed to an increasingly networked world in which public policy tools have become more complicated and confusing to both the policy makers and the people responsible for carrying out new policies. Similarly, as noted by Marek et al. (2014), collaboration enhances innovative solutions to complex problems, as well as helps to avoid the duplication of efforts. This has resulted in a shift from traditionally hierarchical governance to a reliance on a more horizontal management structure. As DeHoog (2015) reasoned, this is because the horizontal management structure has a heavier reliance upon structures and relationships with private sector groups, where traditional sector boundaries have become increasingly blurred, if not altogether irrelevant (DeHoog, 2015). Further, Khan (2015) listed growing income inequality, intolerance, religious fundamentalism, and decreasing civic engagement as reasons that communities are increasingly relying upon the philanthropic contributions of nongovernmental organizations to meet community needs. Khan (2015) further noted that the recent recession, that was considered the worst recession since the Great Depression of 1929,

has exacerbated this reliance upon community/institution collaboration to promote economic recovery.

Andrews and Entwistle (2010) conducted research regarding cross-sector partnerships across various sectors, including public-public partnerships, public-private partnerships, and public-nonprofit partnerships. Focusing on the partnerships' effectiveness, efficiency, and equity, they found some promising results for public collaboration efforts. Although they found no evidence to support that successful collaboration could occur among all of the various sectors, they did report a positive association between public-public partnerships in all three of the aforementioned performance-areas examined (Andrews & Entwistle, 2010). They concluded that cross-sector partnerships can help promote public improvements, so long as the partnerships are chosen carefully (Andrews & Entwistle, 2010).

Purpose of Faith-based Organizations and Government Collaboration

The United States is a diverse country with virtually every race, religion, ethnicity, and culture from around the world claiming citizenship. From the first pilgrims, who were searching for personal and religious freedom, the people who came to the new land came from various backgrounds, religious groups, and cultures. As centuries passed, the number of people from varied backgrounds has continued to expand, with the dominant religions of Christianity giving way to both other religious affiliations and no religious affiliations at all. The Pew Research Center (2015) predicted that in the United States Christianity will decrease from its 2010 figure of 78% to 66% by 2050. Further, as

the number of people who identify themselves as being Christian has dropped, the number who affiliate themselves with non-Christian religions or with no religion has increased by 1.2% and 6.7%, respectively, between 2007 and 2014 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Yet, as the population's decline in Christianity continues, the desire for religious organizations to be more involved with political issues has increased. The Pew Research Center (2015) found that since 2010, the percentage of Americans who believe that religious organizations should be more involved in social and political issues has increased 6%, from 43% to 49%, which represents half of the citizenry. Khan (2015) also noted that Americans are very generous in regard to volunteering their time and donating money and other resources to their communities, which serves to form 'civic associations' that contribute to the general good of society. In fact, in addition to charitable giving in the United States realizing its sixth straight year of increase, at $373.25 billion in 2015, it was also its second year in a row with a record-breaking level (Charity Navigator, 2017).

In a more deliberate manner, a movement known as the "New Monasticism" has emerged that encourages serving God and others through participating in community life and helping to deliver public services (Richmond & Peters, 2015). According to the Dictionary of Christian Spirituality (2011), Monasticism "refers to those who either live alone, in a solitary manner, or to a group of persons who live together in community striving towards a common end and engaged in a shared apostolate" (p. 618). The second half of this definition is what the new monastics embrace as the foundation of their responsibility to their communities. Richmond and Peters (2015) speculated that since

historic monasticism emphasized singleness and celibacy, focusing on the second part of the definition enables married people to participate in the movement; thus, the addition of the word "New" to monasticism. The concept remains the same, however, that community members have a vested interest, if not an obligation, to accept responsibility for working together for the common good. Based upon biblical principles, Richmond and Peters (2015) pointed out the necessity of monasticism to communicate God's will through actions that convey religious beliefs. Therefore, members of many FBOs believe that it is their duty to participate in community affairs. Similarly, Terry et al. (2015) noted that several religious traditions do not just provide services to the community out of a religious obligation, but that they, in fact, value being able to do so. Further, they noted that a wide range of community services are increasingly being provided by FBOs and that this trend is growing (Terry et al., 2015). American Muslims, for example, are increasingly getting involved in philanthropic endeavors in both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, as this can be interpreted as one of the five pillars of Islam (Khan, 2015). This is not anything new, as spiritual leadership is a concept that precedes modern secular leadership. In many respects, organizations have similar leadership structures and dynamics as those found in past and present religious structures.

Ancient cultures are known to have worshipped gods of all kinds, and their societies are believed to have followed who they believed were the spiritual leaders appointed by those gods. Religions have formed cultures since almost the beginning of time, as they bind people together with shared beliefs, common practices, and mutual

goals (Bowker, 1997). They serve as protective systems for people to have children and raise them, while promoting a sense of security by sharing familiar behaviors, rituals, and expectations regarding what follows death. Religious organizations serve as an integral part of society as they promote beliefs and rituals as a means of creating a moral community (Graham & Haidt, 2010).

Religious leaders are able to influence their members to think not only about what is best for themselves, but, rather, to act in a manner that fosters a mission that goes beyond the members of the religious organizations and carries over into the local communities. In fact, religious organizations are well known for their community outreach in areas that local, state, and federal agencies fail to address completely. Green, Barton, and Johns (2012), for example, noted that faith-based groups make a significant contribution to various local welfare services. Further, Placido and Cecil (2014) suggested that nearly every form of modern social services has its roots in religious organizations.

In the United States, collaboration between faith-based organizations and government agencies to provide social services dates back to the birth of the nation (Carlson-Thies, 2004). These collaboration efforts diminished, however, as government restrictions prevented needed funding. People who fear that such collaboration serves to promote faith-based agendas have aggressively advocated for a complete separation of church and state, as interpreted in the Establishment Clause (Carlson-Thies, 2004). With the implementation of the U.S. Constitution, legal boundaries resulted in a strict

separation of church and state funding. Known as the Establishment Clause (U.S. Constitution.), the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights states,

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. (U.S. Constitution.)

Various interpretations of this amendment have caused some to argue that there is no place for faith-based organizations in public service. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black clarified his interpretation of the Establishment Clause in the 1947 Everson vs. Board of Education case, when he wrote, "No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion." This and other similar interpretations have caused some faith-based organizations to shy away from collaborative efforts, as the environment was prone to uncertainty and hostility (Carlson-Thies, 2004).

Since faith-based organizations are well equipped with resources, including expertise, skilled personnel, and facilities to address numerous welfare issues in the community (Green et al. 2012), their participating in addressing public issues is extremely important for local areas to minimize personal hardships and community shortfalls. Contributions to food banks, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation efforts are common goals of faith-based organizations. Without the inclusion of religious organizations in addressing community issues and

formulating solutions, essential resources and perspectives are being ignored. What has been discovered throughout the years is that is that it is possible to form partnerships between government agencies and faith-based organizations, while honoring the separation of church and state requirement of the Establishment Clause (U.S. Constitution.). In fact, several U.S. Presidents have fostered collaboration via various versions of faith-based initiatives, while the Supreme Court has continued to uphold their validity.

Presidents William Jefferson Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump have all implemented various initiatives to reinforce government and faith-based-organization collaboration. President Clinton signed into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Of significance in this Act is the Charitable Choice provision that provided funding for welfare services, community services block grants, and substance abuse treatment and prevention programs offered by faith-based organizations (Carlson-Thies, 2009).

President George W. Bush greatly expanded the faith-based initiative by adopting Charitable Choice regulations, implementing equal treatment regulations, creating the White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, and opening centers in 12 major federal agencies to enhance the utilization of faith-based organizations to carry out vital work in communities throughout the United States (Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance, 2016). Executive Order 13279—*Equal Protection of the Laws for Faith-Based and Community Organizations* (2002) served to guide Federal agencies

regarding policies for faith-based organizations, as well as other community organizations, to ensure equal protection of the law for competing for government contracts to carry out community services. Executive Order 13280—*Responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture and the Agency for International Development With Respect to Faith-Based and Community Initiatives* (2002) established the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI) in an effort to guide specified agency heads to ensure that policies are implemented to fulfill the Order's conditions. President Bush's perspective was made very clear in the forward of the White House Press Release in which he stated:

> The indispensable and transforming work of faith-based and other charitable service groups must be encouraged. Government cannot be replaced by charities, but it can and should welcome them as partners. We must heed the growing consensus across America that successful government social programs work in fruitful partnership with community-serving and faith-based organizations. (Bush, 2002)

Per Section 2 of Executive Order 13280 (2002), the purpose of the Order was to remove regulatory obstacles for faith-based and other community organizations to compete for federal funds that will be used to deliver social services. Recognizing that countless invaluable resources had been sidelined in the distribution of much needed social services, Executive Order 13280 (2002) provided an avenue for highly qualified faith-based and other community organizations to compete for federal funds in the same

manner as any other secular organization. Removing the discriminatory practice of disqualifying faith-based organizations, based solely on their religious affiliations, Executive Order 13280 (2002) paved the way for the more efficient allocation of government contracts and the more effective utilization of local expertise and resources.

Executive Order 13498—*Amendments to Executive Order 13199 and Establishment of the President's Advisory Council for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships* (2009) was signed by President Barack H. Obama. Executive Order 13498 (2009) did not change any of the rules set forth by either Clinton's or Bush's versions of the initiative. Rather, Executive Order 13498 created a new Advisory Council for the renamed Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and outlined a list of goals to more effectively address targeted public policy issues including the promotion of interfaith collaboration, reducing global warming, and reducing domestic and overseas poverty (Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance, 2016).

In November 2010 President Obama signed Executive Order 13559—*Fundamental Principles and Policymaking Criteria for Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations*. Very little was different from Executive Order 13279. Mostly, Executive Order 13559 served to reaffirm what was already in place, including the ability for faith-based organizations to offer privately funded services and religious activities, even though it may receive federal funding to provide some of those services. One notable change is the guarantee that a person who seeks services can refuse them from a faith-based organization and obtain a referral to an alternate provider.

President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 13798—Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty (2017). The Order serves to reinforce the protection of religious freedom of both individuals and institutions. Executive Order 13798 (2017) states, "The Founders envisioned a Nation in which religious voices and views were integral to a vibrant public square, and in which religious people and institutions were free to practice their faith without fear of discrimination or retaliation by the Federal Government" (Section 1).

Most recently, President Trump signed Executive Order 13831—*Establishment of a White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative* (2018). The Order, signed on the National Day of Prayer that was established in 1952 and is always held on the first Thursday of May, created the White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative. The task of the White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative is to make recommendations to the administration, as well as to keep the administration apprised of any breaches of religious liberty protections within the executive branch.

The legal platform for faith-based organization and government collaboration, however, has its roots in the Supreme Court decision Bradford v. Roberts (1899). The District of Columbia contracted with a local Roman Catholic hospital to erect another building on the hospital grounds to provide care for its needy citizens. When challenged as being inconsistent with the Establishment Clause of the United States Constitution, the Supreme Court determined that such an arrangement did not endorse any religion, but, rather, it was utilizing a private organization in a manner that would not serve to promote any religion or religious activities (Bradford v. Roberts, 1899).

During WWII numerous government projects and building renovations were halted. This led to a weakened infrastructure of public hospitals, which contributed to the decreased ability to provide quality healthcare services. To address this public concern, Congress passed the Hospital Survey and Construction Act (commonly known as the Hill-Burton Act), in 1946 (Thomas, 2006). The Hill-Burton Act resulted in $3.7 billion in federal funding and $9.1 billion in matched funding from state and local governments, from 1947 to 1971, to both public and private nursing homes; specialized facilities, including mental health care; public health centers; and hospitals, regardless of religious affiliation (Thomas, 2006). Although challenged on other grounds, The Hill-Burton Act of 1946 was not challenged on religious grounds, as the Bradford v. Roberts decision had already paved the way for such funding (Thomas, 2002). Decades passed before the Supreme Court would address another case regarding government funding of social service projects via faith-based organizations. Numerous cases were brought forward in the decades to follow The Hill-Burton Act, but the Supreme Court consistently agreed that government funding was appropriate to assist faith-based organizations deliver much needed social services, as long as certain religious boundaries were not crossed (Wallace v. Jaffree, 1985; Bowen v. Kendrick, 1988; Zobrest v. Catalina Foothills School District, 1993; Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia, 1995; Agostini v. Felton, 1997; Mitchell v. Helms, 2000; Hein v. Freedom from Religion Foundation, 2007).

Leaders in religious organizations have also recognized the changing demographics within communities. Judkins and LaHurd (1999) noted that the United States is comprised of a much more diverse population that no longer is socialized in the context of narrow gender, class, and racial backgrounds with common beliefs and values. Therefore, leaders of religious institutions must recognize these cultural changes and, while remaining true to their core beliefs and values, respond to the increasing cultural diversity within their communities (Judkins & LaHurd, 1999). The diversity has continued to grow. Bagby (2012) noted that the number of mosques throughout the United States has had a steady increase. At the same time, Pew Research Center (2015) revealed that Christianity in the United States continues to decline, while citizens claiming affiliation with no faith group continues to rise. The continually shifting demographics within many American communities requires careful attention to the evolving needs of the citizens.

Religious organizations have a very important role in communities. In addition to providing places where like-minded community members come together to worship and share their religious beliefs, they serve as a source of moral nurturing that extends beyond the buildings' doors. Sirianni and Friedman (2001) argued that churches lead to community members engaging in civic actions and community-building activities that address various issues such as community development, social services, health, the environment, racism, and poverty. With these organizations having so much influence in community matters, it is important that church leaders are involved with policy

formulation. Communities may be more receptive to public policy that is formulated and carried out with the input of various religious and cultural groups' leaders, as the policies are more likely to address the needs and concerns of everyone affected by them. Bao et al. (2012) noted that government systems are increasingly fragmented with conflicts in values, making it necessary for governments to determine what the values of the community are and how to effectively respond to them.

Potential for Conflicts in Faith-based Organizations and Government Collaboration

Although there are cases of productive collaboration, a successful model has yet to be created that does not face eminent failure (Marek et al., 2014). As communities continually become more religiously- and culturally-diverse, local, state, and federal policy initiatives and implementation often fail to address the ever-changing perspectives and values of community members. Bao et al. (2012) noted that community diversity requires the need to collaborate with various entities, including other government jurisdictions and both for-profit- and nonprofit-organizations, to ensure that agreements and resources are obtained to meet the expectations of citizens. Coalitions and collective decision-making, noted Page (2013), can be interpreted by utilizing public choice theory, that is well suited to explain how collaboration takes shape, evolves, and interacts. Rational choice institutionalism assumes that people respond to incentives in a manner that will satisfy their own interests (Page, 2013). This results in collaboration that are formed by groups of people who may each have differing levels of commitment, vested interests, and perceptions of importance, which often makes conflicts inevitable. Lynn et

al. (2003) noted that it is important to examine the myriad interests, incentives, and power relationships that affect both policy authorization and implementation. If participants' interests diverge or conflicts arise, they are more likely to be resolved if power has been consolidated, conflict resolution procedures are already in place, and effective monitoring and enforcement arrangements are established (Ostrom, 1990).

Despite the potential conflicts that may arise, many faith-based organizations and local governments recognize the value of collaboration to address community needs and carry out community projects. Doing this in a manner that neither thwarts the free speech of faith-based organizations nor serves as a platform for proselytizing to unsuspecting community volunteers is key to successful collaboration. Legal boundaries have been outlined in the Charitable Choice provisions of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, to ensure that FBOs are given the same opportunities as other organizations when competing for funds to help implement social programs. Outlined in the regulation is the clarification that FBOs have the right to preserve their own religious character, which includes the explicit right to display their religious symbols and art and preserve their religious standards for leadership requirements and hiring practices (Winston, Person, & Clary, 2008). On the other hand, if direct funding is involved, FBOs are not allowed to use any of the funding for inherently religious activities, such as proselytizing, worship, and religious teachings, nor can they discriminate against anyone due to his or her religion or lack of religion (Winston et al., 2008). Although many FBO and government collaboration efforts do not involve public

funding, these guidelines can serve to increase community participation and ensure optimal outcomes. Roberts (2012) noted that there is no evidence that bureaucracies are becoming less complicated and that the result is an increasing reliance on third parties to address community issues.

Allocating limited resources is a basic function of every city government in the United States, as resources, including funds, manpower, and time, are finite. A municipality's operating budget is a legal document that serves as the reference point of a community's obligations, priorities, policies, and objectives (MRSC, 2015). With limited revenues, not every community project will receive adequate funding. This requires project organizers to either abandon their projects or seek outside resources to further their objectives. Often, faith-based organizations are willing and able to provide community services by coordinating collaborative events, providing funding, and recruiting volunteers. However, how much support and what kind of services can be provided are questions that arise, due to concerns about the Establishment Clause in the U.S. Constitution and community perceptions on the proper role of faith-based organizations in city issues. Further, questions may arise regarding transparency, resulting in nonmembers of the faith-based organization being hesitant to participate in a collaborative event that is not coordinated by the FBOs with whom they identify themselves.

Religion fosters cultural norms and establishes moral foundations. Within diverse communities, these cultural norms and moral beliefs may comprise vast differences, if

not complete incompatibilities. However, community organization owes its foundation to theology (Day, 2012). Graham and Haidt (2012) reported that religious teachings create and maintain people into groups that stress superiority of their own beliefs over any others, to the point of complete loyalty and self-sacrifice. This loyalty and self-sacrifice, however, is often limited to members of one's own group. The Hebrew Bible, for example, states to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). Anderson (1998), however, noted that this commandment only applied to other Israelites. Jin-Myung (2011) also noted that this verse can be understood to indicate a hatred for outsiders. These boundaries between different religious groups, even if subtle in practice, serve to divide communities, which can impede the formation of inclusive public policy. Tolerance in communities and the formation of public policy that accounts for various belief systems will only occur when diverse groups are exposed to one another in a manner that enables them to experience fellowship and be able to identify with the groups' similarities. Accepting differences can only occur when these groups learn to not fear each other or feel in any way threatened by sharing communities.

Ignorance is a significant factor in community turmoil. For example, many people associate the wearing of turbans with terrorists and lump people into feared groups. The turban, itself, however, cannot be associated with a single religion or group. Yet, in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in the United States, many turban-wearing Muslims, Arabs, and Indians were labeled as terrorists and targeted for discriminatory behaviors (Ahluwalia & Alimchandani, 2012). If community leaders were

involved in more collaborative behaviors, misconceptions could be clarified, and leaders could disseminate this information to their respective groups. For some groups, this is very important, as they are unlikely to speak on their own behalves because of their spiritual beliefs. The Sikhs, for example, believe that everything occurs for a reason, even discrimination and hate crimes, as a result of God's will and karma. Therefore, they are less likely to pursue justice for discriminatory actions against themselves (Ahluwalia & Alimchandani, 2012).

Forming community alliances that include people from different religions, ethnic backgrounds, and cultures can serve to build community pride, increase tolerance, improve environmental esthetics, promote economic efficiency, and establish a sense of belonging and acceptance among all community members. In order for community alliances to be established, however, varying moral systems must be explored and analyzed. Graham and Haidt (2010) mirrored this perspective by noting that different moral systems result in group-level concerns, whereby placing their own needs over those of outside groups. Religions are complex institutions that have been established over hundreds, if not thousands of years. Mundane choices, for example, evolved from being social order to being sacred order, by turning them into religious practices (Graham & Haidt, 2010, p.144). In this manner, choices are made with the influence of deeply rooted belief systems, rather than for purposes that rely solely on what is considered best for oneself or for others outside of the respective group. With the rise of diversity in the Western world, these moral systems can come into conflict and result in some groups

choosing to not participate in community activities. By providing collaboration opportunities among diverse populations, cultural awareness can improve, representative public policy can increase, and community involvement can serve to build shared alliances and common goals.

Familiarizing oneself with the various religions, cultures, and group expectations within a community can be an insurmountable task. One estimate alone identifies more than 300 different religions in the United States with approximately 2,500 denominations within them (ProCon.org, 2016). For some, religion is a very private issue. For others, however, religion is an outward and expressive way of life. When people within a community interact outside of their religious establishments, their differences in belief systems and practices can lead to miscommunication, misunderstandings, and conflict. This can occur even when people are acting with good intentions. Arnold and Brooks (2014) provided a case study involving a black female (Bobbie) who was appointed by the district superintendent to become the principal of a 100% African American middle school that had a high percentage of poor students, as well as an ongoing decline in student achievement scores in every subject. She was also the fourth principal in four years to be assigned to the school. An experienced educator and administrator, Bobbie viewed her religion as a key component in her leadership role (Arnold & Brooks, 2014). As a leader in her community, Bobbie believed that her spirituality was more than a part of her private life. Rather, she believed that it was her faith in God that gave her the ability to be an effective principal in an environment that was known for its unique level

of difficulty and hardships (Arnold & Brooks, 2014). Bobbie believed that without religion, she had failed as the previous principals had (Arnold & Brooks, 2014). On the contrary, she was able to utilize her faith as a tool to assist in her extremely important work in the community.

This case illustrates how some people believe that they are not only unable to separate themselves from their religion, but that they are, in fact, better equipped to do just the opposite and embrace it as a tool to perform their jobs more effectively. However, it is important for public administrators to recognize the limitations of expressing their beliefs in the workplace and when participating in collaborative efforts within the community.

Minimizing Conflict Via Representative Bureaucracy and Open-minded Leadership

The concept of representative bureaucracy was first proposed by Kingsley (1944). Kinglsey's assertion was that bureaucracy was comprised of the majority class in society, and that no great change was ever proposed because it was comprised of the people who were powerful in society. Further, Kingsley (1944) proposed that representative bureaucracy enhanced societal stability, as it mirrors the forces that are dominant in society. Levitan (1946) followed up Kingsley's proposal with the assertion that representative bureaucracy is only effective if internal controls are in place to ensure that administrators behave in a way that their actions promote democratic values. Long (1952) then followed Levitan with the assertion that representative bureaucracy was not effective at the federal level, but, rather, through local administrative channels where

administrators are more likely to represent the views of the local community. Next, Van Riper (1958) contended that, to be effective, representative bureaucracy must meet two criteria: (a) administrators must mirror a cross-section of the communities in which they serve, in terms of class, geography, and occupation, and (b) administrators must subscribe to similar value systems of the local people. Finally, Mosher (1968) argued that, in addition to a representative bureaucracy being one in which decisions represent the backgrounds of the decision makers, it can also be both active and passive. Active representative bureaucracy, Mosher (1968) stated, is when representatives purposefully advocate for the people's interests in the community, while passive representative bureaucracy occurs when the representatives are part of the groups with whom they represent in the bureaucracy such as race, religion, or ethnicity.

Astley (1984) noted the emergence of collective strategy that fosters the breakdown of boundaries between organizations and their environments. Similar to Follett, Astley (1984) rejected the notion that organizations that may be viewed as holding competing views and/or missions cannot work together to contribute to one another's success. As Astley (1984) pointed out, many organizations have become fused together to the point that they are unable to operate independent of one another. In fact, although they have historically operated from the viewpoint of an autonomous entity, organizations are incapable of truly separating themselves from their surroundings and are simply components of a much bigger environment (Astley, 1984).

Gray (1989) asserted that collaboration is always time consuming and fragile, and, in an attempt to avoid negative outcomes, requires participants to pay close attention to its process. This is particularly important, according to Gray (1989), because the good intentions of participants never outweigh the deep-rooted resistance of groups to compromise their own interests. Whether conscious or unconscious, there are factors that serve to inhibit successful collaboration. Therefore, Gray (1989) outlined three general phases of the collaboration process: (a) problem setting, to include defining the problem, identifying legitimate stakeholders, and getting parties to the table; (b) direction setting, to include establishing ground rules, creating an agenda, evaluating options, and establishing a consensus; and (c) implementation, to include managing constituencies, building support, and fostering compliance. Gray (1989) further noted that collaboration is not the same as compromise, which can result in an imbalance of power and a reason to postpone or even abandon a collaboration effort. Finally, Gray (1989) recommended that, although they are not always necessary, the use of mediators can help to address differences and provide an environment where all participants feel safe to express themselves.

What is important to individuals varies from culture to culture, as well as from person to person. Therefore, it is crucial for leaders to be familiar with the various perspectives, beliefs, experiences, and expectations of group members, so they are able to prepare for and prevent any potential conflicts that these differences may cause. McCormick (2011) noted that people have subjective embodied experiences that are a

result of personal intersections between power-laden demographics such as gender, class, and race. This, Christensen (2011) argued, results in all individuals carrying their past joys and traumas and leads to the need to build trust and feel safe, prior to being able to contribute effectively to positive group outcomes. However, Christensen (2011) further noted that culturally created categories such as race and gender dictate people's experiences, opportunities, and perspectives. Therefore, it is crucial for leaders to not just be aware of the different expectations of a diverse group of people, but to also make a concerted effort to foster an environment of tolerance and unity.

Summary

Collaboration with faith-based organizations is an important option for communities that are interested in maximizing community resources and outcomes, while promoting a tolerant, if not harmonious, environment with people from diverse backgrounds and belief systems working toward a common goal. The successful unification of community members, local organizations, and government bodies can only occur when collaboration efforts are as structurally, procedurally, and interpersonally as healthy as they can be (Gajda, 2004). This requires the application of collaboration theory and an ongoing formative evaluation process of the vitality, productivity, and effectiveness of strategic alliances (Gajda, 2004). Although each event is unique, regarding its members, setting, and dynamics, previous studies and established theories help both researchers and participants gain an insight into what either contributes to or hinders the success of such undertakings. The literature has revealed that collaboration

with faith-based organizations can serve as an invaluable tool for local governments to fulfill community projects that would otherwise be either postponed or eliminated altogether, due to limited resources and budgets. The literature falls short, however, with respect to how religious toleration levels affect these collaboration events and the participants in them. This study, therefore, reveals the perceptions of the participants from both the faith-based organizations and the general public in community collaboration.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine religious tolerance perspectives of participants who were involved in collaborations that were organized by a single-denomination religious organization and the local city government. Positive social change occurs through deliberate actions. Two cases of collaboration were assessed to determine the levels of tolerance toward varying religious beliefs perceived by participating members of the faith-based organizations, members of the government agencies, and community volunteers involved in these community projects. A case study method was used to evaluate participants' perspectives, with data being collected during face-to-face interviews. This methodology provided the best fit for assessing the participants' perspectives in relatively bounded environments with short and distinct time frames.

This chapter includes an outline of the research design that was used for this study. In addition to the design, this chapter illustrates various important aspects of the research, including how participants were selected and treated; how data was collected, processed, analyzed, and stored; and how trustworthiness, transferability, and confirmability for both the study and the data were established. It concludes with a summary of the essential framework for the methods that were employed.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Questions

The research questions for this case study are:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of participants of faith-based organization and government organization collaborations regarding how comfortably they were able to participate in a manner that neither promoted nor stifled the spiritual beliefs of both the members and nonmembers of the faith-based organizations?

RQ2: What factors either fostered or hindered a harmonious and productive work environment regarding tolerance, acceptance, and unity among volunteers with varied belief systems?

Central Concepts

The United States of America is home to people with numerous spiritual beliefs and religious practices. When a collaboration occurs between a faith-based organization and a government agency, there is a unique environment created that consists of a group of people whose religious beliefs are known and a group of people whose religious beliefs are unknown. Since the particular religious beliefs are known for the faith-based organizations, these volunteers came into the event with their beliefs being assumed to be consistent with their organization. This group of people is referred to as the Affiliated. On the other hand, volunteers who were recruited by the government organizations were not assumed to have any particular religious affiliation or any religious beliefs at all. They are referred to as the Unaffiliated. Since the study did not focus on assessing participants'

levels of affiliation to the organizations through which they volunteered, there are no assumptions regarding participants' levels of spirituality.

The phenomenon that was studied is the religious tolerance experienced by both the Affiliated and the Unaffiliated throughout the collaboration events. The central concept of this study was to evaluate how people of various faiths perceived their environment while they worked together in a collaboration event between a local government organization and a faith-based organization. The perspectives of the volunteers from both the faith-based organization and the government organization were gathered. Of particular interest was the level of religious tolerance that participants perceived between members of different organizations.

The goal of this research was to compile and evaluate participants' perspectives regarding religious tolerance in a collaboration effort that is cosponsored by a faith-based organization and a sector of local government. Since the participants worked together in a small geographical area, it was assumed that the majority of them would have similar environmental experiences and interpersonal interactions.

Research Tradition and Rationale

The case study follows a qualitative research method. Yin (2011) stated that, whether planned or not, all research studies have inherent designs that often change throughout the course of the studies. In fact, Yin (2011) noted that there is no fixed number of designs or typologies of blueprints for qualitative studies, which enables the researcher to customize his or her research design throughout the study. After the study is

completed, the researcher is then able to identify both the planned and unplanned features that comprise the final design (Yin, 2011). There are pros and cons to this type of research. The outcome of the design may be a successful research project with valid data, or it may be a compromised study with flaws (Yin, 2011). The researcher's integrity is crucial as qualitative designs, according to Maxwell (1996), are characterized by an interactive approach of the purpose, research questions, conceptual context, and methods continually interacting throughout the research process and raising concerns about validity.

A case study of two collaboration events between a local city government and a faith-based organization examined the environment of the collaboration regarding participants' perceptions of the levels of tolerance of differences of faith and their perceptions of their ability to be open about their beliefs without judgment or criticism. The events include the repair of equipment and grounds to enable local parks to reopen and the refurbishing of equipment and grounds at an elementary school. Merriam (1998), even if more inclined to a pragmatic approach than Yin, also noted that qualitative research is well suited to help understand how people view their experiences. According to Creswell (1998) a case study is bounded by time and place. Further, as stated by Kvale and Brinkmann (2014), case study research is used to illuminate, from the participants' own perspectives, the phenomenon of interest. Perhaps the strongest reason to choose this research method comes from Denzin and Lincoln (2005) who described qualitative research as a naturalistic approach to interpret phenomena, based upon their

meanings to the participants, by using interviews, conversations, recordings, photographs, and memos to oneself to form a series of representations of the phenomena being studied. Kalaian (2008) also stated that qualitative research is conducive for context-specific studies where the researcher is seeking a rich description of behaviors and experiences. More specifically, phenomenological research is used to gather data via in-depth interviews with the people who experienced the phenomena of interest to the researcher (Kalaian, 2008).

Creswell (1998) noted that this type of study should include a variety of sources of information including organizational documents, interviews, and archival client data. To ensure the quality of the study, Yin (1998) noted four tactics to be used throughout each phase of research: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. Yin (2011) also noted the importance of triangulating results to ensure the strength of the gathered evidence. Therefore, comparing participants' perceptions promotes the reliability of the results. Yin (2011) noted that the more it can be shown that at least three different sources reveal similar perceptions, the stronger the evidence is. This was important in these case studies, to provide an accurate interpretation of the levels of tolerance perceived by participants during each of the studied activities.

Validity is of upmost importance. The researcher must be aware of any threats to validity and proactively combat any threats that may arise during the course of the study. Maxwell (1996) identifies five issues of validity challenges: (a) correctness or credibility of a description; (b) conclusion; (c) explanation; (d) interpretation; and (e) other sort of

accounts (p. 87). Addressing these challenges to qualitative researcher validity, according to Maxwell (2009), can be accomplished by producing rich data via repeated observations and intensive interviews; obtaining feedback from participants to reduce misinterpretations; collecting data from various sources and accounting for discrepant evidence; replacing adjectives with numbers for describing data; and comparing results to different events, settings, and groups.

Various research designs were reviewed, in an effort to determine which design would be most conducive to the goals of the study. For this qualitative study, various research designs were considered, but ultimately ruled out. For example, grounded theory, according to Creswell (2009), is used with the goal of developing an abstract theory that is based upon the views of the participants in the study. Further, this type of study calls for grounded theorizing while collecting data (Bloor & Wood, 2006b). This was not ideal for this study, as the goal is to collect data, objectively, and analyze it at a later data.

A phenomenological research method, according to Bloor and Wood (2006c) is used when the researcher wants to describe, understand, and interpret the meanings of participants' experiences of human life. Further, a phenomenological research method begins with the assumption that all participants understand what the researcher is asking and has experienced the phenomenon about which he or she is being asked (Bloor & Wood, 2006c). This type of research methodology was appropriate for this case study, as each of the participants was fully informed of what was being asked and had experienced

the phenomenon that was being studied. Further, as Aspers (2009) noted, phenomenology is based upon the premise that meaning is constructed by the actors' perspectives of the phenomenon being studied, which is exactly what this study is intended to do. Bloor and Wood (2011) identified a case study as being a research strategy that is used for evaluating social phenomena in a bounded system of naturally occurring settings. Further, Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) asserted that case study research is done in an effort to illuminate, from the participants' perspectives, the phenomenon of interest. A case study approach, therefore, was used, as it is the research design that best fit the setting being studied.

(NOTE: Is this paragraph the problem? Am I using the term phenomenology incorrectly? The way I have it presented, I just believed that it was supporting a case study approach at revealing participants' experiences from their perspectives.)

For this case study, participants' perceptions of their interactions in a faith-based organization and government collaboration were evaluated. Gerring (2013), noted that case study approaches include descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory designs. Since the purpose of this case study was to describe the perceptions of the participants regarding religious tolerance, the descriptive design was chosen. Aspers (2009) noted that phenomenology studies are useful for understanding the meanings that people have constructed in relation to other meanings. These first-order constructs, which are at the root of an individual's perception of phenomena, must be understood before a researcher

can develop second-order constructs, which are, basically, constructs of the constructs that are revealed in a study (Aspers, 2009).

Employing a case study method was ideal for this situation for several reasons. First, there is a clearly defined beginning and end to each of the two collaboration events being studied. Bloor and Wood (2006a, 2011) noted that a case study is appropriate when used to examine a particular setting and gain an understanding of the processes involved. This is precisely what this case study was intended to do. Second, the researcher was not a participant in either of the collaboration events between the faith-based organization and the government agency. Cresswell (1998) cautioned against researchers studying situations in which they have been an active participant. In this respect, the author was better able to gather and evaluate data objectively. Third, the primary goal of the study was to understand the emotional and psychological impacts participants of various religious affiliations had on one another in a setting that was co-organized and co-implemented by a specific faith-based organization and a local government agency. Bloor and Wood (2006a) asserted that the case study method enables the researcher to assess the unique characters of participants by generating detailed and holistic data.

Finally, it was the researcher's goal to be able to use these two collaboration events to triangulate the data, in an effort to ensure validity and be able to contribute to generalized theoretical propositions for future faith-based organization and government collaboration and similar case studies. This perspective was supported by Yin (2013) who pointed out that case studies are able to produce data that contributes to theoretical

conclusions. Further, Stake (1995) noted that a case study provides an insight and understanding of a unique situation or event. Stake (1995) also noted that thick description by participants can convey what the experience itself meant to them. This sentiment has become a qualitative-research standard, as thick description goes beyond simply reporting events. Rather, according to Ponterotto (2006), thick description provides context and meaning so that thick interpretation can follow.

The research design for this study follows very closely to Yin's realist perspectives that support the generalizability of results. Yin (2003) noted that a case study investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context and examines a distinctive situation. This approach, therefore, was appropriate for this study.

Role of Researcher

The role of the researcher for this study was to collect and analyze data. Since the collaboration events have already taken place, there was no opportunity to be an observer, participant, or an observer-participant. This means that the data collection tools needed to be carefully constructed with open-ended questions that provide participants the opportunity to express themselves freely. The interaction with participants was limited to data collection only. In an effort to collect as much data as possible from each participant, inquiries regarding the study and the questions being asked were freely addressed. Prior to asking the interview questions, the purpose of the study was reviewed and any questions the participants had were answered. Close attention was paid to participants' body language, and notes were taken regarding their demeanor. Notes were

also taken regarding the researcher's feelings, thoughts, and emotions that arose during the interviews, as well as the researcher's perceptions of the participants' body language and tone. Outlying responses were also noted that led to additional conversation regarding the events. Simon and Goes (2018) noted that keeping a journal can help to determine how to proceed with a study and assess if any ethical concerns need to be addressed. The data was also used to help triangulate results.

The role as the researcher is to be an interpreter. Stake (1995) wrote about case study research and noted that,

> the case researcher recognizes and substantiates new meanings. Whoever is a researcher has recognized a problem, puzzlement, and studies it, hoping to connect it better with known things. Finding new connections, the researcher finds ways to make them comprehensible to others. (p. 97)

It is not the researcher's role to make suggestions, ask leading questions, or redirect participants in a direction that may support the researcher's biases. Rather, the researcher's sole responsibility is to encourage participants to be completely forthright with their personal experiences and perceptions of faith tolerance levels during the collaboration events. It is important to encourage participants' openness and honesty. Therefore, it was conveyed that there is no judgment or scrutiny regarding personal opinions. It was made clear that there are no right or wrong answers. Moreover, it was made clear that there was no desired outcome other than truthful perspectives. Reinforcing the researcher's trustworthiness, by making participants feel comfortable and

encouraging them to express themselves freely, was the researcher's most important responsibility throughout the study.

Personal and Professional Relationships with Participants

There are no personal or professional relationships with any of the participants of the collaboration events that took place. The only participant with whom this researcher ever met prior to the study is the former mayor of the city and current assemblywoman. She was one of the primary organizers of both of the collaboration efforts being studied, and she is the primary contact person for event information and for locating other event leaders and volunteers. Since the researcher is not affiliated with neither the faith-based organization nor the government entity involved in the events, there were no existing relationships that could cause participants to fear repercussions for providing honest answers.

Other Ethical Issues

There were no existing relationships to manage. Regarding biases, the goal was for the researcher to not share any spiritual beliefs with the participants, in an attempt to encourage participants to answer questions with honesty and no fear of judgment. When the purpose of the study was explained, the importance that all perspectives are valued was emphasized, as the ultimate goal is to acquire the truth.

No ethical issues were identified prior to the data collection for the study. Following through with the promise made to the participants, all responses are

completely confidential. No incentives were used to recruit participants, and there was no reason for anyone to fear any repercussions for their honest responses.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The only requirement that was used for eligibility is that the person was an active participant in one of the collaboration efforts. Five participants from each event were interviewed. Numerous volunteers were involved with these collaborative efforts, ranging from two hundred to over five hundred participants per event. The event leaders did not have a formal interviewing process to determine eligibility to volunteer for the three events. However, the organizations do have some form of a record of most of the participants. Therefore, the events' leaders were relied upon to help locate participants. This was not too difficult to do, since many of the participants were still current members of the participating faith-based organizations, government organization, or the local community.

Several groups of people were involved in the two collaboration efforts that were used for this case study. Members from the local city government and the community at large were involved in both collaboration efforts. Both collaboration events included participants from a church from a neighboring city and people recruited through the local city government. All community members were encouraged to participate, regardless of their faith or spiritual-organization affiliation. Therefore, each collaboration event included members of a faith-based organization, which are refer to as the Affiliated

group, and numerous members of the community whose religious affiliations, if any, were unknown, which are referred to as the Unaffiliated group. It was not attempted to have a representative sample of participants from the Unaffiliated group, regarding their religious perspectives. The participants were not asked about their religious views, although many of them freely shared this information during the interviews.

The participants of the collaboration events include city leaders, faith-based organization leaders, faith-based organization members, and community members whose religious affiliations were unknown. Ages of participants range from elementary-school-age children to adult. However, only participants who are eighteen years old and older were asked to participate in the study.

The collaboration events took place in a somewhat diverse community. To limit the scope of the study, no demographical information was taken into account when evaluating the data. Only the organization affiliation of the participants was noted.

As previously stated, the faith-based organization for both events is a church from a neighboring community. Further, numerous volunteers were from other denominations or their religious affiliations were unknown.

Sample Size

The sample for this study consists of a purposeful population. Merriam (1998) noted that purposeful sampling is used when the researcher is attempting to gain insight into a particular group of people; therefore, the sample must be derived from a group of people in which the most information can be retrieved. For this reason, young children

were not included in the sampling, as it is not clear if they would have been able to comprehend the nature and scope of the study, as well as the perspectives that were being examined. However, to ensure that various perspectives were gathered, a concerted effort was made to have a sampling that represents an equal number of participants from each organization involved in the collaboration events.

Patton (2002) noted that sampling for qualitative research is usually small and is also determined by how the study will be impacted. Further, Maxwell (2013) noted that a representative population is necessary for collecting data to answer research questions. For this study, the goal was to interview at least eight people per event, with a mixture of participants from the faith-based organizations and government agencies per event. The goal was to make it possible to triangulate responses within each group and between the two groups being evaluated. Yin (2011) noted the importance of triangulating results, to ensure the strength of the gathered evidence. Data collection continued until data saturation was achieved. Although saturation appeared to have been achieved after interviewing a total of eight people, two more people were interviewed. The additional two interviews, as shown in Chapter 4, reinforced the belief that saturation had been achieved, as the responses were consistent with the previous eight interviews.

Quantitative and qualitative research require different sampling procedures. Quantitative research often relies upon the inclusion of a variety of people, in an effort to make generalizations to a much larger population of people (Natasi, 2017). Qualitative research, on the other hand, employs a more selective procedure and focuses on specific

groups of people, certain types of individuals, or particular processes (Natasi, 2017). Further, according to Natasi (2017), the sampling strategy for qualitative research is determined by: (a) the research question(s)/purpose; (b) the time frame of the study; and (c) the resources available. For this study, one of the most common qualitative sampling strategies, known as homogeneous sampling, was used. One of the goals of homogeneous sampling involves selecting participants with similar experiences. It decreases variation and simplifies analysis (Natasi, 2017).

Determining sample size for qualitative research is an ambiguous task. There is not a consensus among qualitative methodologists regarding sample size, so there is not much justification or rationale available to support how or why these decisions are made. Unlike with quantitative research, where the goal is usually to gather large amounts of data and generalize the findings to even larger populations, more purposeful sampling of fewer individuals or groups is more fitting (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) noted the importance of data saturation in qualitative research, which requires the researcher to continue to increase the sample size until the data reveals replication or redundancy. The shortcoming of this, however, is that there are no clear guidelines to determine what constitutes data saturation, resulting in ambiguity with qualitative research. However, the absence of clearly defined sampling-size rules does not prevent quality qualitative research. Marshall et al. (2013) identified factors that they believed influence the sample size required to achieve saturation: (a) quality of interviews; (b) number of interviews per participant; (c)

sampling procedures; and (d) researcher experience (p. 12). For case studies, Yin (2013) recommended the use of at least six participants, while Creswell (2007) recommended no more than four or five. Creswell (2007) also recommended three to five interviewees per case study.

Morrow (2005) noted that the number of participants in qualitative research focuses on very few individuals, if not only one, as it is "idiographic and emic," which seeks to determine categories of meaning from the perspectives of the participants studied (p. 252). Therefore, phenomenon being studied of a particular incident, in this case a community collaboration, only required a small number of participants. Therefore, a small sample was sufficient to gather information that reflected the experiences of the group as a whole for the phenomenon being studied. Referring to the aforementioned sample-size recommendations of Yin (2013) and Creswell (2007), a sample size of five sources was used for each of the two cases, with ten participants for the entire study. This number was also large enough to allow for any dropout participants, as no one chose to drop out. The final sample size was determined by the point of saturation.

There were no problems recruiting enough participants from the two events for the study. Although the exact number is not known, each of the organizations had numerous volunteers at these events, which helped to overcome any potential issues recruiting participants for the study such as lack of interest, changed contact information, or relocation of residency. Although hundreds of participants were contacted regarding the study, the ten participants who were interviewed provided a sufficient amount of data

to reach saturation, as the interview responses became redundant. Since this is a qualitative study, this small sample size is sufficient.

Participant Recruitment Procedures

Public officials, faith-based organization leaders, and some other volunteers who participated in the events were available via public records, promotional materials, and notes kept by the event organizers. The rest of the participants were identified by the event organizers. Upon receiving contact information, volunteers were recruited via email and telephone. A copy of the recruitment letter was sent to all of them, which included an overview of the study, sample questions, and participants expectations and rights. Advance contact fosters participation because it informs and motivates respondents by helping them to identify with the topic (Shuttles, 2008). It was explained that the research will contribute to future successful collaboration between faith-based organizations and local governments, with the goal of appealing to respondents to participate for the good of the community. This is supported by Shuttles (2008) who noted that using advance contact with persuasive messages can increase response propensity.

Key organizers from both events agreed to help locate participants from the participating government- and faith-based-organization. The leaders of the organizations provided their commitment to help locate event volunteers. Each of the organizations' leaders were given a copy of the purpose of the study and a copy of the interview questions. They were also given assurance of privacy, honesty, integrity, openness, and utmost ethical standards and protocols throughout the research process.

To ensure that past event volunteers were not put off by being contacted by a complete stranger, based upon their previous volunteer status, an informational letter was sent by event organizers (See Appendix A: Letter From Event Organizers to Volunteers). Written to neither encourage nor discourage participation, the purpose of the letter was solely to inform the volunteers that the event organizers had been made aware of the study and would not have any knowledge regarding who was or was not interviewed. The primary goal was to ensure the confidentiality of each person's decision to either participate or not to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

Face-to-face interviews were used to collect data. Yin (2013) asserted that the purposeful selection of research instruments is just as important as selecting the sample population, as they both are used to ensure that the research topic and research questions are effectively addressed. During the interviews, participants were asked for their permission to be recorded. Since this is a case study of two collaboration efforts that have already taken place, the only data available is based upon personal recollection of events and archival documents from both prior to and following the events including city press releases, church bulletins, interagency correspondence, social media announcements, newspaper articles, and whatever other forms of documentation that were generated by the event organizers. These documents were used for event descriptions and details, to familiarize the researcher with the purpose of the events and logistical information.

To ensure that comprehensive and relevant data was gathered in the study, a carefully structured interview protocol was employed (see Appendix B: Religious Tolerance Interview Protocol). Castillo-Montoya (2016) stressed the importance of such protocols to ensure that the interview questions align with the research questions, that the interview is structured to be inquiry based, that feedback is sought and utilized, and that a pilot interview protocol is employed. These steps, according to Castillo-Montoya (2016), help to ensure the development of a well-vetted interview protocol that fosters the collection of rich data that addresses the research questions. The importance of this process is supported by Seidman (2013) who stressed that the purpose of an in-depth interview has a much greater purpose than simply answering questions, as the true objective is to obtain an insight into the lived experiences of the people being interviewed and what those experiences mean to them.

To gather data that addresses the research questions and gain an insight into the participants lived experiences, open-ended questions were used in the interviews. Maitland (2008) noted that open-ended questions are more effective than closed-ended questions when a researcher wants to obtain a deeper understanding of participants' preferences and attitudes. Participants were encouraged to express themselves freely, with the assurance of confidentiality. During the face-to-face interviews, the participants' answers were recorded on a recording device, after permission was granted via a consent form (see Appendix C: Participant Consent Form).

Participants were asked for permission to be recorded via an audio recorder, and it was explained that the recording would only be used by the researcher to help validate results (see Appendix C: Participant Consent Form). Two copies of the consent form were signed by the researcher and each participant, so that each person could retain a signed copy. Participants were also given a copy of the interview script to follow along during the interview. This helped to ensure that the spoken questions were not misunderstood. Following the interviews, a typed transcript was forwarded to the participants, who were offered a week to respond with any corrections, questions or concerns. All the transcripts are considered accurate, either by participant confirmation or by the passage of a week's review without any corrections, concerns or questions.

How structured a research protocol is varies from researcher to researcher. Yin (2011) noted that some qualitative researchers use no protocol at all, while others use a highly structured protocol. Regardless of how structured or unstructured a protocol is, however, Yin (2011) advised against not having an open mind during qualitative research, as field perspectives and emerging and unforeseen information need to be accounted for in data collection. Being too structured can incorporate bias and steer research in a direction that reflects what the researcher expects, rather than what is reality, while being completely unstructured may result in missing information and lack of productivity (Yin, 2011). For this reason, Yin (2011) noted that the researcher will end up structuring the protocol to be somewhere in the middle, whereby there is a protocol to keep the researcher focused and on topic. This may result in having to make adjustments

during the data collection process, as data evaluation can be affected by unanticipated information. The use of a journal for the researcher to record any emerging and unforeseen information provides an opportunity for a more accurate review of the data at a later time, as well as to reevaluate codes. Simon and Goes (2018) supported this perspective by noting that initial codes can be broken down into more elaborate codes, as qualitative research analysis is an ongoing process that may result in data needing to be recategorized. On the other hand, Yin (2011) noted that some form of prepared protocol may be necessary to help keep the focus on the original topic and questions. In this study, an interview protocol was used, which enabled the researcher to foster consistency in how participants were approached and interviewed (see Appendix B: Religious Tolerance Interview Protocol). Additionally, due to the nature of the topic, an open mind was necessary to account for unexpected interactions. Therefore, a mental framework that was comprised of a set of objective behaviors was used to guide the researcher during interviews. This, as Yin (2011) suggested, assists the researcher in thinking outside the box and improving the discovery process.

Anderson (2010) listed numerous types of data for qualitative research, including face-to-face interviews that were employed for this study. In addition, case study notes, audio recordings, relevant documents, press clippings, photographs, and observation notes were used (Anderson, 2010). These various sources were used together to triangulate the data, as outlined later in this chapter.

Researcher-developed Instruments

The questions for participants were written to encourage openness, honesty, and depth. Of equal importance, they were accompanied by both written and verbal assurance that all responses are confidential, with their responses only shared in summary form. This promoted honest perspectives. Kennedy (2008) stressed the importance of anonymity for the success of surveys. This is especially true, according to Kennedy (2008), when seeking opinions and attitudes about such topics as race, politics, and religion, with anonymity contributing to an increased willingness of participants to share their true perspectives even if they are not considered socially desirable responses.

The interview questions were written as open-ended questions, with the goal of addressing the research questions. Each interview question was written to evoke a personal perspective to help illuminate the true experiences of the participants, which served to answer the research questions. Further, since the participants were promised confidentiality, their responses are more likely to be honest perspectives.

Interview questions 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 were written to answer the first research question regarding participants' perceptions of their levels of comfort working in an environment with various spiritual beliefs. The questions were written to address the perceptions of both the affiliated faith-based organization members as well as the unaffiliated participants who volunteered via the local government's recruitment efforts. These questions were also directly related to Gajda's (2004) theoretical perspectives that collaboration is a journey, not a destination, and that with collaboration, the personal is as

important as the procedural. Table 3 outlines the relationship between the first research question and the interview questions, as well as their connection to Gajda's (2004) theoretical concepts.

Table 3

Connection of Research Question 1 to Interview Questions and Theoretical Concepts

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of participants of faith-based organization and government organization collaborations regarding how comfortably they were able to participate in a manner that neither promoted nor stifled the spiritual beliefs of both the members and nonmembers of the faith-based organizations?

Related Theoretical Concepts

1. Collaboration is a journey, not a destination. (Gajda, 2004)
2. With collaboration, the personal is as important as the procedural. (Gajda, 2004)

Related Interview Questions

1. Why did you choose to participate in this collaboration event?

2. How comfortable were you expressing your religious beliefs with other volunteers?

5. Overall, how tolerant do you believe volunteers from outside of your organization were of your religious beliefs?

6. How tolerant did you perceive volunteers were from outside of your organization of your religious beliefs in the middle of the collaboration event?

7. How tolerant did you perceive volunteers from outside of your organization were of your religious beliefs by the end of the collaboration event?

8. Please rate and describe your overall experience volunteering in this collaborative effort with people who either are not affiliated with your organization or do not share your religious beliefs.

10. Please share anything you believe would help me understand the religious tolerance levels experienced during this collaboration event.

Interview questions 3, 4, 9, 11, and 12 were written to answer the second research question regarding the perceived factors that either fostered or hindered a harmonious and productive work environment regarding tolerance, acceptance, and unity among participants with varied belief systems. Gajda's (2004) theoretical perspectives that relate to this question also include the two previously mentioned for the first question, as well as the concepts that collaboration is known by many names and collaboration develops in stages. Table 4 outlines the relationship between the second research question and the interview questions, as well as their connection to Gajda's (2004) theoretical concepts.

Table 4

Connection of Research Question 2 to Interview Questions and Theoretical Concepts

Research Question 2

What factors either fostered or hindered a harmonious and productive work environment regarding tolerance, acceptance, and unity among volunteers with varied belief systems?

Related Theoretical Concepts

1. Collaboration is known by many names. (Gajda, 2004)
2. Collaboration is a journey, not a destination. (Gajda, 2004)
3. With collaboration, the personal is as important as the procedural. (Gajda, 2004)
4. Collaboration develops in stages. (Gajda, 2004)

Related Interview Questions

3. What factors do you believe fostered your ability to openly discuss your religious beliefs with other volunteers.

4. What factors do you believe hindered your ability to openly discuss your religious beliefs with other volunteers.

9. Please rate and describe your overall perspective regarding how important you believe it is for people to support a religiously tolerance work environment during a volunteer collaboration event.

11. Please share anything you believe would contribute to a more religiously tolerant environment for future faith-based organization/government collaboration events.

12. Please share anything you believe occurred during the collaboration event that would either encourage or discourage you to participate in a future collaboration event with the two sponsoring organizations.

To ensure that the interview questions were aligned with the research questions, the protocol was discussed, at length, with the dissertation committee members and a key person from each of the participating organizations. The feedback from the dissertation committee members and the organization leaders confirmed that the questions aligned with the purpose of the study, as it was outlined in the letter of invitation and explained in the discussions (see Appendix D: Letter of Invitation).

To ensure that all perspectives related to the study were thoroughly explored, participants were given the opportunity to add anything that they believe may be relevant to the study. Further, to allow for unexpected directions that participants' answers may take, brief notes were taken during the interviews and written on the researcher's copy of the interview protocol sheet. However, very few notes were taken, as all questions were answered with a sufficient amount of information to address the research questions.

As previously stated, open-ended questions were best for this study. For a case study, it is important to encourage answers that have depth. Anderson (2010) noted that qualitative research has its strength when six criteria are met. First, it is important that the issues being addressed can be examined in detail and in depth (Anderson, 2010). Second, the interview consists of more than restricted questions and is structured to allow for the researcher to guide and/or redirect the participant in real time (Anderson, 2010). Third, as new information arises, the research framework can be revised and redirected in a quick manner (Anderson, 2010). Fourth, the data is reflective of human experiences, and is more interesting than quantitative data (Anderson, 2010). Fifth, the research subjects

have subtle nuances and depth that are often missed by more positivist research methods (Anderson, 2010). Finally, findings cannot be generalized to the larger population, but may be transferable to another similar setting (Anderson, 2010). Each of the six criteria listed applies to this study, as human experiences were evaluated from a first-person perspective of those who were directly involved in the collaboration being examined.

Procedures for Pilot Studies

Although a full pilot study was not undertaken, the collaboration leaders were asked to review the questions and provide feedback. In addition to providing a written outline of the study and a copy of the interview protocol, the purpose of the study was explained to at least one key person from each participating organization. This was done to help establish the validity of the interview instrument.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation and Data Collection

Adult volunteers from the two collaboration events were recruited for the study via email addresses and telephone numbers that were provided by the event organizers. The purpose of the study, sample interview questions, and participants' rights were shared upon initial contact. Once participants agreed to be interviewed, dates, times, and locations were established. To ensure privacy, the face-to-face interviews were conducted in a location of the interviewee's choice, including their homes, offices, or an outdoor area. The goal was to enhance openness in a comfortable and nonthreatening environment.

Points of Contact

A minimum of six points of contact took place with study participants. The first point of contact was to recruit the participant, as outlined in the *Sample Size* section. The second point of contact was to schedule an interview. The third point of contact was to confirm/remind participants of the scheduled interview. The fourth point of contact was to collect the data via an interview. The fifth point of contact was to readdress interview Questions 8 and 9, which are the control questions to establish response reliability, and confirm the accuracy of the transcribed interview. Questions 8 and 9 were used to prompt both an open-ended answer and a scale rating (1-5) of the overall experience of the participant and of the participants' perspectives regarding the importance of religious toleration. These questions are covered in more detail below under Trustworthiness of the Data via Intercoder Reliability. The final point of contact included a typed transcript of each interview for participants to review for accuracy.

Data Collection Setting, Duration, and Process

As previously noted, participants were asked to identify where they would like to complete their interviews. The goal was to make sure the participants were in the most comfortable environment possible, so that they would feel free to express themselves openly and honestly with confidence that their responses are confidential. Most participants chose to be interviewed in their homes. However, three interviews were held outdoors, and one was held in an empty office at City Hall.

Each interview lasted about an hour, with one interview lasting for about an hour and a half. The duration of the interviews included the amount of time it took to review and sign the participant consent form that clarified the participants' rights, a brief review of the purpose of the study, and information regarding the digital recording. Two copies of the consent form were signed. One copy was given to the participant, and the other copy was kept by the researcher. Further, a copy of the interview questions was given to the participants, so they could read them while they were being asked. This proved to be a helpful, as sometimes the participants reread the questions to themselves, prior to providing an answer. After all the interview questions had been completed, the participants were given an opportunity to ask any questions or offer any information they believed was relevant to the study. This information was recorded and included with the analyzed data. Once all questions were answered and comments were noted, the interviews ended. Participants were encouraged to contact the researcher, if they thought of any questions or wanted to add comments. They were thanked for their participation, and the researcher and participants exited the interviews.

As previously noted, during the interviews an audit trail was established, to contribute to the preliminary coding framework and the data analysis process. This included notes regarding interactions in the interviews, participants' demeanors, and anything else that might have contributed to the coding, sorting, and evaluation of the data. Although the goal was to help determine if the preliminary codes needed to be revised, that didn't actually occur until the data had been reviewed and organized several

times. Simon and Goes (2018) noted that codes are necessary to initially organize the data. Further, as advised by Simon and Goes (2018), a review of the words and codes with the participants can help to ensure that they reflect their experiences and perceptions. Periodically, the participant would be asked to clarify a response. Statements such as "Please explain what that means to you," and "Would it be safe to say that (fill in the blank) is what you mean?" were used to encourage rich text, as well as to encourage dialog that would reveal which of the preliminary codes, if any, could be applied to the comments.

Interview questions 8 and 9 were written to both gather data and to help establish intracoder reliability. Question 8 asked the participant to rate and describe their overall experience volunteering in the collaborative effort with people who either are not affiliated with their organization or do not share their religious beliefs. Question 9 asked the participant to rate and describe their overall perspective regarding how important they believe it is for people to support a religiously tolerant work environment during a volunteer collaboration event. Both questions have the following options: (1) Very Unimportant; (2) Somewhat Unimportant; (3) Important; (4) Very Important; and (5) Extremely Important. The participants were contacted within one week after the interviews and asked to answer the scale-rating portion of the questions. This, as noted above, helped to establish intracoder reliability, which reflects if the data collected by the researcher is consistent.

Beyond this, there was no need for follow-up interviews. However, participants were encouraged to contact the researcher if they had any questions.

There is no known confidential data that was collected for this study. Names have been kept confidential in the findings, and the participants have been assured of such. The purpose of the study has been shared with the primary organizer and participant of both collaboration efforts, who is a prominent government official. She has expressed no concerns about any data collection restrictions. She reviewed the interview questions and expressed no concerns about the possible data that would be collected with them. Further, she freely shared all relevant documents associated with the events.

All data is being kept by the researcher. There is no known confidential data being collected. The only data that is being kept confidential are the participants' names. All responses to interview questions have been compiled in summary format for data analysis and the presentation of findings. Data will not be destroyed. Data will be kept by the researcher for five years in a computer, a backup hard drive, and cloud drive that are all password protected.

Data Analysis Plan

The preliminary codes for this study were created in a manner that aligned the interview questions with Gajda's (2004) collaboration theory. This Focused Coding process was done by assigning primary codes that were based upon key words from Gajda's theory, including *imperative (I), many names (MN), journey (J), personal (P), and develops in stages (DS). Codes were assigned to key words, including necessity (N),*

duty (D), community service (CS), spiritual obligation (SO), personal fulfillment (PF), process (P), leader behavior (LB), follower behavior (FB), spirituality (S), inclusion (IN), expectations (E), initial perceptions (IP), and *evolved perceptions (EP*). Even though these exact words were not always given in the answers, they have been aligned with the interview questions (see Appendix E: Preliminary Data Analysis & Coding Worksheet). Probing interview questions were asked to encourage thick, rich, and descriptive answers. After each interview, responses were reviewed to identify gaps, inconsistencies, contradictions, and incomplete answers. The preliminary codes were applied, and gaps in appropriate codes were noted. Both the primary codes and the codes were evaluated to determine if further coding and categorizing was necessary, which is not unusual with qualitative research. As noted in Chapter 4, the majority of the preliminary codes were deemed sufficient for the data. However, three new codes were created as clear themes emerged that could not be sufficiently categorized with the preliminary codes.

Data was organized by themes, cases, and relationships. Color coding, letter coding, and highlighting was used to be able to reveal the patterns, trends, and relationships among the data.

The interview questions were written to reveal two perspectives: 1) the perspective of the members from the faith-based organizations and 2) the perspective of participants as a whole working together. Therefore, some data addressed question 1 and some data addressed question 2. Since the interview questions are open-ended, it was also

expected that there would be some crossover, whereby responses for questions could apply to both research questions.

Sorting and Coding Procedures

The goal of this research study was to manage, explore, and find patterns in the data that was obtained through interviews. This required numerous steps of reviewing and organizing the data, as is often the case in qualitative research. In general, however, the following steps were taken:

1. Interviews were transcribed.
2. Preliminary codes were assigned to each response.
3. New codes were created for data in which preliminary codes did not apply.
4. Data was organized by interview question.
5. Data was organized by codes.
6. Data was organized by research question.
7. Data was organized by themes.
8. Codes were tallied and illustrated in graphs and tables.
9. Data was used to reveal connections between interview questions and research questions.

Data Analysis Software

No data analysis software was used. Published coding and data analysis information was used to organize and interpret data.

Discrepant Cases

Morrow (2005) noted that for a qualitative study, open-ended questions should be limited to a small number because more questions generates more answers. Further, Morrow (2005) stated that adequate data in qualitative research is not realized by acquiring a large number of participants. Rather, employing strategic and targeted sampling procedures and then asking fewer interview questions is more likely to elicit responses that are more detailed and convey a deeper meaning from participants. These carefully planned and executed strategies help to minimize the number of discrepant cases (Morrow, 2005).

If there are discrepant cases, however, they cannot be ignored. Therefore, Morrow (2005) noted that it is important to identify disconfirming data and compare them with confirming data. This should be done repeatedly to enable the researcher to revise assertions and/or categories until the true experiences of participants emerge (Morrow, 2005).

The researcher was prepared to include and analyze all discrepant cases. This wasn't necessary, however, as no discrepant cases emerged.

Presentation of the Results

The research data was compiled, sorted, processed, analyzed, and presented in Chapter 4. The results were then interpreted and summarized, and the findings are presented in Chapter 5. For enhanced clarity the results are presented in both written and graphic formats.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of the Process

The value of any study can be lost, unless trustworthiness and credibility are established. Yin (2011) noted that there are three objectives for building trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative studies. First, the research must be done in a manner that is public and accessible, which has come to be known as transparency (Yin, 2011). This, Yin (2011) stated, requires the researcher to describe and document all research procedures; make all data available for inspection; be prepared for criticism and scrutiny; and be open for refinement. To ensure transparency, the leaders of the collaboration events were fully versed about the purpose and methodology of the study. Further, they were asked to review the interview questions and provide feedback regarding whether they believed that the questions accurately addressed the issue being studied. Second, Yin (2011) identified methodic-ness as the conscientious effort to ensure that research procedures are orderly, which minimizes bias and careless work (pp. 19-20). Methodic-ness also fosters the ability to cross check procedures and data, according to Yin (2011) (p. 20). Finally, Yin (2011) argued that trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative studies requires the adherence to evidence which requires that the participants' actual language is reflected accurately in the data collection process. Reality is reflected in a participant's actual language, which helps to corroborate the experiences and enhance the validity of the data (Yin, 2011). This perspective was reiterated by Creswell (2013), who

noted that the reality of participants' experiences with phenomena can only be considered accurate if validity is established.

Throughout the data collection process, all three of the criteria outlined by Yin (2011) were employed. Every interview question was read from the interview protocol, to ensure that every participant was asked identical questions. The research was publicly accessible, it was methodic, and it was digitally recorded to accurately reflect the participants' actual language.

Trustworthiness of Data

To ensure that the data is trustworthy, more than one strategy was utilized. To ensure credibility, feedback from the dissertation committee was incorporated to ensure that the interview questions aligned with the research questions. Further, the data analysis process was done using published and respected qualitative research methods, coding practices, data analysis, and interpretations. Triangulation was also used, which requires collecting data from multiple sources (Maxwell, 2009; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The sample size exceeded the recommended sample size for qualitative research as suggested by Creswell (2007) and Yin (2013), who recommended four to five sources and at least six sources, respectively. After all the interviews had been completed, the data was reviewed to determine if any gaps existed or if participants needed to be contacted again for more information and/or clarifications. After numerous reviews, it was determined data saturation had been reached. Therefore, no further data collection was necessary to

complete the study. As there were six points of contact with each participant, it was also determined that the researcher had fulfilled the contact and member checks requirements.

External Validity and Transferability

Qualitative research does not require findings to be generalizable. Rather, the goal of qualitative research is for it to be transferable (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Transferability is achieved through detailed and thorough data analysis. Further, detailed notes regarding the research and data collection process, as well the researcher's perceptions regarding participants' concerns and behaviors, provide a well-documented process with thick description that others may refer to for similar studies (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). For findings to be transferable, Morrow (2005) noted that the researcher must provide sufficient information about himself or herself as an instrument, as well as the research itself including context, processes, participants, and researcher– participant relationships. This, according to Morrow (2005), enables readers to determine how closely the study and its findings might transfer to a similar environment asking similar questions.

The participants were deliberately chosen, as they are part of a small group of people who participated in at least one of the collaboration events being studied. Within the defined participant pool, there was no preference for one event volunteer over another. Therefore, simply meeting the criterion of having been a volunteer in one of the events was sufficient for inclusion.

Dependability of Data

An audit trail was kept throughout the research process. This includes notes of comments made by participants that did not address a question but provided a commentary that was later evaluated for relevance. The researcher's perceptions of the interviews themselves were also noted. The researcher was also prepared to address any issues the might arise during the interview process with the committee chair, but nothing occurred to require this. Further, Morrow (2005) suggested that input from the organizations' leaders should be sought, in the event that concerns or issues arise, but this was not necessary.

Since there are two collaboration events being assessed, there was an opportunity to triangulate the data. Further, each collaboration included both the same government organization and faith-based organization. This provided an opportunity to collect data from different sources from two events that were cosponsored by the same organizations, and then to assess whether the responses were consistent from one event to the other. This provided a unique opportunity to assess the dynamics and interactions of these two organizations, as the settings and goals of both events were similar, but the volunteers who were interviewed were different.

Confirmability

Many researchers employ quantitative research methods, as data is expressed in numerical and quantifiable measurements that are more conducive for objectivity. Greenbank (2003) noted that this is especially true in policy making where government

officials tend to prefer the ability to view research results in quantitative measurements. However, not all data can be measured and/or expressed in numerical form, including emotions, context cues, opinions, and body language. Rather, a level of subjectivity is required by the researcher to interpret participants' behaviors. Not without its concerns, qualitative research has its merits. As Greenbank (2003) noted, value-laden research is essential in the social sciences even if researchers are unable to remain value-neutral, because it is possible to be objective. To foster this, Greenback (2003) contended that researchers need to evaluate their own values and make those values clear to those who are evaluating the research results. Other strategies that researchers can employ to reduce bias in qualitative studies include feeding back preliminary findings to the participants for confirmation of objective interpretations; triangulating data; recognizing data that may run counter to their own values and actively reevaluate such data; and acknowledging ulterior motives of career, educational, or status enhancements that could result from achieving favorable research results (Greenbank, 2003). By being cognizant of these concerns, the researcher is confident that there was no personal biases or influence on the collection, organization, or interpretation of the data.

Trustworthiness of the Data via Intercoder Reliability

Morrow (2005) noted that reliability is achieved when research processes and emerging designs are carefully tracked and an audit trail is recorded. This is accomplished by recording detailed activities and processes in a chronological manner, noting any and all influences on the collection and analysis of the data, grouping data into

categories and/or models, and keeping analytical memos (Morrow, 2005).

Intracoder reliability, also called intra-observer consistency, is established when one coder (researcher) establishes agreement in coding from one occasion to another (Knapp, 2008). Intercoder reliability is achieved when two or more independent coders agree on the coding of open-ended questions (Cho, 2008). Intercoder reliability ensures the objectivity and validity of the interpretation of content (Cho, 2008). Therefore, the process of intercoder reliability of data can be extremely valuable. For this study, there was only one researcher interviewing participants, and, as previously noted regarding data reliability, the researcher relied upon what Knapp (2008) referred to as intra-observer consistency, which is agreement from one occasion to another with the same rater (p. 713).

According to Knapp (2008) the three key concepts in the classic theory of reliability are: Observed score (the measurement actually obtained); True score (the measurement that, in some sense, should have been obtained; and Error score (the difference between true score and observed score). (p. 713). To determine the reliability coefficient for the interview questions, the ratio of the variances between the true scores and the observed scores was determined (Knapp, 2008). To accomplish this, participants were contacted within a week of completing the interviews with follow-up control questions. Question 8 (Please describe your overall experience volunteering in this collaborative effort with people who either are not affiliated with your organization or do not share your religious beliefs.), and Question 9 (Please rate and describe your overall

perspective regarding how important you believe it is for people to support a religiously tolerance work environment during a volunteer collaboration event.) have been designated as the control questions, as they were written to elicit responses that reflect an overall perspective of the participants' experiences and opinions about the topic. These are the only questions that include a rating scale (1 to 5). The responses to the rating portion of the questions were used for the sole purpose of establishing reliability.

Content Validity

As previously stated, content validity was established in several ways. First, the data collection instrument was constructed of open-ended questions. This was done to ensure that participants would not answer questions with a yes or no answer. Rather, the questions were worded to elicit responses that would reflect their personal experiences of the phenomenon being studied. Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) noted that probing questions are necessary to foster in-depth responses from the interviewees. Second, the interview questions were written to directly address the research questions. Third, the committee members' feedback was incorporated, to improve the interview questions. Fourth, leaders of the participating faith-based organization and government agency were asked to review the questions, and their feedback was taken into serious consideration. Finally, during the interviews, notes were taken regarding any conversations or input that veered from the interview questions. These notes were especially helpful for subsequent interviews, as they added details about the events that were considered factors that could affect participants' experiences. Therefore, although the interview protocol was not

altered, the researcher was able to ask for clarifications when participants alluded to similar factors as previous interviewees had mentioned.

The interview questions were derived from the research questions. The interview questions were all open-ended questions that were worded in a manner that did not suggest any right or wrong answers, with the exception of two control questions that were used to establish what Knapp (2008) referred to as "intra-observer consistency" (p. 713) . This was done by writing the interview questions to be used for all participants, rather than organization-specific. Since there were various religious affiliations among the volunteers, including the possibility of participants with no religious affiliation, the interview questions were carefully written to neither support nor criticize any particular set of beliefs.

A concerted effort was made to avoid acquiescence response bias. This, according to Holbrook (2008) is when respondents agree with statements, even if they don't agree at all. To avoid acquiescence response bias, Holbrook (2008) recommended that researchers should avoid agree-disagree questions and replace them with open-ended questions that require participants to respond with direct and specific answers. This encourages participants to answer the questions in a manner that illustrates the researcher's dimension of interest (Holbrook, 2008).

There were participants who expressed concern that their answers were not helpful to the study. However, they were reassured that there are no right or wrong answers. Further, they were assured that all answers were helpful, as every perspective

was considered valuable to the study, regardless of how insignificant they believed their perspective might be.

Ethical Procedures

Protection of the Participants' Rights

The protection of participants' rights is of utmost importance in any study. This study is no exception. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) noted that confidentiality, anonymity, and accuracy of information must be obtained. This was explained to participants, prior to their participation and throughout the study, with the guarantee that they could withdraw from the study at any point during the research process (Fung, Chan, & Chien, 2013).

The promise of openness and honesty, regarding any questions they may have about the study, was reiterated throughout the study, with the assurance that their privacy will be protected. They were informed that their names will not be used in the presentation of any results or in the publication of the completed dissertation. Finally, participants were assured that they would always have the final say regarding their level of participation in the study.

The nature of this study did not require any data collection that needed to be disguised in any way. Participants knowing exactly what type of data that was being collected and the reason for it did not compromise the findings. Therefore, the purpose of the study and its desired outcome of accurately reflecting participants' personal experiences was clearly outlined. Participants were reassured that there are no hidden

agendas, and that the purpose of the study is exactly as it is stated...nothing more and nothing less.

Institutional Permissions

Every Ph.D. candidate at Walden University must receive Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval prior to conducting research. Walden University's IRB is comprised of faculty members, staff members, and at least one external reviewer and is tasked with ensuring ethical research that involves human subjects (Walden University, 2017). The primary goal of an IRB is to ensure the safety of participants by making sure researchers reason through all of the potential risks and benefits that could arise throughout a study and adjust their research as necessary (Walden University, 2017). Permission was granted by Walden University's IRB to move forward with the study on December 11, 2018 (IRB# 12-04-18-0025529).

Ethical Concerns Related to Recruitment Materials and Processes

This study was very straight forward. The purpose of the study was clearly outlined and written in a nonthreatening tone (see Appendix F: Recruitment Letter). Only participants who were comfortable sharing their experiences during one of the collaborative events were interviewed. Since the volunteers were asked to contact the researcher only if they were interested in taking part in the study, the researcher did not encounter any potential participants who appeared hesitant or expresses concerns about being included.

Ethical Concerns Related to Data Collection

No ethical concerns arose related to any of the data collection activities. The importance of openness and honesty, from both the researcher and the participants, was stressed. The purpose of the study was reiterated and participants' open and honest input was encouraged, for the sake of an accurate reflection of their perceived experiences. Since the study was seeking opinions regarding perceptions of religious tolerance, there was concern there may be some people who might be hesitant to be forthright. Therefore, it was important to assure participants that they were not being judged and that their honest perspectives would only serve to contribute to a deeper understanding of these collaborative environments.

Protection of the Participant's Rights

Participants have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times. Therefore, it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that every aspect of a study is conducted in a manner that ensures equal and fair treatment of every participant. Stake (1995) wrote that researchers have great privilege and obligation to be a part of a study. What this means is that they must pay close attention to what they are researching and draw conclusions based upon what is meaningful to both the clients and their colleagues (Stake, 1995). With this privilege and obligation comes the responsibility of the researcher to both conduct research and report findings in an ethical manner. This requires strict confidence for participants who desire not to be publicly identified.

Full disclosure of the study was provided in writing to participants in the recruitment letters (see Appendix F: Recruitment Letter). The information included for the participants:

- Outlined the purpose of the study;
- Identified criteria used to select participants for the study;
- Offered flexibility regarding location of data collection;
- Identified Walden University as the organization that is overseeing the study;
- Guaranteed confidentiality of all responses;
- Assured participants that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time;
- Offered to forward a copy of the research findings, if desired; and
- Provided contact information for participants who may have questions or concerns (Sarantakos, 2005).

Summary

This case study provided an opportunity to examine the perspectives of the participants involved in two faith-based organization and government collaboration events. The purpose of the study was to illuminate the level of tolerance perceived by participants of various faiths and/or no formal faith affiliation in community projects that were cosponsored by a faith-based organization and a government entity. Stake (1995) noted that, the function of research is not to answer all of the possible questions about a topic, but to increase our understanding of it for our betterment. The goal was to

contribute to the current faith-based organization and government collaboration literature, by utilizing proven qualitative case study research methods.

of provides a thorough description of and justification for the research design and methodology for this study. A case study approach that utilized face-to-face interviews was used to gather data. Open-ended questions were written to foster detailed answers to reflect a thick description of the participants' experiences. As a qualitative study, a large number of participants was not necessary, and the sample of ten people was drawn from the two participating organizations. Data was organized, coded, and analyzed, based upon professional and respected published research methods. The study was designed to fill a gap in the available literature, while being sure to meet all required ethical, academic, and professional standards.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this case study is to explore participants' perceptions of tolerance levels regarding their spiritual beliefs while working within a collaborative setting of mixed faiths. To evaluate participants' experiences, the following ontological research questions were used as the foundation of the study.

RQ1: What are the perceptions of participants of faith-based organization and government organization collaborations regarding how comfortably they were able to participate in a manner that neither promoted nor stifled the spiritual beliefs of both the members and nonmembers of the faith-based organizations?

RQ2: From the perspectives of the research participants, what factors either fostered or hindered a harmonious and productive work environment regarding tolerance, acceptance, and unity among volunteers with varied belief systems?

In this chapter, the study is outlined to include the current conditions of the participants, the demographics of the participants, the data collection procedures, the data analysis, the evidence of data trustworthiness, and the results. Particular attention is paid to the coding of the results, which was done with meticulous attention to identify patterns of both similarities and differences of participants' experiences.

Setting

To foster a comfortable environment for participants, they were asked to choose the location for the interviews. There was no evidence that any person felt uncomfortable

during the interviews, with either the location or due to any personal experiences or conditions. However, two individuals did talk about the loss of a loved one either shortly before or shortly after their participation in the collaboration events. Although they each showed their emotions in the interviews, they very quickly regrouped and moved forward. It was evident that the timing of the events reminded them of their personal losses, but there was no indication that the accuracy of their memories of the events were altered.

Demographics

All of the ten participants were adults who had volunteered for a collaboration event between the city and a local church. Since the topic addressed religion, it was determined that including volunteers under the age of 18 was not appropriate. Gender was not considered a factor, so there was no effort to have a certain number of either males or females in the study. However, half of the volunteers interviewed had been recruited from the community at large by representatives of the local city government, and half of the volunteers interviewed were affiliated with the church, in an effort to gather data from both groups of people involved in the collaborations. The religious affiliations of the participants who were recruited by the city to volunteer were unknown, unless it was revealed, voluntarily and without prompting, during the course of the interview.

Although this was not known prior to the interviews, most of the participants in the study had volunteered at both of the events being studied. They were only asked

questions regarding their experiences at one event. However, since the questions are open-ended, it wasn't uncommon for them to share their experiences at both events, as they related to the question asked. Not a single respondent mentioned a different experience from one event to the other.

Data Collection

Although the original plan was to interview eight people per event, for a total of 16 people for the two events, data saturation was achieved with this study with ten participants. Six of the participants were affiliated with the church, and four of the participants had been recruited from the community at large.

Each of the ten interviews were held in a different location, over the course of four months. Some participants preferred to be interviewed in their homes, some preferred to meet at an outdoor location, and one chose to meet at her office. All participants signed consent forms to be recorded, and a digital recording was made of the interviews via a computer and an external microphone that was placed in front of them.

Including the amount of time to review and sign the consent form, most interviews lasted for approximately one hour. The interviews were then transcribed and forwarded to the participants for their review and confirmation of accuracy. They were given one week to respond with comments and/or corrections. Seven participants responded with an email that stated that the transcript was correct. Three participants did not respond. This was not surprising, however, since it was made clear that they had a

week to respond with comments or corrections before the transcripts would be considered uncontested.

To ensure intra-coder consistency, there were two control questions that required a follow up phone call to each participant. Questions eight and nine were designed to verify response accuracy and consistency. First, the control questions were used to ensure that the information being recorded by the researcher was accurate. Second, the control questions were used to confirm that the participants' responses were consistent. These two questions were asked during the initial interview and again a week later via a follow up phone call. The control questions asked participants to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, both their experiences of religious tolerance at the event and their views regarding the level of importance of religious tolerance at any collaboration event. No other follow-up contact was necessary after that.

Data Analysis

Once the collection of the data was complete, each response was reviewed and assigned the appropriate preliminary codes. Almost immediately, three common themes arose that resulted in the creation of three new codes. After numerous reviews of the data, every relevant comment had been assigned at least one code. Further, clear patterns emerged within each question to reveal common responses among the participants.

As previously noted, the preliminary codes were created to align the interview questions with Gajda's (2004) collaboration theory. The five categories that were assigned to key words from Gajda's theory include *Imperative, Many Names, Journey,*

Personal, and *Develops in Stages.* These preliminary codes allowed for the data to be organized thematically. This proved to work very well, as the data was able to be aligned with at least one of the five themes.

The data went through various stages of coding and organizing, to group related material and identify emergent patterns. Saldana (2016) noted that various coding methods are appropriate for ontological questions, whereby the nature of the participants' realities are being studied. Included in the choices are In Vivo, Focused Coding, and Themeing the Data (Saldana, 2016). As outlined in Chapter 3, focused coding was used as an initial strategy for the codes, prior to the data collection process, which enabled participants' responses to be categorized by exact words and phrases. These included *Necessity, Duty, Community service, Spiritual obligation, Personal fulfillment, Process, Leader Behavior, Follower Behavior, Spirituality, Inclusion, Expectation, Initial Perceptions*, and *Evolved Perceptions.* Only the codes were used to code the data, while the categories were used to group the codes into five accepted principles and abstractions that Gajda (2004) noted as being observed factors for successful collaboration. These five categories provided the foundation to form axis core-categories, around which other data revolve. This allowed for more accurately coded data, as minor differences in comments resulted in different codes. For example, the category of *Collaboration is an Imperative* includes four codes that each represent a different reason that it is considered imperative. The reasons that participants get involved with a collaboration event differ from person to person. The four reasons that revealed themselves in the data include a belief that it is

necessary, the feeling of a sense of duty, a desire to focus on and complete a task, and commitment to a common goal. Of these four reasons, only *Necessity* and *Duty* were included as initial codes under the category of *Collaboration is an Imperative,* while the codes of *Task Driven* and *Common Goal* are codes that emerged from the data.

During the first round of coding of the completed data, the Focused Codes were applied. Although they proved to be sufficient for a large portion of the data, some data needed more appropriate codes. Saldana (2016) noted that In Vivo Codes are created from the actual language of the participant and are evocative and action oriented. Therefore, additional codes were established to reveal emotional narrative, rather than simply describing a generic setting. As previously stated, both *Task Driven* and *Common Goal* were codes that emerged when the data was reviewed and evaluated and were added to the category of *Collaboration is an Imperative.* Another code that emerged is *Comfortable or Neutral Environment,* which was placed under the category of *With Collaboration, the Personal is as Important as the Procedural.*

One code required a modification. The code *Inclusion,* under the category *With Collaboration, the Personal is as Important as the Procedural,* needed to be separated into two different codes. The data revealed that the term inclusion covered two types of responses. One type of inclusion is the motivation of a person to volunteer at an event with the desire to be part of a group and/or project. Another type of inclusion is the feeling of belonging and/or acceptance among the rest of the volunteers at the time of the event. To clarify these two different perspectives, the first type mentioned was assigned

the initial code of *Desired Inclusion,* while the second perspective was assigned the code of *Perceived Inclusion.*

The research questions were written to identify the religious tolerance levels experienced by the participants and the factors that either contributed to or impeded a work environment that promoted acceptance and unity of people from various faiths. Each interview question was written to address one of the research questions. Interview questions one, two, five, six, seven, eight and ten relate to research question one. Interview questions three, four, nine, eleven, and twelve relate to research question two. Interview question 13 did not apply to a specific research question, as it provided an opportunity for the participants to ask questions and offer unprompted comments.

The coded data were organized in five ways. First, all participants' coded responses were organized per interview. Second, participants' coded responses were grouped together according to the specific interview question. Hence, responses to interview question one were put in one group, responses to interview question two were put in another group, and so forth. Third, coded data were organized by category. Fourth, coded data were organized and tallied by code. Finally, the data were organized and tallied per research question. These five ways enabled the data to be analyzed by respondent, by question, by category, by code, and by relationship to each research question.

Although the interview questions were each written to align with only one of the two research questions, many of the participants' responses spoke to both of them. For

example, in response to the question "How comfortable were you expressing your religious beliefs with other volunteers?" one respondent stated, "If someone had asked me, I would have had no problem. It's just that, where I was, we were all working. We were all there to get the job done." For this response, four different codes were assigned: *Task Driven; Common Goal; Community Service;* and *Comfortable/Neutral Environment.* This response is related to the first research question, which is regarding the participant's perception of comfort, while also being related to the second research question which is focused on factors that either foster or hinder the collaboration environment and religious tolerance.

Each interview question was reviewed numerous times, to ensure that all appropriate codes were applied. In doing so, numerous patterns emerged. Although the preliminary codes proved to be relevant for much of the data, three new codes were added for a large portion of the responses. In fact, these three new codes accounted for 196 of the 445 assigned codes: *Task Driven* (*f*=59); *Common Goal* (*f* =27); and *Comfortable/Neutral Environment* (*f* =110). The codes of *Task Driven* and *Common Goal* were placed under the category of *Imperative,* while the code of *Comfortable/Neutral Environment* was placed under the category of *Personal.* Accounting for 44 percent of the final code tally, an overwhelming pattern emerged from these new codes, alone.

While reviewing the data, it became clear that the term *inclusion* meant two different things. Although this was an original code, it couldn't be applied the same for responses all related to inclusion. Rather, it had to be separated into two types of

inclusion: 1) the desire to be included and 2) the perception of being included. For example, Respondent nine shared that there were volunteers who stated that they felt very welcome and accepted at the event, which was assigned the code *Perceived Inclusion*. Further, Respondent nine noted that some of these people also asked how they could be a part of a future collaboration event, which was assigned the code *Desired Inclusion*. Therefore, all responses that were originally coded for *Inclusion* were separated based upon whether it was a motivation to participate in the current or future event, *Desired Inclusion*, or whether it was a perception of feeling included at this particular event, *Perceived Inclusion*. This distinction stood out with the code tallies, as a clear pattern emerged, based upon the interview question. For example, *Desired Inclusion* was revealed in the responses for question one, but *Perceived Inclusion* was not. Conversely, *Perceived Inclusion* was revealed in the responses for question two, but *Desired Inclusion* was not. Since both questions were written to address research question one, they complimented one another to reveal two different perspectives of their perceptions regarding their comfort levels of inclusion.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data collection process, Yin's (2011) recommendations for building trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative studies were employed. To meet Yin's (2011) three objectives, the research was done in a public and accessible manner, known as transparency; the research procedures were orderly, identified as methodic-ness; and the participants' actual language was reflected accurately

in the data collection process, which reflects reality and corroborates the participants' experiences (Yin, 2011).

Potential threats to validity must be identified, and strategies to avoid them must be assertively employed to foster the trustworthiness of qualitative research, data, and results. Johnson (1997) listed numerous strategies that can be used to do this. Of notable relevance to the current study, the use of what Johnson (1997) referred to as low inference descriptors, data triangulation, pattern matching, and reflexivity were employed in a concerted and methodical manner. Verbatim quotes, which were used throughout the data collection, coding, and analyzing stages of the study, are, according to Johnson (1997), a common form of low inference descriptors. Data triangulation occurred, as responses were gathered from ten different sources. Further, the interview questions were written in a manner to generate rich text, which resulted in various different questions generating similar responses. This also contributed to pattern matching, which Johnson (1997) noted is the ability to predict results that form pattern, as well as the degree to which the predicted patterns actually are formed by the results. Finally, reflexivity, which Johnson (1997) described as the researcher's self-awareness and critical self-reflection to any potential biases and predispositions that could affect the data collection process and conclusions, was employed throughout every step of the study.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, a concerted effort was made to also follow Maxwell's (2009) recommendations for addressing the challenges of validity, including producing rich data via repeated observations and intense interviews; obtaining

feedback from participants to reduce misinterpretations; collecting data from various sources and accounting for discrepant evidence; replacing adjectives with numbers for describing data; and comparing results to different events, settings, and groups. Each of these measures was taken. Intense, open-ended-question, interviews were conducted; possible misinterpretations were negated by participants' approval of recording transcripts; various sources were used for data collection; no discrepant cases arose; numbers have been used to describe data, and, as the participants who had volunteered at both of the collaboration events noted, they detected no differences in the tolerance levels experienced at each event.

Transferability

The findings of the study are transferable. This was made possible by providing a thorough description of the context; a well-documented data-collection process; a clear identification of the events and participants being studied; and an understanding of the researcher-participant relationships (Morrow, 2005). Further, thorough data analysis of this study makes it possible for a reader to determine if its findings could apply to a similar environment and address comparable questions. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) noted that this is the goal of qualitative research, as transferability is more important than generalizability.

Dependability of Data

To foster the dependability of the data, the data collection process was methodic and consistent. Each participant was interviewed in the same manner. Every question was asked in the same order and read verbatim from the written interview protocol. Further, each participant was given a copy of the interview questions to read for themselves while they were being asked. This ensured that participants did not mishear a question. Questions were encouraged, and openness and honesty were fostered by ensuring that all responses are confidential.

Confirmability

Qualitative research has its critics. However, quantitative research is not ideal for all situations and studies. Subjectivity is sometimes required to interpret participants' responses, as vocal tone, facial expressions, pauses, and body language cannot be accounted for with mere numbers. In this study, both verbal and nonverbal cues were taken into account, and notes were taken during the interviews for the researcher to refer to when reviewing the data. This allowed for value-laden research, which Greenbank (2003) stated is essential in the social sciences. The researcher's perceptions must be taken into account, as well. Therefore, a concerted effort must be made by the researcher to acknowledge personal biases and possible ulterior motives that could influence data interpretation and results (Greenbank, 2003). For this study, the researcher was continually cognizant of this, and made sure not to express any opinions or show any nonverbal behaviors that could be interpreted by the participants as a sign of

disagreement, judgment, or distaste of any kind. Rather, every participant was treated with respect and encouraged to be as open and honest as possible regarding their real experiences at the events.

Discrepant Cases

There were no discrepant cases or nonconforming data. Although each participant answered the questions with their own words, the responses were very similar in nature and tone. This is reflected in the clear themes that emerged in the data, which the coding process served to illustrate. It should be noted that some participants were very passionate about their experiences, which is reflected in a high number of similarly coded responses. This, however, does not reflect a discrepancy, as the responses did not reflect a different view than the other respondents. Rather, it served to reinforce the similar perspectives across the participants.

Results

Although qualitative research is not based upon numbers, they can be used to establish patterns and recognize deviations in the data. Sandelowski (2001) noted that the use of numbers in qualitative studies can help to generate patterns, establish clarity, and reveal meaning from the data. In addition to using words to describe data and findings, visual representations that are created with numbers can help to generate patterns, reveal relationships, and provide summarized illustrations that are relatable to the reader. A data display that is overloaded with words can be difficult for the reader to comprehend, according to Sandelowski (2001), whereas a data display with numbers can succinctly

summarize data into key findings and concepts. For these reasons, various tables and figures have been created to summarize the data, reveal emerged patterns, and illustrate findings.

Organized into five groups, the data were tallied by respondent, question, category, codes, and in relation to each research question. The code frequencies revealed some clear patterns in the data. It also allowed for the ability to thoroughly compare and contrast the coded responses to one another, different groups, and between the two research questions.

The first way the coded responses were organized is by respondent. It became clear that the interview questions elicited more coded responses in some categories than others across all respondents. For example, of the five categories, responses that were included in either *Collaboration is Personal or Collaboration is an Imperative* accounted for a large number of responses from the majority of the respondents. On the contrary, the category of *Collaboration is a Journey* had relatively few coded responses. For example, whereas the lowest number of coded responses that a participant had under the category of *Collaboration is Personal* was eight, there were five respondents had either zero or only one coded response under the category of *Collaboration is a Journey* (see Table 5).

Table 5

Category and Codes Frequencies per Respondent

Category/Code	Respondent									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Imperative	**(*f*=9)**	**(*f*=14)**	**(*f*=6)**	**(*f*=6)**	**(*f*=3)**	**(*f*=18)**	**(*f*=9)**	**(*f*=11)**	**(*f*=19)**	**(*f*=10)**
Necessity	*f*=1	*f*=3	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=2	*f*=1	*f*=1	*f*=5	*f*=1
Duty	*f*=1	*f*=1	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=1	*f*=2	*f*=0
Task Driven	*f*=6	*f*=6	*f*=4	*f*=4	*f*=1	*f*=10	*f*=6	*f*=6	*f*=10	*f*=6
Common Goal	*f*=1	*f*=4	*f*=2	*f*=2	*f*=2	*f*=6	*f*=2	*f*=3	*f*=2	*f*=3
Many Names	**(*f*=4)**	**(*f*=6)**	**(*f*=5)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=10)**	**(*f*=2)**	**(*f*=4)**	**(*f*=20)**	**(*f*=3)**
Community Service	*f*=0	*f*=2	*f*=2	*f*=0	*f*=1	*f*=6	*f*=1	*f*=3	*f*=2	*f*=1
Spiritual Obligation	*f*=1	*f*=2	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=7	*f*=2
Personal Fulfillment	*f*=3	*f*=2	*f*=3	*f*=1	*f*=0	*f*=4	*f*=1	*f*=1	*f*=11	*f*=0
Journey	**(*f*=3)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=0)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=5)**	**(*f*=7)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=0)**	**(*f*=20)**	**(*f*=1)**
Process	*f*=1	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=4	*f*=4	*f*=1	*f*=0	*f*=11	*f*=0
Leader Behavior	*f*=2	*f*=1	*f*=0	*f*=1	*f*=1	*f*=3	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=9	*f*=1
Follower Behavior	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0
Personal	**(*f*=19)**	**(*f*=15)**	**(*f*=13)**	**(*f*=16)**	**(*f*=15)**	**(*f*=25)**	**(*f*=9)**	**(*f*=16)**	**(*f*=24)**	**(*f*=15)**
Spirituality	*f*=4	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=2	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=8	*f*=2
Desired Inclusion	*f*=1	*f*=1	*f*=0	*f*=1	*f*=2	*f*=1	*f*=0	*f*=2	*f*=2	*f*=2
Perceived Inclusion	*f*=4	*f*=2	*f*=5	*f*=2	*f*=1	*f*=6	*f*=0	*f*=3	*f*=5	*f*=1
Comfortable/Neutral	*f*=10	*f*=12	*f*=8	*f*=13	*f*=12	*f*=16	*f*=9	*f*=11	*f*=9	*f*=10
Stages	**(*f*=3)**	**(*f*=4)**	**(*f*=3)**	**(*f*=2)**	**(*f*=21)**	**(*f*=11)**	**(*f*=7)**	**(*f*=7)**	**(*f*=15)**	**(*f*=5)**
Expectations	*f*=1	*f*=1	*f*=1	*f*=0	*f*=10	*f*=6	*f*=3	*f*=5	*f*=4	*f*=1
Initial Perceptions	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=0	*f*=1	*f*=4	*f*=2	*f*=1	*f*=1	*f*=3	*f*=1
Evolved Perceptions	*f*=2	*f*=3	*f*=2	*f*=1	*f*=7	*f*=3	*f*=3	*f*=1	*f*=8	*f*=3

The second way that coded responses were organized is per interview question. This enabled the frequencies to be viewed per concept, rather than per participant. This also helped to triangulate the data, as a similar pattern emerged with the categories of *Collaboration is an Imperative* and *Collaboration is about the Personal* showing a prominence in the responses, while the category of *Collaboration is a Journey* reflected far fewer responses (see Table 6).

Table 6

Category and Codes Frequencies per Interview Question

Category/Code	Interview Question											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Imperative	**(*f*=10)**	**(*f*=10)**	**(*f*=7)**	**(*f*=18)**	**(*f*=8)**	**(*f*=7)**	**(*f*=5)**	**(*f*=4)**	**(*f*=20)**	**(*f*=5)**	**(*f*=7)**	**(*f*=4)**
Necessity	(*f*=6)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=2)
Duty	(*f*=1)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)
Task Driven	(*f*=3)	(*f*=6)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=15)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=5)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=9)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=1)
Common Goal	(*f*=0)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=7)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=0)
Many Names	**(*f*=12)**	**(*f*=5)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=4)**	**(*f*=0)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=6)**	**(*f*=9)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=4)**	**(*f*=12)**
Community Service	(*f*=4)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=2)
Spiritual Obligation	(*f*=3)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=1)
Personal Fulfillment	(*f*=5)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=5)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=9)
Journey	**(*f*=6)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=0)**	**(*f*=1)**	**(*f*=6)**	**(*f*=2)**	**(*f*=8)**	**(*f*=2)**	**(*f*=5)**	**(*f*=6)**
Process	(*f*=2)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=5)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=3)
Leader Behavior	(*f*=4)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=3)
Follower Behavior	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)
Personal	**(*f*=5)**	**(*f*=22)**	**(*f*=14)**	**(*f*=9)**	**(*f*=22)**	**(*f*=9)**	**(*f*=6)**	**(*f*=21)**	**(*f*=31)**	**(*f*=9)**	**(*f*=12)**	**(*f*=7)**
Spirituality	(*f*=1)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=6)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)
Desired Inclusion	(*f*=4)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=2)
Perceived Inclusion	(*f*=0)	(*f*=8)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=6)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=4)
Comfortable/Neutral	(*f*=0)	(*f*=11)	(*f*=12)	(*f*=9)	(*f*=12)	(*f*=5)	(*f*=5)	(*f*=19)	(*f*=20)	(*f*=8)	(*f*=8)	(*f*=1)
Stages	**((*f*=0)**	**(*f*=4)**	**(*f*=4)**	**(*f*=8)**	**(*f*=9)**	**(*f*=13)**	**(*f*=8)**	**(*f*=6)**	**(*f*=13)**	**(*f*=3)**	**(*f*=4)**	**(*f*=6)**
Expectations	(*f*=0)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=8)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=3)
Initial Perceptions	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=3)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)
Evolved Perceptions	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=2)	(*f*=8)	(*f*=8)	(*f*=4)	(*f*=5)	(*f*=0)	(*f*=1)	(*f*=3)

The third way that the data were organized is by the five categories. Comprising 37.5% of the total coded responses, the category of *With Collaboration, the Personal is as Important as the Procedural (f*=167) represents the largest group of coded responses. The category that represents the second largest number of responses is *Collaboration is an Imperative (f*=105) and accounts for 23.6% of the coded responses. The third largest group of responses corresponds with the category *Collaboration Develops in Stages (f*=78) and comprises 17.5% of the total coded responses. The fourth largest number of responses corresponds with the category *Collaboration is Known by Many Names (f*=56) and accounts for 12.6% of all coded replies. The category with the least amount of responses is *Collaboration is a Journey, not a Destination (f*=39), and contains 8.8% of the total coded replies (see Table 7).

Table 7

Category Frequencies

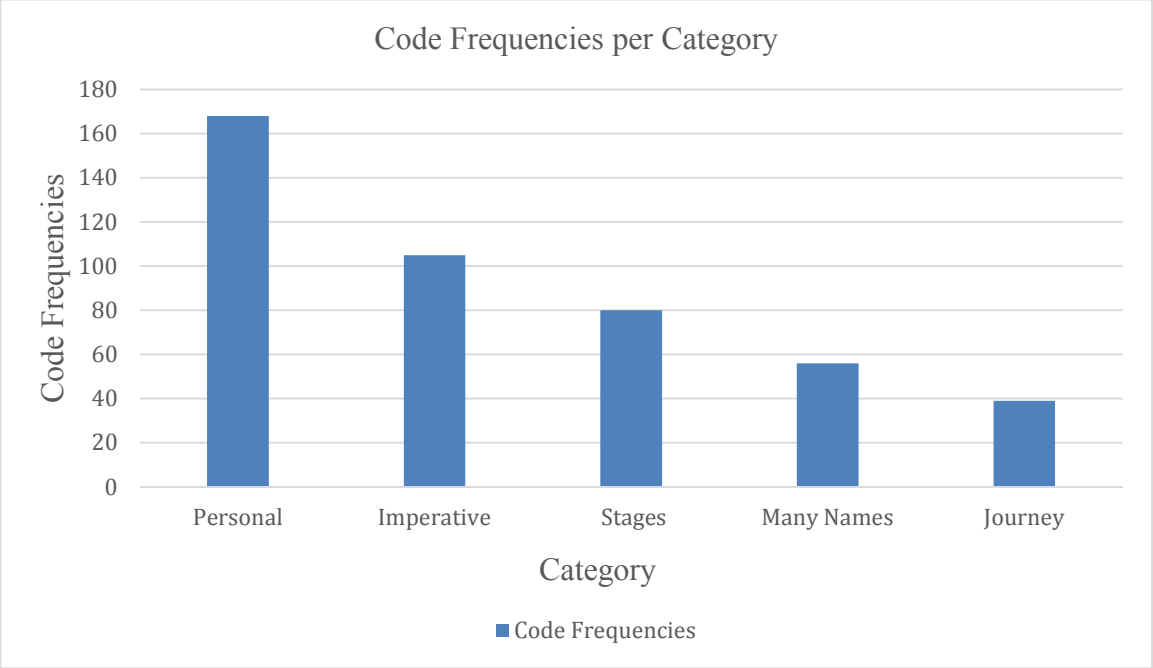
Category	Frequency
Collaboration is an Imperative	*f*=105
Collaboration is Known by Many Names	*f*=56
Collaboration is a Journey, Not a Destination	*f*=39
With Collaboration, the Personal is as Important as the Procedural	*f*=168
Collaboration Develops in Stages	*f*=80

To further illustrate the vast difference between the largest and the smallest groups of responses, Figure 1 shows a side-by-side view of the five categories' totals in descending order. As the figure illustrates, the frequency of responses is relatively high in the area of *With Collaboration, the Personal is as Important as the Procedural (Personal)*, with the categories of *Collaboration is an* (*Imperative), Collaboration Develops in Stages (Stages), Collaboration is Known by Many Names (Many Names)*, and *Collaboration is a Journey, not a Destination (Journey)* following in descending order. As discussed in the literature review, sociological institutionalism supports the perspective that like-minded people with shared norms, beliefs, and guidelines can work very well together to achieve personal goals (Page, 2013). Further, personal partnerships and positive relationships are deemed important for collaboration to be successful (Jones, Borgatti, & Hesterly, 1997; Thomson & Perry, 2006). The success of the collaboration efforts also appears to be partly due to what was revealed in the literature review by Chen (2011) who noted the importance of joint decision making and trust for positive collaboration outcomes, which are very personal in nature.

The importance of the personal aspects of collaboration efforts is evident for people who are guided by faith. As outlined in the literature review and revealed in numerous participants' responses, being guided by faith is a very personal and important driving force for participating in community events that serve to benefit the community

as a whole. As Terry et al. (2015) noted, various religious communities not only provide community services for religious reasons, but they, actually, value being able to do it.

Figure 1. Descending-order comparison of coded responses per category



The fourth way that data were organized is by codes. Within the category *Collaboration is an Imperative* the codes have the following number of coded responses: *Necessity (f*=14); *Duty (f*=5); *Task Driven (f*=59); and *Common Goal (f=27*). The number of coded responses found within the category *Collaboration is Known by Many Names* are *Community Service (f*=18); *Spiritual Obligation (f*=12); and *Personal Fulfillment (f*=26). *Collaboration is a Journey, not a Destination* has the following number of coded responses: *Process (f*=21); *Leader Behavior (f*=18); *Follower Behavior (f*=0). Within the category *With Collaboration, the Personal is as Important as the Procedural* the codes have the following number of responses: *Spirituality (f*=16); *Desired Inclusion (f*=12); *Perceived Inclusion (f*=29); and *Comfortable/Neutral Environment (f*=110). Finally, within the category *Collaboration Develops in Stages* the number of coded responses include *Expectations (f*=32); *Initial Perceptions (f*=13); and *Evolved Perceptions (f*=33).

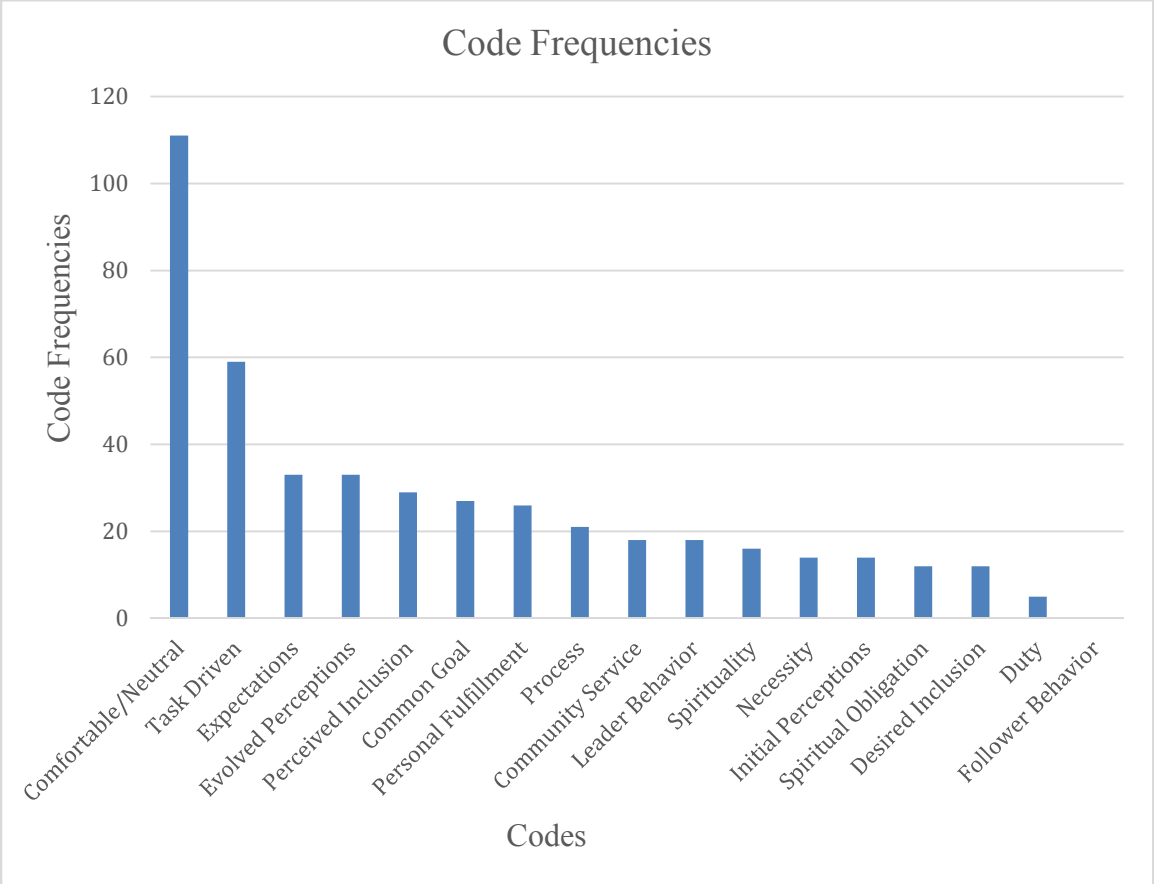
Table 8 shows the frequencies of the codes. For illustrative purposes, a graph was created to reveal the code responses in descending order (see Figure 2). The most prevalent code, by almost twice as much as the second most common code, of comfortable/neutral environment was assigned to 110 interviewee comments. Aligning with the highest number of total responses, this code is found in the category of *With collaboration, the personal is as important as the procedural.* The figure illustrates the overwhelming gap between this and every other code.

Table 8

Codes Frequencies

Category	Codes	Frequency
Collaboration is an imperative		
	Necessity	*f*=14
	Duty	*f*=5
	Task Driven	*f*=59
	Common Goal	*f*=27
Collaboration is known by many names		
	Community Service	*f*=18
	Spiritual Obligation	*f*=12
	Personal Fulfillment	*f*=26
Collaboration is a journey, not a destination		
	Process	*f*=21
	Leader Behavior	*f*=18
	Follower Behavior	*f*=0
With collaboration, the personal is as important as the procedural		
	Spirituality	*f*=16
	Desired Inclusion	*f*=12
	Perceived Inclusion at Event	*f*=29
	Comfortable/Neutral Environment	*f*=110
Collaboration develops in stages		
	Expectations	*f*=32
	Initial Perceptions	*f*=13
	Evolved Perceptions	*f*=33

Figure 2. Descending-order comparison of aggregate code frequencies



The fifth, and final, way the data were organized is per research question (see Table 9). Although the interview questions were written to elicit responses to address a particular research question, an interesting pattern emerged across the five categories, as well as among the coded responses. Both research questions were similarly represented within each category and within each code. As the data show, the number of responses per category, per research question is very similar. This was interpreted as an indicator that the categories and codes sufficiently applied to both questions, rather than more heavily on one than the other. Of the 445 codes assigned to comments, 233 applied to Research Question 1 and 212 applied to Research Question 2. The data support that both questions were addressed in a balanced manner. For illustrative purposes, each category was graphed to show the similarity of responses for both research questions. Figures 3 through 7 show the side-by-side comparison of responses for each research question, per category, while Figure 9 includes all responses for each research question. For the category *Collaboration is an Imperative*, both research questions had around 50 coded responses. Within the codes, the frequencies of responses also revealed a similar pattern. With less than ten responses each, the codes of *Necessity* and *Duty* were applied for each of the two research questions. Both research questions also had more than ten *Common Goal* responses and more than 25 *Task Driven* responses (see Figure 3). This was not too surprising, since the codes *Common Goal* and *Task Driven* were not part of the preliminary codes. Rather, they are codes that emerged from the review of data. These two codes were easily assigned to responses for each of the two research questions.

Interview question one was written for research question one, while interview question four was written for research question two, but both interview questions elicited several responses regarding being task driven. For example, one response for interview question one was, "We were all there to get the job done," and one response for interview question four was, "We're just there to get the job done." As stated, these two interview questions were written for separate research questions, but the similarity of responses, regardless of the question being asked, became evident throughout the interviews. This emergent pattern continued throughout the remaining four categories, with similar responses and consistent perspectives for both research questions. As stated, each category was graphed to illustrate the comparable responses for both research questions. For the category *Collaboration is Known by Many Names*, the aggregate responses are RQ1 (*f*=29) and RQ2 (*f*=27) (see Figure 4). For *Collaboration is a Journey, Not a Destination,* the frequencies are RQ1 (*f*=18) and RQ2 (*f*=21) (see Figure 5). The category *With Collaboration, the Personal is as Important as the Procedural*, revealed a similar pattern with RQ1 (*f*=94) and RQ2 (*f*=73) (see Figure 6). Finally, within the category *Collaboration Develops in Stages*, the aggregate frequencies are RQ1 (*f*=43) and RQ2 (*f*=35) (see Figure 7). All codes are displayed in clusters, grouped into the five aforementioned categories, in a side-by-side comparison of both research questions (see Figure 8). The data reveal a clear pattern of components of successful collaboration, which include being aware of and fostering a comfortable/neutral work environment; understanding that people want to feel included; staying task driven; focusing on the

common goal; being aware of participants' expectations; and ensuring that perceptions of the work environment remain consistent from start to finish.

There were some coded responses that were revealed more often in interview questions related to research question one and some that were revealed more often in interview questions related to research question two. However, there is a clear pattern of either a relatively high response rate of a particular code or a relatively low response rate of a particular code, for both research questions.

The various presentations of the data worked to reveal consistent patterns across the ten participants, within each interview question, inside each category, among the codes, and between the two research questions. Clear themes emerged, consistent perspectives were revealed, and the data reflected parallel experiences of the participants at both events studied.

Table 9

Code Frequencies per Research Question

Category	Code	RQ 1	RQ 2
Imperative		(*f*=49)	(*f*=56)
	Necessity	*f*=9	*f*=5
	Duty	*f*=3	*f*=2
	Task Driven	*f*=26	*f*=33
	Common Goal	*f*=11	*f*=16
Many Names		(*f*=29)	(*f*=27)
	Community Service	*f*=12	*f*=6
	Spiritual Obligation	*f*=7	*f*=5
	Personal Fulfillment	*f*=10	*f*=16
Journey		(*f*=18)	(*f*=21)
	Process	*f*= 10	*f*=11
	Leader Behavior	*f*=8	*f*=10
	Follower Behavior	*f*=0	*f*=0
Personal		(*f*=94)	(*f*=73)
	Spirituality	*f*=9	*f*=7
	Desired Inclusion	*f*=5	*f*=7
	Perceived Inclusion	*f*=20	*f*=9
	Comfortable/Neutral	*f*=60	*f*=50
Develops in Stages		(*f*=43)	(*f*=35)
	Expectations	*f*=13	*f*=19
	Initial Perceptions	*f*=8	*f*=5
	Evolved Perceptions	*f*=22	*f*=11

Figure 3. Code comparison between research questions in category Collaboration is an Imperative

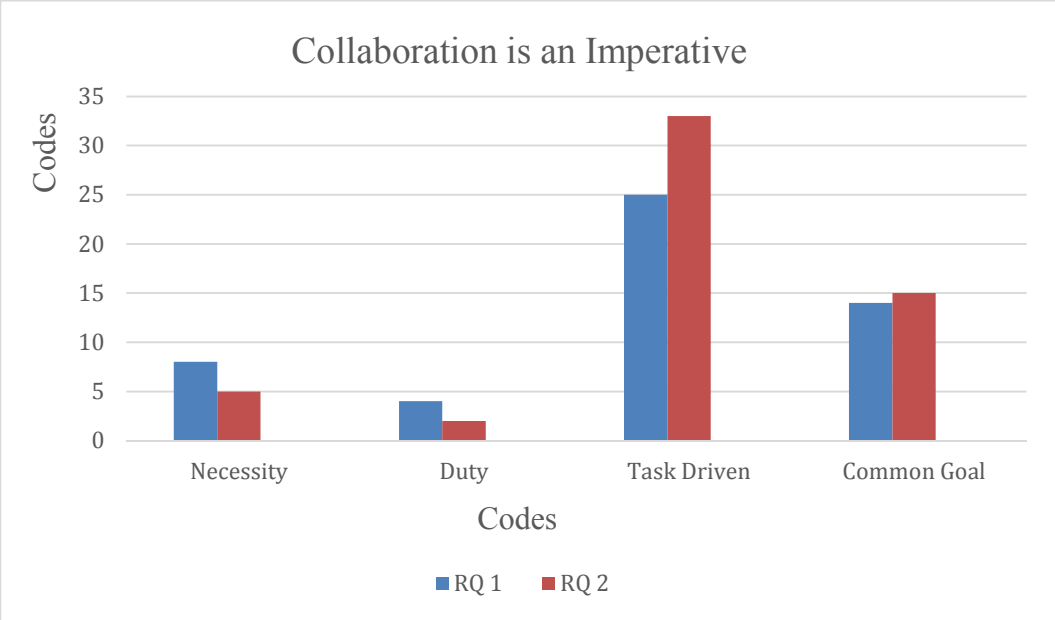


Figure 4. Code comparison between research questions in category Collaboration is Known by Many Names

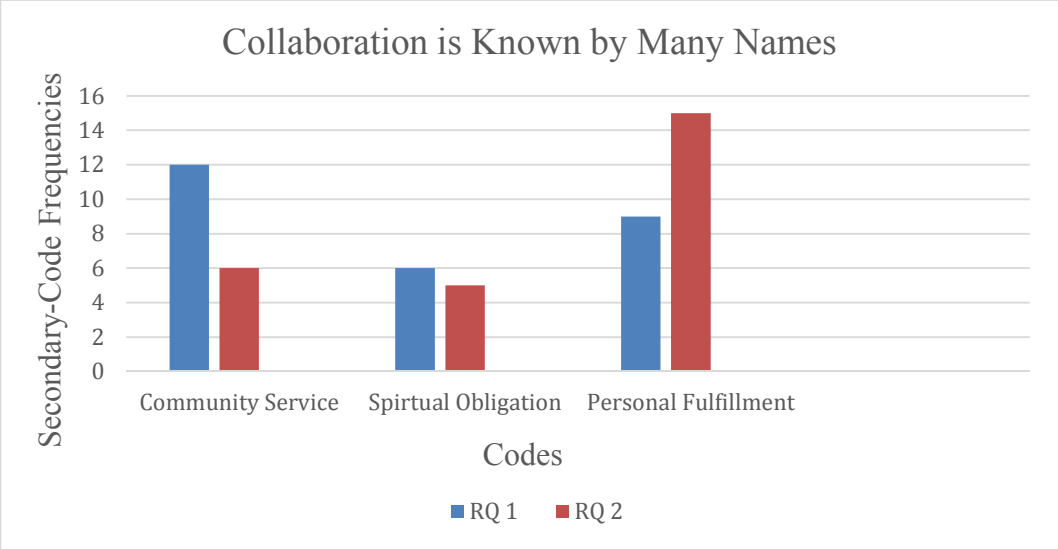


Figure 5. Code comparison between research questions in category Collaboration is a Journey, Not a Destination

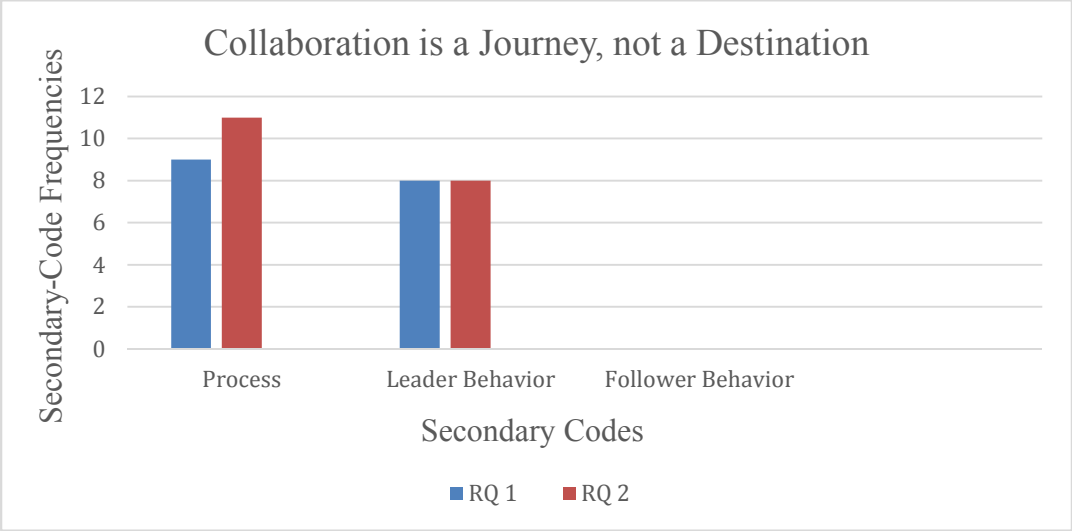


Figure 6. Code comparison between research questions in category With Collaboration, the Personal is as Important as the Procedural

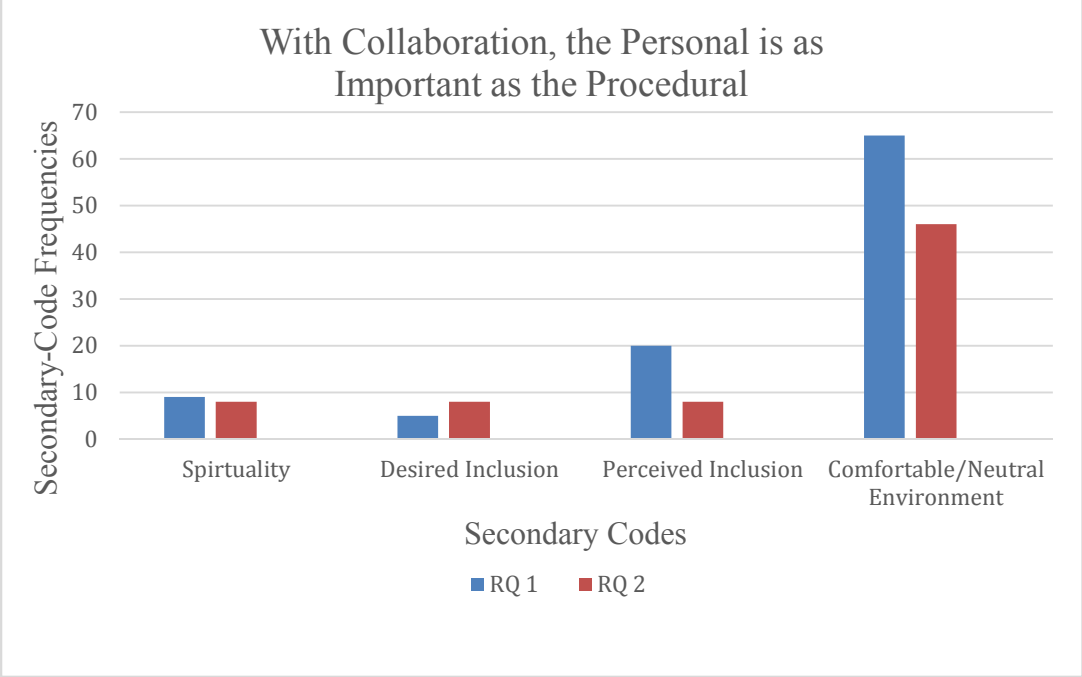


Figure 7. Code comparison between research questions in category Collaboration Develops in Stages

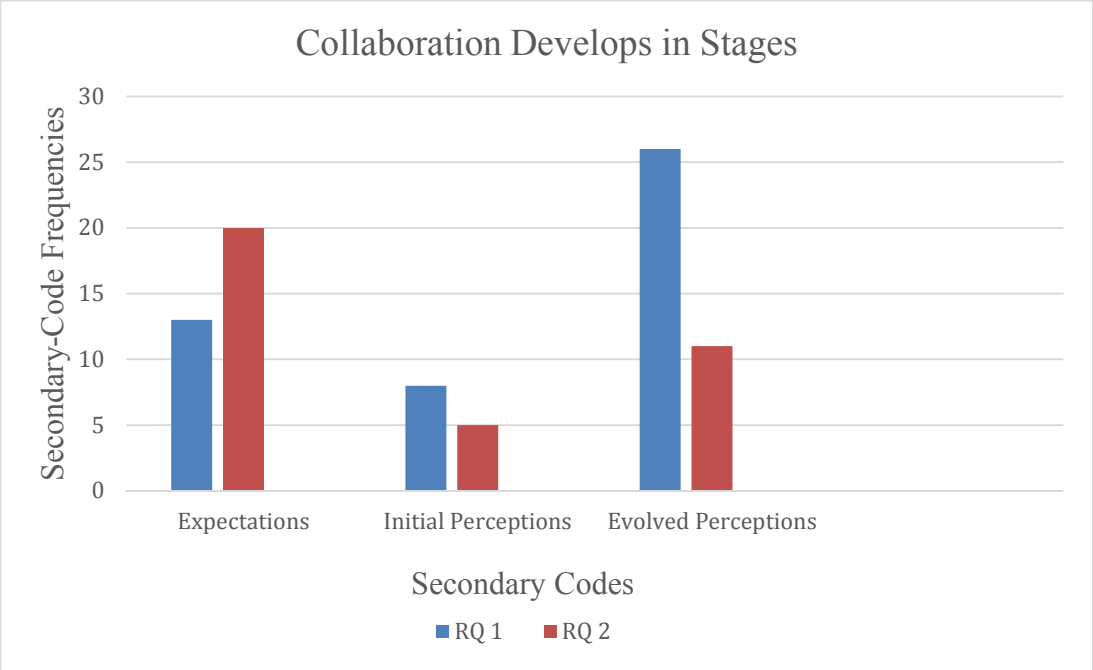
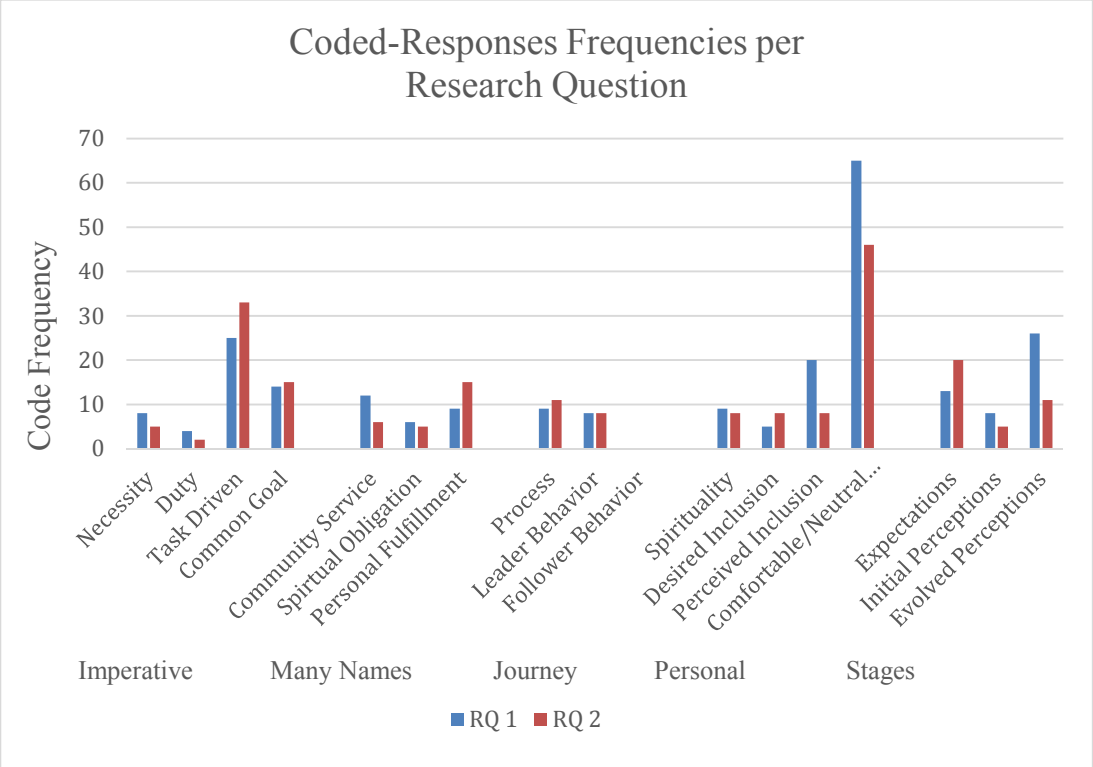


Figure 8. Code comparison between research questions of all categories



Answers to Research Question 1

The data revealed a consistent perspective that clearly answered both research questions. The first research question, regarding participants' religious tolerance experiences, was answered with various positive statements that reflected an environment that was task-driven, tolerant, and comfortable.

Task Driven

All participants noted that the focus was on the work, rather than on the people who were working. For example, Respondent nine stated, "We were there to do work," Respondent eight stated that, "We were just working," and Respondent ten claimed that,

"We were doing a lot of manual labor…" Other similar statements included, "We were just painting," "We were all there to get the job done," and "Everyone was just task driven, from what I saw," and reflected a common goal-oriented experience among volunteers.

Religious Tolerance

As noted, the environment was focused on the tasks, rather than with whom people were affiliated or what their religious beliefs were. In fact, there was not a single respondent who mentioned having his or her religion, or lack there of, addressed. Respondent two, for example, stated that "I feel like this was a welcoming situation where it was irrelevant which religious background you were from or what organization you were from." Respondent ten echoed this sentiment with the statement, "The religious struggle…there really didn't seem to be (any)…because it didn't really matter where we came from." Respondent ten also stated, "We weren't there to preach to people." Other participants expressed comparable perspectives regarding the topic of religion with statements such as, "Really, we didn't talk about religion," "I don't really know if they knew about my religious beliefs," and "It's just not something that was a topic of conversation…"

Comfortable Environment

In addition to being task driven and religiously tolerant, the data reflected the common perspective that participants experienced an inclusive and comfortable work environment. Respondent four, for example, stated, "I don't know who was from the

church and who wasn't. They weren't separated in any way, so everyone was just, well, just part of the same crowd." Respondent five also stated, "I couldn't tell who was or who wasn't a part of the church." Respondent six provided a similar perspective with the comment that, "Everyone else who was there for a common goal was tolerant of everyone and didn't single anyone out." Various other comments mirrored this viewpoint, as reflected in comments such as, "And I did see, when my head came up after the prayer, that some of the people were just standing there and didn't appear to participate in it, but nobody cared" and "You would have thought it was just one group working together." As supported by the data, respondent two summed up the common perspective of the participants with the comment, "Everybody just worked together. To be honest, if you had been looking from the outside, you wouldn't have known who was from which group. It didn't matter where you came from. Everyone wore the same T-shirt. It was unifying."

Answers to Research Question 2

The second research question, regarding participants' perspectives of what factors either fostered or hindered a harmonious work environment that included volunteers with varied belief systems was also answered. The data reflected the importance of effective planning and implementation; focusing on and being transparent about the common goal; and remaining task driven.

Effective Planning and Implementation

Collaboration provides invaluable opportunities for all parties involved. Local communities often rely upon them to meet the needs and wants of residents when budgets fall short. Without effective planning and implementation, however, valuable time and resources can be lost. When the collaboration efforts rely upon volunteers to complete the required tasks, it is important to ensure that the work environment is free from any personal, physical or logistical issues that could hinder their ability to carry out their tasks. By providing a well-organized and prepared setting, leaders can foster a task-oriented environment that leaves little room for personal issues to interfere with the work to be done. Respondent seven summed up this perspective with the following statement.

> "When I decided to help with this event, the last thing I wanted to do was be pressed about my beliefs. That's not what I signed up for. I doubt anyone would sign up to help if they thought they were going to be pressed to share their beliefs with strangers. When you volunteer to help with something, you should be able to show up and do what you expected to do…not be blind sided by people with an agenda. Just tell me what you want me to do, and let me do it."

A well-planned and implemented event enhances the likelihood that volunteers will be willing to participate in a future collaboration effort. In fact, several volunteers noted that they either did participate in another collaboration event or that they would be willing to, if the opportunity presented itself. Not a single respondent stated that he or she

would not be willing to participate in a future collaboration event with these two organizations.

The study revealed that these events were, indeed, effectively planned and implemented. The volunteers were provided the necessary tools to complete their tasks, such as paint, paint brushes, shovels, plants, planting soil, hedge clippers, and cleaning supplies. Additionally, both events had lunch provided for the volunteers and water available throughout the day. Further, there were leaders who roamed throughout the events to provide help and answer questions, as needed. The lunches were also provided by two other faith-based organizations, but no personal or spiritual agendas were pushed by either of the organizations. In fact, not all of the respondents were even aware of the fact that lunch had been donated by a faith-based organization.

Respondents reported that, throughout the events, the volunteers remained engaged and happy. Respondent seven, for example, commented that "Everyone seemed to be getting along and working hard together." Respondent seven also stated, "Tasks were assigned, and we just focused on the project."

Common Goal and Transparency

Having a common goal serves to minimize conflict, as volunteers view one another as team members who are working together to achieve a mutually desired outcome. To ensure that participants remain focused on the common goal, it's important to clarify that goal and exhibit transparency throughout the collaboration process. Knowing exactly what the organization leaders' intentions are is crucial for trust to be

established and the efforts of volunteers to be maximized. Regarding collaboration efforts with government entities, Spicer (2017) noted that citizens require accessibility to information, to hold officials accountable. Collaboration can blur the lines of authority, according to Spicer (2017), which can lead to tax-payer concerns. To avoid potential conflicts, breach of trust, and ethics issues, transparency is vital for both current and future collaboration efforts. Clearly stated intentions, according to Rand, Fudenberg, and Dreber (2015), actually have more of an impact on participants than the expected outcomes of the events and leads to significantly higher levels of cooperation.

Breaking trust, by revealing a hidden agenda, is detrimental to collaboration efforts. It can dismantle a current collaboration project, as well as hinder any possible future collaboration efforts. Once trust is broken, it is very difficult to reestablish. It is both a moral and an ethical obligation to be transparent about the purpose and process of a collaboration. In addition to the integrity aspect of being transparent, there is a practical purpose of it, as it helps to ensure that volunteers will want to participate in future collaboration efforts.

The goal appeared to be clearly understood among participants in both of the studied collaboration events. Respondent four, for example, stated, “It just seemed that everyone was just friendly and happy to be working together to make the school look better.” Further, the fact that the cosponsoring organization is faith based was clearly stated in the recruitment efforts and on the T-shirts that were handed out to all participants. Respondent one noted that, regarding the fact that the collaboration included

a faith-based organization, "…there was a lot of pre-work done on it and advertising and fliers and everything…it was very out there. We weren't hiding anything." Providing this information, both before and during the collaboration events, contributed to the transparency of the collaboration leaders and their goals. Further, it, likely reduced potential conflicts, as like-minded and tolerant people would be inclined to participate. As summed up by Respondent eight, "I think that most people came in knowing that the event was being sponsored by a church, so I don't believe people who weren't tolerant would have volunteered.

Task Driven

Collaboration is done with the intention of completing a project. Therefore, it is important for leaders to provide an environment that fosters participants' abilities to focus on the tasks required to complete the project. This includes providing the necessary tools, proper guidance, and appropriate environment, to enable participants to remain focused on their tasks. The data support that these three requirements were met, as numerous statements were made regarding both events being highly task oriented. Respondent eight, for example, stated, "I think it was that we were all there to get the job done, so that was the only thing we thought about."

Summary

Two areas of concern were identified in the research questions for this case study of two collaboration events between a faith-based organization and a local community. The first question was written to determine whether religious tolerance was experienced

at the events, while the second question was written to identify what factors either fostered or hindered a tolerant environment at the events. Ten people were interviewed, the interviews were transcribed, and participants were given an opportunity to confirm the transcripts' accuracy. Preliminary codes that were grouped into five different categories, based upon Gajda's (2004) collaboration theory, were assigned to the data, with three new codes being created to fill the preliminary codes' gaps. The next chapter provides the interpretation of the findings of the coded and organized data; the limitations of the study; recommendations for further research, in relation to current literature; and the study's implications for positive social change that can be realized through successful faith-based organization and local government collaboration.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to address two questions regarding faith-based organization and local-government collaboration for two events. The first research question asked if religious tolerance was experienced by participants from both organizations, while the second question asked what factors either hindered or fostered a religiously tolerance environment during the collaboration. This topic is very important, because limited resources often cause local governments to rely upon faith-based organizations to help address public concerns that would, otherwise, be unattainable. Local governments are often tasked with finding ways to address the needs and wants of their communities that tax dollars do not cover. With the help of faith-based organizations, many communities are able to complete public projects that require means that are beyond the local governments' resources. When faith-based organizations and local governments collaborate, manpower shortages and budget constraints can be overcome. However, when a faith-based organization collaborates with a local government, the participants should not be concerned about whether or not either talking about one's faith or not wanting to talk about it will affect the work environment. In fact, the goal of the collaboration should be to complete the project in an environment where everyone feels comfortable and welcome. The ten participants interviewed from these two events expressed very positives perspectives regarding their experiences and comfort levels. In fact, not a single person expressed a negative experience with another

volunteer, leader, or government official at either of the events. Both collaboration events were considered highly successful, and all participants had only positive comments.

Interpretation of the Findings

A review of the current literature illustrated the importance of nongovernment agencies in maximizing community productivity that goes beyond what taxes allow. The United States relies upon nongovernment agencies to address numerous community concerns. The National Center for Charitable Statistics of the Urban Institute (NCCS) (2019) noted that there is a growing number of nonprofit organizations, with more than 1.56 million of them in the United States. In 2015, nonprofit organizations accounted for 5.4 percent of the country's gross domestic product, by contributing about $985.4 billion to the economy (NCCS, 2019). Further, in 2016, an estimated 25.2 percent of adults volunteered an estimated 8.7 billion hours of their time, a 2 percent increase from the year before and worth an estimated $187.4 billion (NCCS, 2019). It is clear that the contributions of nongovernmental agencies are essential to the increased productivity of the United States economy. Local governments simply are not able to meet every need or desire of the community, without additional financial and physical help. Fortunately, the United States is a very generous country, with an estimated $427.71 billion donated to U.S. charities in 2018 from foundations, corporations, bequests, and American individuals (Giving USA, 2019). Countless benefits are reaped from these additional resources that are needed to fill the gaps where tax dollars fall short.

Successful collaboration does not happen by chance. Austin (2000) noted that the personal perspectives must be taken into account, including recognizing how personally and emotionally connected individuals are; knowing whether participants are able to touch, feel, and see the social value of the collaboration, identifying the level and quality of interaction among the senior leaders; understanding the extent personal connections and interactions occur across the cosponsoring organizations; and ascertaining how strong the personal bonds are.

Successful collaboration also relies upon logistical competence. Schweitzer et al. (2008) noted that fostering and managing positive relationships; forming content knowledge; teaching participants how to manage multiple roles and assume various levels of accountability; and enhancing participants' abilities to create resources by utilizing networks are all necessary for successful collaboration efforts.

Six Questions of Relevance

Six questions of relevance were presented in Chapter 2 that Gajda (2004) noted were necessary to ensure a systematic and efficient approach and, ultimately, to foster an accurate outcome of a collaborative effort. These questions were addressed throughout the study, as outlined below.

Question one, according to Gajda (2004) is: How can it be determined if partnerships have been strengthened or if new linkages have been formed as a result of this strategic alliance? This question was easily answered by all of the participants, as they were very clear about their positive perspectives of both organizations. The fact that

the two partnering organizations have worked together successfully more than once speaks volumes about their positive strategic alliance. Also, leaders from both organizations were extremely cooperative with assisting the researcher for this study. In fact, they appeared eager for participants to share their perspectives about the events and their experiences. They were proud of the work they had accomplished together, and future collaboration between the two organizations was considered a strong possibility.

Question two, according to Gajda (2004) is: How can a community-wide infrastructure be described and its development be measured and/or characterized over time? This question was more difficult to address than the first question. The scope of the collaboration was very narrow, as the events were each only a day long and confined to specific locations in the community. The city, however, is a relatively young city, having only become incorporated in 2008. Therefore, its infrastructure and development are in still in a relative state of infancy. This, however, contributes to the reason that collaboration efforts are necessary, as the community has spent the last decade working to establish its economic and social identity. As a fledgling government body, the city leaders realized that nongovernmental resources were necessary to address areas of concern that had once been overseen by the county government. Becoming an incorporated city provided increased local decision making, but it also resulted in lost county-funding. These collaboration efforts, as well as several others not covered in this study, have contributed greatly to the community infrastructure. Further, the positive

outcomes of these events have both short-term and long-term positive implications to the community's development.

Question three, according to Gajda (2004) is: What does it mean to "link" agencies? This question was mostly answered prior to collecting data from the participants. Event organizers were more than willing to share their admiration for the work that their counterparts did for the community. Their views of each other were completely positive, and they considered their work together as vital to the community. How different organizations are linked together was also shared by interviewees. Respondent nine, for example, stated, "Well, if you're going to have a successful community, you got to work together. It can't just be the church. It can't just be the police department, or whatever." The importance of linking agencies together for the betterment of the community was a common theme among the respondents, and focusing on the task at hand, rather than on any personal or spiritual agenda, was reiterated by all ten study participants.

Question four, according to Gajda (2004) is: Is the strategic alliance becoming increasingly seamless or collaborative over time? Since these two organizations had collaborated for two different events, it is true that the strategic alliance between them continued over time. Relationships were built and strengthened among the leaders, and future collaboration efforts are already being considered between the two organizations. Since each organization's goals and agendas have been brought to the table twice, future collaboration will not require as much time and effort to get to know one another's

organizational culture and expectations. The working relationships between event organizers and among many of the volunteers has become comfortable and familiar.

Prior to the events, the two affiliate organizations worked very well together. Communication, organization, and good planning are factors that appear to have strengthened the relationship between these organizations. This also provided a prepared and organized work environment for the volunteers that kept them focused on the tasks. It is believed that this contributed greatly to the successful outcomes of the collaborations. Participants came to the events prepared to work, and the well-organized environment enabled them to be highly productive.

Question five, according to Gajda (2004) is: What level or breadth of collaboration is needed to achieve particular outcomes? For both of the collaboration events, there were three huge factors that determined a successful outcome. First, money had to be raised and supplies had to be either bought or donated, prior to the events. This part of the collaboration was done mostly by the church, that acquired approximately $100,000 in monetary and product donations for one of the events, and an undisclosed amount for the other event. This was a result of contacting sister churches and local businesses for help. Second, both organizations were crucial in recruiting the hundreds of volunteers needed for the events. Third, the careful logistical planning and the systematic implementation of the plans made it possible to successfully complete a large amount of work in a short amount of time. Conversations with the leaders made it clear that each organization entrusted the other organization to be responsible for the areas in which they

had expertise. For example, the city government did not solicit donations from local businesses or other faith-based organizations, and the church did not handle any of the processing of legal forms or permits. Two important things to note here are: 1) legal issues needed to be overseen by the government, and 2) the church has participated in numerous collaborative efforts with other organizations and is quite knowledgeable in this area. As mentioned in Chapter 2, faith-based organizations have a lot of resources to offer, including skilled personal, facilities, and expertise, in areas where governments may fall short (Green et al., 2012). The key takeaway from this is that the leaders from both organizations recognized their strengths and limitations, so their roles were easily defined and respected, and they were able to provide a productive strategic alliance.

The importance of each organization completing the required prep work beforehand cannot be overstated. It is vital to successful collaboration. This is especially true when working with volunteers, as their time is being offered for free and should be respected. In addition to being important at a particular event, respecting volunteers' time is essential for encouraging future participation. Although the exact number is not known, both the leaders and participants stated that many of the volunteers helped at both events. This perspective addresses both the current question regarding the breadth of the collaboration, as well as the previous question regarding the strategic alliance becoming more seamless over time, which has been demonstrated both between the two organizations and between the volunteers and the organizations. The working

relationships have continued to grow, and there have already been conversations about possible future collaboration.

Question six, according to Gajda (2004) is: What is the point at which efforts to increase collaboration are simply a waste of resources, without increasing desired outcomes? Since these events were each only one day long, this question did not have much of an opportunity to come up. However, it is believed that if the events had been longer than one day each, the second day would not have been nearly as productive as the first. For the elementary school event, for example, the temperature was over 100 degrees, and some people left the event early. This was especially true for volunteers who had brought young children with them. Regardless of the weather, the amount of work at both events, according to all ten participants, was exhausting. Therefore, expecting volunteers to return the next day would, likely, not have been a productive decision. So, in addition to the aforementioned necessity for good planning and implementation, restricting the amount of work needed to be done to one day makes the events more manageable for both the leaders and the volunteers. Overwhelmed workers are less likely to volunteer for a future event. As it stands, the participants left the events with feelings of pride and accomplishment, and they all claimed they would volunteer again if the opportunity arises.

Findings in the Context of the Theoretical Framework

The first interview question asked participants why they chose to volunteer at the event. The responses revealed a strong tie to personal factors. For example, responses to

this question, regarding why they chose to participate in the event, included statements such as, "…I was curious, and I wanted to participate," and "My kids used to go to the school, so I have a connection to it, I suppose." This corresponded with the current literature, included in Chapter 2, that people get involved in community events for various reasons, including duty, necessity, and having a vested interest working together for the common good. Numerous statements were made to support this perspective. Respondent two, for example, stated, "I feel the need and desire to do outreach and model that for my kids," which the researcher perceived as a statement of both necessity and duty. Another statement that spoke to the necessity of participating is from Respondent seven who noted that, "Although my kids are grown, it's still better to have the community parks open. It's good for the kids, the families, and for the community as a whole….I believe it affects our property values, so it's best for them to be open." Another statement, from Respondent eight, echoed this point with the comment, "I like to be involved in my community, and the work needed to be done."

One area that stood out in the literature is that people are often eager to be a part of something that gives them personal satisfaction (Terry et al., 2015). Further, as Richmond and Peters (2015) noted, actions are an important aspect of expressing personal beliefs and fulfilling individual goals, while being a part of something bigger than oneself. The data reflected this, as the category of *With Collaboration, the Personal is as Important as the Procedural*, had the highest frequency of coded responses (f=168), which accounted for 38 percent of the total coded responses.

A basic economic concept is that resources are scarce (Krugman & Wells, 2018). Local governments are tasked with the responsibility to meet the needs and wants of as many members in their communities as possible. Some projects will not be addressed, due to limited funding. For this reason, local communities have relied upon nongovernmental organizations to help them increase their resources. Therefore, collaboration is an imperative. Faith-based organizations are found in every community, and their ability to bridge the gap between tax-based resources and community aspirations is well documented. The data from this study reflected a belief in the value of having strategic alliances between local governments and faith-based organizations. With more than one-hundred coded responses within this category, the events' volunteers shared the importance of being task driven and focusing on a common goal, for these alliances to be productive and effective. Respondent one, for example, stated that being tolerant of one another fosters a work environment so that, "…we can get more things done." This sentiment was echoed by Respondent three, who stated that "Your religious beliefs aren't what's important. You're here to work toward this (goal)." By ensuring a religiously tolerant environment, volunteers were able to focus on their tasks. Transparency, sufficient planning, and efficient plan-execution are essential components of collaboration events that are imperative for many community concerns to be adequately addressed.

Collaboration is a process that, according to Gajda (2004), develops in stages. With eighty coded responses regarding expectations, initial perceptions, and evolved

perceptions, the data reveal clear perspectives of collaboration participants. They came with clear expectations to work on a particular project, complete the tasks within a certain time frame, and to produce specific results. The preparation before the events and the execution of well-planned strategies were crucial for these expectations to be realized. Participants repeatedly mentioned that they were always tasked with a job to do and the resources necessary to do it. Without the success of the various planning and implementation stages, the collaboration efforts could not have been accomplished. Further, the team-building that was able to occur throughout the events, due to volunteers working comfortably together, enabled participants to remain positive and focused on their tasks. If people had felt unwelcome or judged, their eagerness to help would, very likely, have diminished, and the productivity of the events would have been negatively affected. However, as comfortable relationships and friendships were formed, teamwork was strengthened. Pride in volunteers' work began as an individual goal, but ended as a team/partnership perspective, as the outcomes were what "we" created versus what "I" created.

Although it may not be true for all collaboration efforts, the categories of *Collaboration is Known by Many Names* and *Collaboration is a Journey, Not a Destination*, proved to be the least addressed of the five categories. These two categories only received around twelve percent and nine percent, respectively, of the total coded responses. This finding is not too surprising. First, the events were very short, with each only lasting for one day. This limited the scope of the events, as well as the ability for

participants to consider what other meanings or names there could be. The short time also did not allow for much of a "journey" to transpire, other than a relatively short start-to-finish experience. Second, the volunteers were tasked with a lot of work, so there wasn't much of an opportunity to experience anything beyond their respective responsibilities. For collaboration that evolves over time, requires participants to undertake various roles, or has a broader scope, these two categories are likely to be more relevant than revealed in this study.

Evidence of Religious Tolerance

Both research questions were clearly answered with the data. Participants revealed no perception of religious agendas, beyond some participants' personal reasons for getting involved. For example, Respondent ten stated, "I am the mission chair at my church, and as a Christian I believe that we are called to serve," while Respondent ten stated, "I have a strong belief in God, and I believe that mission changes lives of people." There is no evidence, however, of any person being made to feel uncomfortable for any reason, including religious beliefs. Rather, all participants noted a comfortable/neutral working environment that was focused solely on completing the required tasks. Whether from the faith-based organization or the community at large, volunteers were not subjected to religious proselytizing. In fact, although some participants made it clear that they would have been comfortable discussing their religious beliefs, the subject did not come up.

The events' environments were welcoming of all religious affiliations, regardless of the fact that the church was a cosponsor. This was made very clear in two ways. First, the church's name was included on all promotional literature and community banners. Second, the church provided matching T-shirts for all participants, regardless of organization- or religious-affiliation, that had the church's name imprinted on it. Leaders and participants shared that most people chose to wear the T-shirts, regardless of organizational affiliation. One respondent commented that, "Had you looked from the outside, you wouldn't have felt that there were different groups there." The T-shirts conveyed a sentiment of unity and fostered a spirit of oneness that contributed to a religiously tolerant environment where all were welcome.

Event volunteers were recruited for the purpose of either beautifying an elementary school or repairing and beautifying three local city parks so they could be reopened to the public. Participants made it very clear that the sole purpose was to get the work done, not to push the agenda of the cosponsoring faith-based organization. Comments such as, "Everybody was there to get the job done," "We're just there to get the job done," and "The amount of work to be done was enormous," illustrated that the primary focus of participants was on the tasks, rather than on any personal or religious agendas.

Volunteers should be able to participate in the event without any other agenda being pushed upon them, including religion. For these two events, participants encountered environments that were exactly as they had been advertised, and only the

tasks at hand were addressed. This had two clear outcomes. First, the projects were completed in a timely, efficient, and effective manner. The elementary school got much needed repairs completed, several beautiful murals painted, and some helpful fixtures installed for children's backpacks and coats. The three city parks got equipment repaired, grounds cleared, and landscapes planted that were necessary for them to reopen. Second, the participants were able to work in comfortable environments, where religion was not a factor. This not only fostered productivity at these events, but it also enhanced the likelihood that future collaboration events will be predicted to be just as welcoming and comfortable. The volunteers were all treated as equally welcome participants, regardless of religious affiliation. The outcomes of the projects were always the focus of the collaboration. The fact that one of the cosponsoring organizations is faith-based was treated as an incidental fact, rather than as a relevant part of an agenda. Respondent four, for example, noted that "We just talked about basic things, like how hot it was, our kids, and stuff like that," while Respondent two stated that, "To be honest, I don't even know what organizations they were from," regarding people with whom she was not familiar.

Throughout the study, only two concerns were mentioned. For the parks event, a man from the community expressed his disagreement with the collaboration. He showed up at planning meetings and expressed his concern that the church was only participating in the event to further its religious agenda. He also published his concern in the local newspaper, warning people that the faith-based organization was using the event to

proselytize to unsuspecting volunteers and to try to get them to attend their church. He showed up on the morning of the event. He didn't say anything to anyone, and he left shortly after he arrived. The event coordinators believe that once he saw that the event was exactly as advertised, he realized that his concerns were unfounded. This man was the only person to express any negative concerns about the project, either before, during, or after the event. His suspicions appeared to be grounded in unfounded concerns about a hidden agenda. Although this is the only person who publicly raised these concerns, it is a very important issue. The second concern was shared by a participant who noted that, although never spoken out loud, there was a moment of hesitation to get involved in an event. Upon reading a banner that promoted the event, seeing that a cosponsoring organization was faith-based resulted in a question about motive. There was speculation that the organization would be handing out bibles, Christian tracts, or invitations to the church, at the event. Although this participant did not want to be subjected to any of that, the person decided to help at the event. The volunteer was grateful that none of his fears transpired. Regarding the outcome of this issue, this respondent noted that, "The people didn't change. My perception of them changed."

These two perspectives are very important to consider. Transparency is crucial for faith-based and government collaboration. As revealed in Chapter 2, many people have expressed their concern regarding the separation of church and state, and hidden agendas will negatively affect both current and future collaboration efforts. Participants have the right to know exactly what to expect when they arrive to an event. A community project

should not be an avenue for a faith-based organization to further its own agenda. Out of respect and fairness, a community project with a faith-based organization should never go beyond its stated scope and purpose. The two collaboration efforts in this study are examples of the accomplishments that can be realized when transparency and religious tolerance are promoted and employed.

Limitations of the Study

The short duration of these collaborative events was considered a limitation, prior to beginning the study. Further, the events occurred more than two years ago, so there was concern that some participants may not have a clear memory of their experiences. Finally, as a study about religious tolerance, the researcher's faith was considered a factor that must not be ignored.

For the purposes of evaluating how harmoniously a group of people with various religious beliefs can work together, in a faith-based, cosponsored event, the short duration of the events was a limitation. Although there is no evidence of any religious conflicts or concerns, a lengthier collaboration may have had a different outcome. If participants had had repeated interactions with one another, it is possible that differences of spiritual perspectives could have resulted in uncomfortable interactions and disagreements. With only one day to complete a large amount of work, personal interactions among volunteers was very limited, so it is beyond the scope of this study to be able to fully evaluate the level of influence that different spiritual perspectives had on working relationships. The data reveal acceptance of one another, regardless of religious

affiliation. A deeper understanding of the long-term implications of a similar collaboration, however, are beyond the scope of the two events in this study.

The amount of time that has passed since the collaboration events did affect some participants' memories. However, this did not materialize as a limitation to the study. Participants sometimes had a difficult time remembering exact events, tasks, or procedures. However, every single participant could easily remember how he or she felt. They may not have remembered how many trees were planted, murals were painted, or fences were repaired, but they clearly remembered their feelings throughout the events. The biggest issue to materialize due to the amount of time that had passed was that potential participants were afraid that they may not remember enough to be of any help. However, once those participants who did agree to be interviewed were asked questions, their memories of their experiences did not appear to have faded.

It can be difficult, if not impossible, to separate spiritual beliefs from personal perspectives. In fact, they are deeply intertwined. How people view events and experiences is reliant upon their prior experiences and beliefs. Meaning is derived from past events and is dependent upon culture and experience (Tavis & Asprem, 2017). Therefore, it can be assumed that the researcher's spiritual beliefs and experiences influenced aspects of the study. First, choosing to study religious tolerance speaks to the bias toward the importance of the topic itself. Second, as a new researcher, it is possible that favorable responses from participants were met with positive nonverbal reactions. This could, unknowingly, cause participants to answer subsequent questions in a manner

that would lead to similar reactions. Third, much of the coding process was based upon subjective assessments. This could only be done with an understanding of the responses based upon the researcher's own culture and experience. Therefore, it is possible that some of the meanings of participants' responses were not understood in a manner that another researcher may have perceived differently.

Collaboration between faith-based organizations and government organizations is not uncommon. However, a limitation to this case study is the lack of transferability (Yin, 2009). The experiences of the cosponsoring organizations, the volunteers, and the community itself are extremely unique. The altruistic motivation, the types of cosponsoring organizations, and the required planning involved, however, are components of the collaboration efforts that are common in countless communities.

Recommendations

The scope of the two collaboration events was very narrow, which made it more manageable. However, it also limited the amount of data that could be gathered and analyzed. Although there is no indication that differences in religious perspectives caused any disharmony, interfered with any working relationships, or reduced productivity, a longer-lasting collaboration may produce different results. A collaboration that involves long-term interactions may lend itself to more serious conversations and potential disagreements. For a deeper understanding of the religious tolerance experienced, a study of a longer-term collaboration between a faith-based organization and a government entity is necessary.

The current study did reveal some important findings. As indicated in the literature review, faith-based organizations have historically been and continue to be invaluable resources to local communities. Even though, as Cosgrove (2008) noted, the United States may have the means to provide for all of its citizens, it often lacks the will, and resources are simply not always allocated in the most efficient or effective manner. This, according to Cosgrove (2008), results in reliance upon faith-based organizations to address numerous community needs, as they are able to contribute knowledge, expertise, manpower, and financial help to communities that have needs that exceed their allocated resources. In the literature, however, is evidence of community members who are skeptical of such partnerships, if not totally adverse to them altogether. It was revealed in this current study that skepticism may have its roots in ignorance, and possibly past experiences. Therefore, transparency is extremely important.

This study revealed two highly successful collaboration efforts that were carried out in a professional, non-threatening, and accepting manner. This did not happen by chance. Both the religious and the government leaders made concerted efforts to involve as many members from the community as possible and to make every volunteer feel welcome, accepted, and appreciated. This was accomplished by adhering to a combination of best practices. First, careful planning set the stage for productivity to follow. The resources needed for the execution of the plans needed to be secured prior to the events. Second, complete transparency was required to encourage volunteers to participate in the events. Regardless of affiliation, all participants had the right to know

all of the organizations' motives and goals, prior to attending the events. Third, on the days of the events, the volunteers were provided the necessary tools to complete their work and guided in a clear and efficient manner. Fourth, a spirit of unity was established, among all volunteers. This was accomplished in several ways. Every person was offered a matching T-shirt to wear. A group prayer was done at the beginning and end of each event, but no one was singled out for either participating or choosing not to. Lunch was provided for volunteers in a designated area, where everyone was able to eat and socialize together. Fifth, volunteers were not pressured to do any more than they were comfortable doing, including the type of work done and the amount of time spent working. Finally, the focus of the events was on the tasks, rather than on any person's religious affiliation or spiritual conviction. Volunteers from the faith-based organization did not use the event as an opportunity to proselytize and recruit people to their church, and volunteers from the community at large did not question members of the church about their religious beliefs or motives for helping this city. The data reveal the importance of these best practices to ensure a productive and comfortable environment (see Table 10).

Table 10

Six Best Practices, per the Data, for Faith-based and Government Collaboration

Best Practice	Outcome
Careful planning is done prior to the event. Resources needed for the execution of the plans are secured; legal and logistical requirements are met; and concerns are addressed.	Volunteers arrive to an event that is ready for them to be able to do the required tasks. Volunteers perceive the collaboration as professional and organized, and feel that the organizers respect their time and effort.
Organizations' motives and goals are clearly expressed and participants are aware of what is expected of them and familiar with the purpose of the event.	Trust is established between the cosponsoring organizations and between the organizations and the volunteers. Future collaboration is fostered.
Necessary tools and clear instructions are provided on the day of the event, and encouragement and guidance are provided throughout the event.	Volunteers are able to complete tasks and work together toward a common goal, using the required tools and following instructions. A well-structured environment keeps people focused on the common goal, and unrelated issues are less likely to arise.
Concerted efforts are made to create a spirit of unity, whereby all tasks, activities, and amenities are available and/or offered to everyone and volunteers are not identified by organization affiliation.	Volunteers are able to complete tasks and work together toward a common goal, in a team-driven atmosphere and with a feeling of belongness and acceptance. No one feels singled out or treated as an outsider.
Volunteers work within the physical capacities and time frames in which they are comfortable.	Volunteers are not pressured to work beyond their personal willingness and limitations. Their productivity is enhanced during the event, and future participation in collaboration events is more likely to occur.
Events are not used as a platform to proselytize or recruit people to attend a particular faith-based organization, nor to condemn a particular religious perspective.	Volunteers experience religious tolerance, which fosters a stress free, task oriented, and efficient work environment. Volunteers are more likely to participate in future collaboration efforts.

These best practices created a comfortable and accepting environment for volunteers from various backgrounds. In turn, the productivity of the events was fostered, and the experiences of the volunteers remained positive and non-threatening. If any one of the aforementioned best practices had not been employed, the outcomes of the events could have been very different. Further, future collaboration could have been affected, as people would be less likely to volunteer their time if the lack of one of the aforementioned best practices had caused a negative, uncomfortable, or stressful experience. Working in an environment where both their time and their perspectives were respected contributed to a positive and productive experience, as well as fostered the likelihood that they would participate in another collaboration in the future.

Implications

The positive outcomes of these collaboration events are promising. For both the local community and other communities around the country, much can be learned from this case study regarding the best practices that contribute to religiously tolerant and productive collaboration efforts. There are individual, family, organizational, and societal implications that can contribute to personal fulfillment and positive social change.

Individual

As the data reveal, personal fulfillment is an important aspect of volunteering for an event that benefits a community. Seeing the completed projects resulted in feelings of pride, belongingness, and accomplishment. Participants noted their enjoyment working

together toward a common goal that benefits the community. Collaboration can help to bring a community together to complete necessary tasks, while also meeting personal and social needs of individual community members. By creating an environment of oneness, people will be more likely to participate in future collaboration and community events. Further, Martinez, Black, and Starr (2002) noted that both the development and the expansion of informal networks among community members are facilitated by feelings of belongingness and interactions of residents, which contribute to improved parenting, social awareness, and community involvement.

Participating in events that rely upon various individuals coming together to improve their community has effects that go beyond the particular projects. For both adults and children, being a part of something that is based upon volunteer efforts for the good of the public, rather than just for oneself, fosters mindfulness of self, community, and purpose. Weare (2013) outlined several positive outcomes of fostering people's mindfulness, including improved mental health, self-regulation, moods, behaviors, and well-being.

Family

Community collaboration serves many purposes. In addition to filling gaps where tax revenues fall short, collaboration projects can help promote family activities and relationships. Both adults and children participated in the two events in this study, which provided opportunities for family members to work together. Civic responsibility is

something that parents teach their children. However, when families participate in community activities, civic responsibility becomes a lifestyle.

Children are especially important, regarding positive social change. Research has shown that long-term social change is related to changes in children's attitudes. The theory of generational replacement, for example, supports the perspective that changes in children's opinions and attitudes are related to long-term social change (Wray-Lake, Flanagan, & Osgood, 2010). Further, including children in purposeful actions fosters their sense of civic responsibility that will contribute to being more civically responsible as adults (Zeldin, Gauley, Kraus, Kornbluh, & Collura, 2017).

Organizational

Financial shortfalls are not always the only reason community needs are not addressed. Personal, governmental, and organizational perspectives of public policy issues and community concerns are not always in sync, which results in varying agendas. Research has shown, however, that collaborative efforts contribute to increased trust, understanding, and shared goals. Kania, Hanleybrown, and Juster (2014) noted that increased exposure to one another results in mindset shifts within organizations, regarding who is involved, how those involved work together, and how progress is achieved. Further, Kania et al. (2014) stated that collaborative efforts improve cross-sector perspectives and foster shared visions, which contribute to more effective coalitions in the future.

The collaboration efforts between the church and the city government have a bigger impact than simply fixing up and opening local parks and beautifying a local elementary school. Their work together contributed to the increased knowledge and understanding of not only the other organization, but of themselves, as well. Kania et al. (2014) noted that cross-sector collaboration contributes to improved perspectives of social issues and fosters more abstract- and critical-thinking about how to address those issues. Future collaboration efforts, therefore, will benefit from these positive changes within each organization, whether the collaboration is together or with a different organization.

Societal

Limited resources result in many community needs being only partially met or to remain unaddressed altogether. Collaboration, however, enables many of these community needs to be addressed. As the literature and this current study have revealed, collaboration is an essential component of contributing to the health and well-being of local communities throughout the United States. Therefore, it is prudent for collaboration organizers to ensure that efforts are planned and executed in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

The study of the collaboration efforts between the church and the city revealed how these well-organized and religiously tolerant collaboration events successfully bridged budget gaps and improved the community. Additionally, the results of the study revealed how a common goal can be achieved, working side-by-side with people of

various faiths. Partnerships were built upon what people had in common, rather than divisions resulting from focusing on people's differences. The improvement of the community was the focused task, which benefited all community members.

The societal implications are endless. Communities around the country greatly benefit from forming strategic alliances with faith-based organizations, to address unmet needs that are pushed aside by higher priorities. Setting aside differences and focusing on commonalities can foster collaboration efforts and improve communities. In addition to the positive measurable outcomes of the projects themselves, the unmeasurable residual side-effects of increased religious tolerance, improved organizational ties, elevated community awareness, and enhanced community-member relationships with one another are invaluable contributors to positive community health and well-being.

Conclusion

The current qualitative case study was designed to examine participants' experiences of religious tolerance during collaboration events between a faith-based organization and a local city government. Further, participants' perspectives regarding the importance of religious tolerance and what factors either foster or hinder it were examined. Current literature supported the importance of collaborating with faith-based organizations to address community needs where city budgets fell short. Therefore, it is crucial that all participants in faith-based organization and local government collaboration efforts are treated with respect and acceptance. The data from the current study revealed that participants did not perceive any religious intolerance toward

themselves or among any other volunteers. Rather, regardless of religious affiliation, participants reported experiencing a strictly task-oriented event, with a common goal, thorough planning, and efficient implementation contributing to a comfortable work environment. The positive experiences reported by the participants and the successful outcomes of the collaboration between the two organizations are a testament to the importance of providing a work environment that is free from personal judgement. Further, transparency during both the planning and execution of the events is of utmost importance, as participants have both the desire and right to not be subjected to a hidden agenda.

In addition to the positive outcomes that communities experience from collaboration with faith-based organizations, individuals and families reap personal benefits as well. Being involved in community events fosters participants' feelings of belongingness and their sense of civic responsibility. However, although current literature supports these perspectives, this study cannot conclude that participation in one of these events had these effects. Rather, this study only supports the perspective that a religiously tolerant environment contributed to the success of these two events, as well as fostered the willingness of volunteers to participate in another similar collaborative event.

Future research on the far-reaching impacts of faith-based organization and local government collaboration can examine long-term individual, familial, and community effects. Further, more research is necessary to determine if religious tolerance experienced in collaboration events contributes to increased religious tolerance in other

environments and settings. People who participate in a collaboration that is clearly defined as being cosponsored by a faith-based organization may have preconceived ideas about the people with whom they expect to interact. When only positive encounters occur, misconceptions can be dispelled and barriers can be broken. With additional research, more can be learned about the far-reaching effects of community collaboration in a religiously-tolerant environment.

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Appendix A: Letter from Event Organizers to Volunteers

(Organization Letterhead)

Dear Event Volunteer,
You may be contacted by Sheree Nelson, who is currently working on a research project to fulfill her requirements to complete her Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration. In her study, she will be interviewing people who volunteered at a community event that involved a local faith-based organization. As one of the participating organizations, we have been informed of the purpose of her study and have reviewed the interview questions.
Although our organization has agreed to provide contact information for volunteers, it was done so with the assurance that no personal information will be shared with anyone other than this researcher, Sheree Nelson. Additionally, the researcher will not disclose who has agreed to participate in the study. Therefore, whether you accept or decline the invitation to participate in the study will remain confidential to the researcher. Finally, the researcher has also confirmed that this contact information will be used solely for the purpose of inviting volunteers to participate in this specific study.
If you would like to be exempt from the contact list for this study, please notify our office by (date, 2018), and we will ensure that your name is not on the list of contacts. Also, if you have questions about the study, the researcher, Sheree Nelson, can be contacted directly at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,
(Event Leader Name)

Appendix B: Religious Tolerance Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed for my study. I promise to take as little of your time as possible to gather your answers to my questions. I would like to reiterate that your participation in my study is completely voluntary, and you may stop this interview at any time if you feel uncomfortable. You may also refuse to answer any question asked, for any reason. Your privacy is guaranteed, and all responses will be included in the study findings in summary format, without any personal identifiers. Please note that the phrase "religious beliefs" is relevant for any and all beliefs and denominations, as well as no religious affiliation or beliefs.

Do I have your permission to make an audio recording of this interview, so that I can confirm that my written responses are accurate? (Use consent form for signature.)

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

1. Why did you choose to participate in this collaboration event?

2. How comfortable were you expressing your religious beliefs with other volunteers?

3. What factors do you believe fostered your ability to openly discuss your religious beliefs with other volunteers.

4. What factors do you believe hindered your ability to openly discuss your religious beliefs with other volunteers.

5. How tolerant did you perceive volunteers were of your religious beliefs from outside of your organization at the beginning of the collaboration event?

6. How tolerant did you perceive volunteers were of your religious beliefs from outside of your organization in the middle of the collaboration event?

7. How tolerant did you perceive volunteers were of your religious beliefs from outside of your organization by the end of the collaboration event?

8. Please rate and describe your overall experience volunteering in this collaborative effort with people who either are not affiliated with your organization or do not share your religious beliefs.

First, please rate your overall experience from 1 to 5, with 1 being Very Uncomfortable and 5 being Extremely Comfortable.

Please circle your choice.

Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable
1	2	3	4	5

Second, please describe your overall experience volunteering in this collaborative effort with people who either are not affiliated with your organization or do not share your religious beliefs.

9. Please rate and describe your overall perspective regarding how important you believe it is for people to support a religiously tolerance work environment during a volunteer collaboration event.

First, please rate and describe your overall perspective from 1 to 5, with 1 being Very Unimportant and 5 being Extremely Important.

Please circle your choice.

Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

Second, please describe your overall perspective regarding the importance of people supporting a religiously tolerant work environment during a volunteer collaboration event.

10. Please share anything you believe would help me understand the religious tolerance levels experienced during this collaboration event.

11. Please share anything you believe would contribute to a more religiously tolerant environment for future faith-based organization/government collaboration events.

12. Please share anything you believe occurred during the collaboration event that would either encourage or discourage you to participate in a future collaboration event with the two sponsoring organizations.

13. Do you have any questions for me? (Please feel free to contact me. Here is my business card.)

Thank you for your willingness to take the time to share your perspective for my study. I will forward a transcript of this interview to you within two days.

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research study about religious tolerance experienced by participants in a collaboration effort between (name of organization) and (name of organization). The researcher has invited only adult volunteers from the event to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to move forward with the interview process.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Sheree Nelson, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to examine the perceived religious tolerance levels of participants from both the faith-based organization and the community at large during this event. Factors that either contributed to an environment of perceived religious tolerance or hindered it will also be studied.

Procedures:
If you agree to continue with the interview, you will be asked questions regarding your experiences during your participation in (name of event).

Here are some sample questions:

- How comfortable were you expressing your religious beliefs with other volunteers?

- How tolerant did you perceive volunteers were of your religious beliefs from outside of your organization at the beginning of the collaboration event?

By continuing with the interview, you:

- Consent to the interview being digitally recorded so that the researcher is able to accurately transcribe the interview into a Word document after the interview is over.

- Approve of a follow-up phone call, text message, or email to clarify questions the researcher may encounter when transcribing the interview responses. This should take no longer than a five- or ten-minute phone call. I will note your preference of communication and add it to this form and will record that contact information in the space provided at the end of this consent form.

- Understand that the interview will take approximately on hour.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. No one at (name of organization) or (name of organization) will know whether or not you participated in this study. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind and stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as setting aside an hour of your time and sitting for up to one hour. Being in this study will not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The potential benefit of this study is to assist future collaboration leaders in ensuring a religiously tolerant environment for all participants in community collaboration efforts.

Payment:

No payments will be made to participants of this study.

Privacy:

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. Data will be kept secure by the researcher in a personal password-protected laptop computer and a password-protected backup harddrive. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Reporting of Suspected Abuse, Illegal Activities, or Potential Harm:

The state of California does not list an independent researcher as being legally obligated to report suspected abuse or neglect of a minor or elder. However, I believe that I have a moral obligation to notify the authorities if any information is shared with me that indicates neglect or abuse to a child or an elderly person. Further, it is also my moral responsibility to report the discloser of illegal information or information that leads me to believe that there may be a threat of harm to oneself or others. Therefore, by signing this consent form you are stating that you understand that any suspected neglect or abuse of a child or elderly person; the disclosure of illegal information; and the threat of harming oneself or others will be reported to the proper authorities.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via xxx-xxx-xxxx or name@abc.com. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at xxx-xxx-xxxx. Walden University's approval number for this study is 12-04-18-0025529 and it expires on 12-04-2019.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision to continue with the interview, please indicate your consent by signing below.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of Consent _____

Participant's Signature _____

Preferred Method of Follow-up Communication _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Appendix D: Letter of Invitation

Dear Organization Leader,

My name is Sheree Nelson, and I am a Ph.D. candidate in Public Policy and Administration at Walden University. I am currently working on my dissertation, which requires me to conduct a study that will contribute to the current literature within my field. I have chosen to do a case study of three collaboration events in the city of _____, that were each cosponsored by a faith-based organization and a local government organization. My understanding is that you are a leader in one of these organizations and helped recruit volunteers for at least one of the events. Therefore, I am hoping that you would be willing to help me locate some of the volunteers for an interview. I am also hoping that you would be willing to participate in a pilot study interview, so that I can ensure that my interview questions accurately address the participants' experiences at the events.

The purpose of this study is to explore collaboration between faith-based organizations and local government to determine how successfully participants of varying spiritual beliefs were able to work together to accomplish a common goal when the collaboration was organized by a single-denomination religious organization. Three cases will be assessed to determine the levels of tolerance toward varying religious beliefs perceived by participating members of the faith-based organizations, members of the government agencies, and community volunteers involved in these community projects. Specifically, the study is addressing the following questions:

> Question 1. What are the perceptions of participants of faith-based organization and government organization collaborations regarding how comfortably they were able to participate in a manner that neither promoted nor stifled the spiritual beliefs of both the members and nonmembers of the faith-based organizations?
>
> Question 2. What factors either fostered or hindered a harmonious and productive work environment regarding tolerance, acceptance, and unity among volunteers with varied belief systems?

All participants' information will be kept confidential, including responses to questions. All information will be compiled for data analysis purposes and presented in my dissertation in summary format. No participants will be identified in my dissertation, and all data collected will only be used without any personal information. My dissertation committee will only see a summary of responses that does not include names.

If you are willing to help me contact volunteers for this study, I would be extremely grateful. I have attached the recruitment letter for your review. To ensure confidentiality regarding who chooses to either participate or not to participate, I have prepared a letter to be sent to volunteers by your organization. This letter, that I have included for your review, neither encourages nor discourages study participation. Rather, it simply informs the volunteers that you have been made aware of the study and that their contact information has been shared with only me and for the sole purpose of this specific study.

I look forward to your reply. My contact information is below.

Cell phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx
Email: name@abc.com
Skype:
Facebook:

Sincerely,

Sheree R. Nelson
BS, MA, MPA

Appendix E: Preliminary Data Analysis & Coding Worksheet

The purpose of this worksheet is intended to allow the novice qualitative researcher to easily determine if there is alignment between the elements of their research proposal. There is nothing more disheartening than to discover at the end of data collection and analysis that one neglected to collect or code for data that would answer the research question using the theoretical/conceptual framework required. Please note that this worksheet does not include considerations for data saturation or emerging themes.

Working Title of Proposal: Religious Tolerance and Government Collaboration with Faith-based Organizations

Problem being addressed:

> Allocating limited resources is a basic function of every city government in the United States, as funds are finite. A municipality's operating budget is a legal document that serves as the reference point of a community's obligations, priorities, policies, and objectives (MRSC, 2015). With limited revenues, not every community project will receive adequate funding. This requires project organizers to either abandon their projects or seek outside resources to further their objectives. Often, faith-based organizations are willing and able to provide community services by coordinating collaborative events, providing funding, and recruiting volunteers. However, how much support and what kind of services can be provided are questions that arise, due to concerns about the Establishment Clause in the U.S. Constitution and community perceptions on the proper role of faith-based organizations in city issues. Further, questions may arise regarding transparency, resulting in nonmembers of the FBO being hesitant to participate in a collaborative event that is not coordinated by the FBOs with whom they identify themselves.

Theoretical or Conceptual Framework: Theoretical:

> Collaboration theory, Gajda (2004) noted, is comprised of five accepted principles and abstractions that are observed facts regarding the development of strategic alliance. First, collaboration is an imperative, which means that it is necessary (Gajda, 2004). Second, collaboration is known by many names (Gajda, 2004). Whether parties refer to them as collaborations, partnerships, alliances, cooperative endeavors, or group efforts, the basic premise is that two or more organizations are working together toward a common goal. Third, collaboration is a journey, not a destination (Gajda, 2004). This principle reveals the importance of the process of collaboration, rather than remaining solely focused on the outcomes. Fourth, with collaboration, the personal is as important as the procedural (Gajda, 2004). Accounting for and addressing personal concerns is no

less important than doing so for details and mechanics. Fifth, collaboration develops in stages (Gajda, 2004). Unpredictable developments and interactions make it impossible to foresee every potential setback, intended outcome, or unintended outcome of a collaboration.

Research question: Should mention the sample population and theory.

The sample population includes participants from one cosponsoring faith-based organization and volunteers from the community population who were recruited by the local city council.

The research questions are:
RQ1: What are the perceptions of participants of faith-based organization and government organization collaborations regarding how comfortably they were able to participate in a manner that neither promoted nor stifled the spiritual beliefs of both the members and nonmembers of the faith-based organizations?
RQ2: From the perspectives of the research participants, what factors either fostered or hindered a harmonious and productive work environment regarding tolerance, acceptance, and unity among volunteers with varied belief systems?

Methodology type: Case study

Data collection protocol: Provide the protocol (Survey, interview questions, etc.) you will be using. It is best to number each item.

Protocol:
The following questions will be used during the interviews.

1. Why did you choose to participate in this collaboration event?

2. How comfortable were you expressing your religious beliefs with other volunteers?

3. What factors do you believe fostered your ability to openly discuss your religious beliefs with other volunteers.

4. What factors do you believe hindered your ability to openly discuss your religious beliefs with other volunteers.

5. How tolerant did you perceive volunteers were of your religious beliefs from outside of your organization at the beginning of the collaboration event?

6. How tolerant did you perceive volunteers were of your religious beliefs from outside of your organization in the middle of the collaboration event?

7. How tolerant did you perceive volunteers were of your religious beliefs from outside of your organization by the end of the collaboration event?

8. Please rate and describe your overall experience volunteering in this collaborative effort with people who either are not affiliated with your organization or do not share your religious beliefs.

First, please rate your overall experience from 1 to 5, with 1 being Very Uncomfortable and 5 being Extremely Comfortable.

Please circle your choice.

Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable
1	2	3	4	5

Second, please describe your overall experience volunteering in this collaborative effort with people who either are not affiliated with your organization or do not share your religious beliefs.

9. Please rate and describe your overall perspective regarding how important you believe it is for people to support a religiously tolerance work environment during a volunteer collaboration event.

First, please rate and describe your overall perspective from 1 to 5, with 1 being Very Unimportant and 5 being Extremely Important.

Please circle your choice.

Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5

Second, please describe your overall perspective regarding the importance of people supporting a religiously tolerant work environment during a volunteer collaboration event.

10. Please share anything you believe would help me understand the religious tolerance levels experienced during this collaboration event.

11. Please share anything you believe would contribute to a more religiously tolerant environment for future faith-based organization/government collaboration events.

12. Please share anything you believe occurred during the collaboration event that would either encourage or discourage you to participate in a future collaboration event with the two sponsoring organizations.

Preliminary Codes: These should incorporate important elements of the research question, theory, and possibly elements of the problem.

Primary code/node	Secondary/child	How does this integrate with data collection protocol? List just the protocol number.
Collaboration is an imperative (I)	Necessity (N) Duty (D)	1, 9, 11, 12
Collaboration is known by many names (MN)	Community Service (CS) Spiritual Obligation (SO) Person Fulfillment (PF)	1, 2, 5, 9
Collaboration is a journey, not a destination (J)	Process (P) Leader Behavior (LB) Follower Behavior (FB)	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12
With collaboration, the personal is as important as the procedural (P)	Spirituality (S) Inclusion (IN)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Collaboration develops in stages (DS)	Expectations (E) Initial Perceptions (IP) Evolved Perceptions (EP)	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Data Analysis Process:

During the interviews I will establish an audit trail to contribute to the preliminary coding framework and the data analysis process. This will include notes regarding the interactions in the interviews, participants' demeanors, and anything else that can help to sort my data. This will also enable me to determine if my preliminary codes need to be revised. Simon and Goes (2018) noted that qualitative software such as Nvivo can help to analyze qualitative data, but that codes are necessary to

initially organize the data. Further, as advised by Simon and Goes (2018), I will review the words and codes with my participants to ensure that they reflect their experiences and perceptions.

Appendix F: Recruitment Letter

Dear Event Volunteer,

My name is Sheree Nelson, and I am a Ph.D. candidate in Public Policy and Administration at Walden University. I am currently working on my dissertation, which requires me to conduct a study that will contribute to the current literature within my field. I have chosen to do a case study of three collaboration events in the city of _____, that were each cosponsored by a faith-based organization and a local government organization. My understanding is that you are affiliated with one of these organizations and volunteered for at least one of the events. Therefore, I am hoping that you would be willing to answer some questions regarding your experiences during the event(s).

The purpose of this study is to explore collaboration between faith-based organizations and local government to determine how comfortable participants of varying spiritual beliefs were working together to accomplish a common goal when the collaboration was organized by a single-denomination religious organization. Three cases will be assessed to determine the levels of tolerance toward varying religious beliefs perceived by participating members of the faith-based organizations, members of the government agencies, and community volunteers involved in these community projects. Specifically, the study is addressing the following questions:

> Question 1. What are the perceptions of participants of faith-based organization and government organization collaborations regarding how comfortably they were able to participate in a manner that neither promoted nor stifled the spiritual beliefs of both the members and nonmembers of the faith-based organizations?
>
> Question 2. What factors either fostered or hindered a harmonious and productive work environment regarding tolerance, acceptance, and unity among volunteers with varied belief systems?

Your perspective will help to answer these questions. If you are willing to participate, I would like to meet with you for a face-to-face interview that should last no

more than an hour to an hour and a half in a quiet public location or at your organization. If you choose to participate, I would appreciate the ability to follow up with you, if necessary, for clarifications and/or additional questions.

All participants' information will be kept confidential, including responses to questions. All information will be compiled for data analysis purposes and presented in my dissertation in summary format. No participants will be identified in my dissertation, and all data collected will only be used without any personal information. My dissertation committee will only see a summary of responses that does not include names.

If you are willing to participate in this study, I would be extremely grateful. I have included the consent form that we will sign prior to beginning the interview process, for your review. Please contact me, so that we can determine a time and location that is most convenient for you to meet. I can be reached via...

Cell phone:

Email:

Skype:

Facebook:

Sincerely,

Sheree R. Nelson

BS, MA, MPA