Author/s:
Fry, Rebecca Elizabeth

Title:
Simple rules for place-based approaches addressing disadvantage

Date:
2019

Persistent Link:
https://hdl.handle.net/11343/237459

# Simple rules for place-based approaches addressing disadvantage

Rebecca Fry

*ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8833-9775*

*Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Evaluation (Research)*
*September, 2019*
*Centre for Program Evaluation, Melbourne Graduate School of Education*
*The University of Melbourne*

## Abstract

The nature of many social, economic and environmental problems facing Australia and the world are increasingly described as 'wicked' or complex in that they are difficult to grasp, unclear how to tackle and often seem insurmountable. Disadvantage is one such problem; there is disagreement about how to define it, it has innumerable and tangled causes, and it refuses to go away. Despite many and varied efforts to address disadvantage in Australia's most vulnerable communities, the size and significance of the issue has barely shifted during the past 15 years or so (Vinson & Rawsthorne, 2015). Disadvantage can profoundly affect individuals, families, communities and society, and is unacceptable in a country with such sustained economic prosperity as Australia. There is a need to find more effective ways to overcome disadvantage and address this injustice.

Place-based approaches are broadly understood to be collaborative, flexible and multi-faceted responses employed within a particular 'place' or geographic location to tackle wide-ranging complex issues. They exist in many different forms and show promise as a response to disadvantage and other complex problems. However, the abundance of place-based frameworks, theories and terminology has created a lack of clarity about the core pieces of evidence and central characteristics of place-based approaches for practice, policy and research.

This thesis sought to leverage from the diversity of place-based approaches and explore evidence associated with the different forms. The study aimed to distil the key characteristics of promising place-based approaches and generate actionable and evidence-informed guidelines or 'simple rules' that can guide the design, development and evaluation of place-based approaches addressing disadvantage in Australia.

The study's literature review found wide-ranging definitions, conceptual frameworks and terminology associated with place-based approaches. The study also identified several points of convergence, including characteristics commonly associated with promising place-based approaches. The results indicate four central and interconnected practices underpin a promising place-based design: collaboration—relate, connect and collaborate across sectors; community engagement—engage and empower community; holistic thinking—think and act holistically; and adaptation—take an adaptive and responsive approach. The study generated a set of evidence-informed simple rules to support the implementation of each of these practices. While the study's results should be interpreted with caution, this research reiterates the overwhelming need for a consensus framework for place-based approaches that helps to accelerate and advance actionable knowledge.

## Declaration

This is to certify that:

- The thesis comprises only my original work towards the Master of Evaluation,
- Due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used, and
- The thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies, and appendices.

Signed

Rebecca Fry

6 September 2019

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisors, Janet Clinton and Krystin Martens, for their guidance, encouragement and review over the course of this study. I would also like to thank Tricia Eadie for her advice and suggestions as my chair. A special acknowledgement is given to David Hogan for his responsiveness, review and advice as a (critical) friend. Thank you David!

To my colleagues at the Centre for Community Child Health, thank you for providing a rich and stimulating work environment, generously sharing your knowledge and sharpening my critical thinking. In particular, thank you to Tim Moore and Sue West for their support, expertise and encouragement. To Megan Keyes, thank you for your advice and review. The support from colleagues at Opportunity Child is also acknowledged.

Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to my family for their support and in particular thank Nick, for his patience, support and cups of tea, which undoubtedly got this thesis over the line.

## Table of Contents

## List of Tables



## List of Figures



## List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| APSC | Australian Public Service Commission |
| CEDA | Committee for Economic Development of Australia |
| DSS | Department of Social Services |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| US | United States |

## Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| Area-based approach | See **place-based approach**. |
| Collective impact | A type of **place-based approach**. |
| Complex problems | Multi-dimensional and persistent problems that have many interconnected causes, which are unpredictable, evolve over time and require multi-faceted interventions. |
| Complexity theory | A type of theory used to explain complex phenomenon. Core concepts include interconnectedness, sensitivity to context, non-linearity, emergence and unpredictability. |
| Deprivation | Limited access to socially perceived necessities including goods, activities and services. |
| Disadvantage | In this study, disadvantage refers to social disadvantage, which is a multi-dimensional concept describing various challenges that prevent people from fully participating in society. Three related concepts often underpin disadvantage—**poverty**, **deprivation** and **social exclusion**. |
| Location-based approach | See **place-based approach**. |
| Place-based approach | A collaborative, flexible and comprehensive approach applied in a particular geographical location to address complex problems. |
| Place-based initiative | See **place-based approach**. |
| Place-based response | See **place-based approach**. |
| Poverty | Limited economic resources. |
| Social disadvantage | See **disadvantage**. |
| Social exclusion | Unable to fully participate in society including work, education, decision-making or social activities. |
| Wicked problems | See **complex problems**. |

## Chapter 1.0 Introduction

The nature of many social, economic and environmental problems facing Australia and the world are increasingly described as 'wicked' in that they are difficult to grasp, unclear how to tackle and often seem insurmountable. Disadvantage is one such wicked problem; there is disagreement about how to define it, it has innumerable, tangled causes and consequences, and it refuses to go away. Despite many and varied efforts to address disadvantage in Australia's most vulnerable communities, the size and significance of the issue has barely shifted during the past 15 years or so (Vinson & Rawsthorne, 2015). Disadvantage can profoundly affect individuals and families, and impose a range of broader social and economic costs. In a country of Australia's wealth, there is more that can and should be done.

Place-based, location-based or area-based approaches[1] are a promising response to complex issues such as disadvantage. They are broadly understood to be collaborative, flexible and multi-faceted responses employed within a particular 'place' or geographic location and have been used in Australia and overseas for several decades. In recent years, collective impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011) has emerged as a new type of place-based approach and has generated a resurgence of interest across Australia (Smart, 2017a). In 2016, there were estimated to be more than 80 locations applying a type of place-based approach in Australia (Graham & Weaver, 2016).

Although there are many different terms used to describe place-based approaches, the various forms do not appear to be distinctive in character. Variations of place-based approaches, however, all share a series of conceptual, theoretical, implementation and research challenges. First, they lack consensus on an agreed definition, core components and the underpinning theory of action and change (Bellefontaine & Wisener, 2011; Hogan, Rubenstein, & Fry, 2018b). This means there are no universally accepted principles or features to guide design, implementation and evaluation. Second, because they are used in response to complex issues, they are applied in unique, uncertain and diverse situations which creates a suite of evaluation and research challenges and difficulties in developing the evidence base (Bellefontaine & Wisener, 2011). Third, because there are contested definitions and conceptual frameworks, there are inconsistencies in how knowledge is framed and categorised. This can limit the integration of relevant existing research into policy and implementation and hinder the growth of the evidence base. The collective impact framework provides a recent example of how contemporary place-based approaches have failed to draw on the breadth and depth of existing knowledge (Wolff, 2016). Fourth, research into different types of place-based approaches is undertaken by wide-ranging disciplines with different perspectives, which can result in siloed research, limit the transferability of findings, and again lead to challenges in locating and using relevant existing research. Finally, there is limited evidence of their efficacy (Hogan et al., 2018b; Moore et al., 2014; Smart, 2017a), linked to the aforementioned evaluation and research challenges and a limited investment in evaluation and research (Fry et al., 2014).

Despite these challenges, place-based approaches continue to resonate strongly with governments and communities in Australia as a means for tackling disadvantage and other complex issues (Smart, 2017a). Investment in this widely-used intervention can be optimised by distilling the core pieces of evidence underpinning place-based approaches and clarifying

[1] The terms locational, location-based, area-based, and place-based initiative/approach/response are used interchangeably in the broader literature. In this study, place-based approach/response/initiative is the preferred term and is used to encompass all of the above variations.

the key characteristics of promising place-based approaches. This will not only help to advance the design, development and impact of place-based approaches, but also accelerate and advance knowledge building efforts.

## 1.1 Research aim and question

The study responds to this opportunity by advancing holistic understandings of place-based approaches and clarifying good practices for place-based responses tackling disadvantage in the Australian context. The main research question was:

> *What characteristics are associated with promising place-based responses to disadvantage in the Australian context?*

The study sought to answer this question by synthesising multiple bodies of literature and identifying patterns about key features of promising place-based approaches. 'Promising' rather than 'effective' place-based approaches were of central interest to this study, given the lack of consensus about what constitutes 'effectiveness' in complex initiatives (Patton, 2015) and the limited evidence base and evaluation challenges associated with place-based approaches. The study also set a specific objective of developing guidelines to support the design, development and evaluation of place-based approaches.

## 1.2 Theoretical perspective

A pragmatic frame shaped the study's design and methods, privileging meaningful knowledge that could enable action ahead of perfect knowledge and appreciating practical limits of the thesis such as time (Creswell, 2009). The study also embraced complexity theory, acknowledging the dynamic and complex nature of place-based approaches and disadvantage. Complexity theory emphasises interconnectedness, emergence and unpredictability in complex phenomenon (Patton, 2015). Grounding the study in the complexity paradigm, alongside its pragmatic frame, permitted the study to evolve the research focus over time, iterate research methods and explore different relationships as new understandings emerged.

## 1.3 Research design

A literature review was undertaken in response to this theoretical perspective, acknowledging the value that different types of place-based approaches could bring to building knowledge and clarifying areas of consensus across the literature. The study's results were interpreted through a complexity theory lens, generating 'simple rules' to provide actionable and evidence-informed guidance to policy, practice and evaluation.

## 1.4 Structure of the thesis

This chapter has introduced the need for a better response to disadvantage and advancing understandings about place-based approaches. Chapter 2.0 discusses the nature of disadvantage and complex problems in more detail, before reviewing the promise and limitations of place-based approaches for addressing disadvantage. The thesis then moves on to describe the study's literature review methods in Chapter 3.0, followed by the study's results in Chapter 4.0. The final chapter summarises the study's findings in the context of the broader literature, considers the study's strengths and limitations, and provides implications for practice, policy, research and evaluation. Appendix A provides supplementary detail about the study's included documents.

# Chapter 2.0 Background

Australia has long been considered the land of the 'fair go', a society where everyone has the opportunity to realise their full potential. However, a small but significant number of Australians are likely to experience enduring disadvantages that restrict opportunities and diminish lives (Productivity Commission, 2018). This represents an injustice that is unacceptable in a society of Australia's wealth and demands more effective action.

This chapter sets out core concepts for defining, measuring and addressing disadvantage in Australia. It frames disadvantage as a complex issue that requires a contextual or 'place-based' response to tackle the messy, multifaceted and interconnected causes and effects of disadvantage. The chapter reviews the evidence base for place-based approaches to provide a basis for the study.

## 2.1 Defining disadvantage in Australia

Disadvantage is a concept that evokes diverse views and understandings. While there is no accepted definition, conceptions of disadvantage have expanded over time to encompass dimensions beyond low income. The related frameworks of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion provide a basis for understanding and measuring disadvantage.

### *2.1.1 Central concepts*

Traditionally, disadvantage has been thought of as poverty and poverty as inadequate income or limited economic resources (McLachlan, Gilfillan, & Gordon, 2013). However, poverty has been criticised for its narrow focus on a single monetary measure and failing to capture the impact of disadvantage on quality of life. Deprivation is a broader perspective that considers disadvantage to exist when people miss out on essential goods and services needed to achieve an acceptable standard of living (McLachlan et al., 2013). Deprivation may therefore be inclusive of low income, but it can also exist if other factors such as restricted access to basic education and health services are experienced. Viewed through the lens of social exclusion, disadvantage is understood to occur when people are prevented from participating in the social, educational, employment and civic opportunities available in society (McLachlan et al., 2013). This broader framing draws attention to a multitude of possible factors as the causes of disadvantage, including structural barriers and processes, and invariably positions disadvantage as a denial of rights (Saunders, Naidoo, & Griffiths, 2007).

Multi-dimensional frameworks of disadvantage such as deprivation and social exclusion often better concur with the reality of experiencing disadvantage (Saunders & Sutherland, 2006) and there is now general consensus that disadvantage manifests in many ways and should be considered from different angles (valentine, 2016). Tomlinson and Walker (2009) outline various dimensions of disadvantage, based on their research with people experiencing disadvantage. They conclude:

> Poverty [disadvantage] is more than simply a lack of income. It is equally the stress caused by a family's inability to make ends meet. It is the poor housing or homelessness, the lack of facilities, infrastructure and stimulation, the fear of crime and the possible lack of respect resulting from living in a deprived area. It is the inability to acquire or renew possessions and the reduced opportunities to fulfil personal ambitions or to exploit opportunities in employment, sport, education, the arts and/or in the local neighbourhood. It is the lack of personal contacts, sometimes arising from the inability to reciprocate, the perceived futility of political engagement and the poor physical and

> mental health, itself a product of bad living conditions, day- to-day pressure and debilitating personal circumstances. (Tomlinson & Walker, 2009, p. 9)

Different perspectives of disadvantage can therefore shape how the issue, its causes and its consequences are understood, measured and addressed. Poverty, deprivation and social exclusion can offer complementary ways of viewing disadvantage and together cover what is generally understood as social disadvantage (Saunders et al., 2007). Vinson (2007a) defines social disadvantage as "a range of difficulties that block life opportunities and which prevent people from participating fully in society" (p. 1). In this study, disadvantage refers to Vinson's (2007a) definition of social disadvantage. The next section examines the extent of disadvantage in Australia, using the approaches of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion.

### *2.1.2 Extent of disadvantage in Australia*

The different concepts of disadvantage draw on diverse measures and do not provide a single answer about the extent of disadvantage in Australia. In regards to poverty, recent estimates indicate around nine per cent of Australians (or 2.2 million people) experienced poverty[2] in 2015-16 (Productivity Commission, 2018). After housing costs are excluded, the same measure rises to just over 13 per cent of the population, or more than one in eight people (Davidson, Saunders, Bradbury, & Wong, 2018). Poverty rates have fluctuated over the past three decades, but using the Productivity Commission's estimates, they have not declined (Productivity Commission, 2018). While many people (61 per cent) move out of poverty after about one year, re-entry is common with 30 per cent of people who were poor in 2001 returning to (or still in) poverty in 2016 (Productivity Commission, 2018). About three per cent of the population (around 700,000 Australians) experienced persistent poverty[3] in 2016 (Productivity Commission, 2018). International comparisons show Australian poverty exceeds many Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, with Australia having the 14th highest poverty rate among the 36 OECD countries in 2015-16 (Davidson et al., 2018).

A slightly higher proportion of the population (nearly 12 per cent) are estimated to experience deprivation[4] (Productivity Commission, 2018). For the most part, people who experience deprivation are different to those who experience poverty. The Productivity Commission (2018) finds almost three per cent of the population (680,000 people) are simultaneously experiencing poverty and deprivation, which represents slightly less than 30 per cent of all people in income poverty and only 25 per cent of all people experiencing deprivation.

In 2015, about 17 per cent of Australians over the age of 15 experienced 'marginal' or lower levels of social exclusion and five per cent experienced 'deep' or higher levels of social exclusion[5] (Brotherhood of St Laurence and Melbourne Institute, 2017). The extent of deep social exclusion in Australia has remained relatively steady over a ten-year period (Brotherhood of St Laurence and Melbourne Institute, 2017). Social exclusion is usually

[2] The percentage of the population below 50 per cent of median household disposable income.

[3] Continuous income poverty for at least the last four years.

[4] The percentage of people who cannot afford two or more goods, services or activities from a list of 25 items deemed essential for an acceptable standard of living.

[5] This multi-dimensional measure considers 30 indicators across different areas or domains of disadvantage, such as material resources, employment, health and so on. The extent of social exclusion is classified as marginal, deep or very deep social exclusion based on the score obtained on the scale. See Brotherhood of St Laurence and Melbourne Institute (2017) for further details.

short-lived; less than half of all the people who experienced deep social exclusion did so for one year out of ten (Brotherhood of St Laurence and Melbourne Institute, 2017). About two per cent experienced deep exclusion for five or more years, over the same decade, but marginal social exclusion was more persistent (Brotherhood of St Laurence and Melbourne Institute, 2017).

All measures point to the concentration of disadvantage in particular people in Australia, finding that people who are unemployed, living in single-parent families, people with disabilities and Indigenous Australians have a higher risk of experiencing disadvantage (Productivity Commission, 2018). Children living in jobless households are at especially high risk (Productivity Commission, 2018).

Together, these measures indicate that many people in Australia experience some form of disadvantage during their life. While disadvantage is short-lived for most, the depth and persistence of disadvantage faced by some people in Australia is a significant issue. The next section explores the locational or geographic profile of disadvantage, which is of central interest to this study.

### *2.1.3 The locational profile of disadvantage*

The Australian Government (2010) claims the drivers of social exclusion are more likely to coincide in particular localities leading to concentrated disadvantage. When people experience disadvantage in a disadvantaged locality, effects can be exacerbated and lead to pockets of concentrated and persistent disadvantage (Saunders & Wong, 2014). In 2010, more than 50 per cent of people experiencing multiple disadvantages in Australia were living in the two most socio-economically disadvantaged areas (Australian Government, 2012). The consequences can be profound. People living in the most disadvantaged 20 per cent of locations, relative to those living in the most advantaged 20 per cent of locations, are: less likely to have Year 12 or Certificate II qualifications; more likely to be developmentally vulnerable on early childhood development indicators; less likely to be employed; less likely to participate in a community group; and less likely to have a say on issues important to them (Australian Government, 2010).

Saunders and Wong (2014) provide further evidence of the nexus between individual-level and locational-level disadvantage. They found,

> substantial and systematic differences in the degree of social disadvantage experienced by those living in different areas. There is also a noticeable gradient in the degree of individual–level disadvantage across areas ranked by the degree of area disadvantage. These patterns indicate that location does matter. (Saunders & Wong, 2014, p. 154)

Additionally, McLachlan and colleagues (2013) found:

> Australians residing in more disadvantaged areas experience much higher rates of chronic disease and mental health problems and the most disadvantaged regions are characterised by higher rates of unemployment, people dependent on income support and children living in jobless families. (p. 13)

There is a vast amount of literature indicating locational effects of disadvantage emerge early in life. By the time children start school, for example, there are marked differences in the developmental vulnerability of Australian children living in the most socio-economically

disadvantaged communities relative to their more advantaged counterparts (Australian Government, 2019). For those who start school behind, the gaps in capability widen, educational and academic discrepancies grow, and they are more likely to experience poorer health, social exclusion and lower levels of wellbeing (Hogan, Rubenstein, & Fry, 2018a; McLachlan et al., 2013).

These pockets of disadvantage are not only concentrated but enduring. Despite various efforts, Vinson and Rawsthorne (2015) found there has been virtually no shift in the extent of disadvantage in Australia's most vulnerable localities over the last 15 years or so. In Victoria, for instance, the same eight localities were ranked in the 12 most disadvantaged localities in 1999, 2007 and again in 2014 (Vinson & Rawsthorne, 2015).

Persistent disadvantage represents an injustice that is unacceptable in a country of Australia's wealth. Disadvantage also imposes a broader range of social and economic costs, negatively impacting on economic productivity, government expenditure and social cohesion (McLachlan et al., 2013). The endurance of the problem suggests a different course of action is required. The next section explores the nature of disadvantage to provide insights into suitable interventions.

### 2.2 The complex nature of disadvantage

So far, this chapter has established disadvantage as multi-dimensional, persistent, and geographically and demographically concentrated. The literature highlights additional features as multi-factorial, interdependent, cumulative and intergenerational, indicating that disadvantage has a complex architecture (Hogan et al., 2018a). First, disadvantage is multi-factorial in that there are multiple causes or factors driving disadvantage. These factors can relate to personal capabilities, family circumstances, the community where one lives, life experiences, and/or the broader economic and social environment (McLachlan et al., 2013). Second, the factors driving disadvantage are often so interlinked and interdependent that it can be difficult to establish causality (Hogan et al., 2018a). For example, poor mental health can be both a cause of disadvantage and a result of experiencing disadvantage (McLachlan et al., 2013). Third, disadvantage is cumulative in that factors accumulate over time and longer spells of disadvantage increase the chance of remaining in disadvantage (Hogan et al., 2018a; McLachlan et al., 2013). Children are particularly sensitive to the cumulative nature of disadvantage and early exposure to disadvantage can risk poorer lifelong outcomes (Hogan et al., 2018a; McLachlan et al., 2013). Fourth, due to its sticky and cumulative nature, disadvantage can be transmitted across generations unless it is successfully tackled (Hogan et al., 2018a; McLachlan et al., 2013). There is also evidence that the accumulation of disadvantage can genetically alter biology, 'getting under the skin' with intergenerational consequences (Hogan et al., 2018a; Marmot, 2015; McLachlan et al., 2013).

The nature of disadvantage is likened by Vinson (2007b) to a 'web' where the multiple factors driving disadvantage are tangled, reinforcing and compounding over time and cannot be easily resolved by a narrow or single solution. Theoretically, disadvantage is situated as a complex problem, due to its innumerable and interrelated causes and intractability (Hogan et al., 2018a; Moore & Fry, 2011). There are various frameworks and theories for understanding the nature of complex issues and the characteristics of appropriate responses, including 'wicked' problems and complexity theory.

### *2.2.1 Wicked problems*

The wicked problems framework is to some extent the predecessor to complexity theory, dating back to the 1970s when the inadequacies of traditional management for social and planning issues were first raised (Peters, 2017). Traditional management or rational planning approaches typically involve detailed up-front planning, precise definitions of the problem, breaking down the problem into separate parts and comprehensive assessment of potential solutions (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014; Head, 2008; Head & Alford, 2015). Critics identified these strategies were not appropriate for a range of social problems (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Rittel & Webber, 1973). Instead, Rittel and Webber (1973) argued for the active involvement of people affected by the issue in planning, emphasising the importance of values ahead of contested scientific knowledge. They also suggested there was a need to better appreciate the ill-definable nature of wicked problems, the uncertainty of their solutions and the use of political judgement (Rittel & Webber, 1973).

Xiang (2013) simplifies the 10 original features of wicked problems as described by Rittel and Webber (1973). The key dimensions include: indeterminacy in problem formulation—it is impossible to precisely formulate the problem because of the diverse and evolving values and interests of those concerned; non-definitiveness in problem solution—there is no definitive solution because of the uncertainty of the problem; non-solubility—the problem cannot be solved and can only, at best, be supressed or managed; irreversible consequentiality—there are irreversible and unpredictable consequences to every introduced solution; and uniqueness—there is always at least one distinguishing feature of the problem despite likely similarities. Head (2008) offers an alternative simplification, describing the core features of wicked problems as divergent viewpoints and values, uncertain patterns and consequences, and complex interactions and interdependencies.

### *2.2.2 Complexity frameworks*

Complexity theory shares many similarities with wicked problems, including an emphasis on uncertainty and uniqueness. Other common complexity concepts include: non-linearity—where small actions can produce large reactions; emergence—whereby effects are unpredictable and instead emerge from interactions; adaptive—in that complex situations respond and adapt to the environment and their interacting components; and co-evolutionary— where components become woven together and co-evolve over time (Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) suggests complexity theory can provide a useful frame for the inquiry into complex phenomenon that are ill-suited to rational-linear approaches.

The Cynefin Framework (Snowden & Boone, 2007) helps to ground concepts of complexity and inform decisions about how to best respond to particular situations. The framework focuses on the nature of causal relationships and identifies five contexts of simple, complicated, complex, chaotic or disorder. Simple situations have identifiable cause and effect relationships, are easy to define, and their impacts are predictable and controllable. Consequently, best practices can be devised and applied to produce reliable results (Snowden & Boone, 2007). Complicated contexts involve less clear cause and effect patterns, but they can be detected with expert input. There are usually several appropriate responses and therefore they tend to be associated with ‘good practice’ responses. In complex situations, cause and effect relationships can only become known after the effect has emerged. Complex problems are unique and uncertain and expertise does not necessarily guarantee success. They are distinguished from chaotic contexts, in which cause and effect patterns are unknown and cannot be detected in retrospect. Disorder refers to the state of not knowing which of the

above four situations applies. These categories are argued to help users better understand the nature of the situation and the appropriate response (Snowden & Boone, 2007).

### *2.2.3 Disadvantage and complexity*

Complexity-informed and wicked problems frameworks therefore illuminate the characteristics of complex problems as ambiguous, messy, interconnected, unpredictable and evolving. The typologies overlap with the character of disadvantage in several ways. The different perspectives of disadvantage highlight contested understandings, the wide ranging and interacting causes of disadvantage showcase complex interactions and interdependencies, the challenges in unravelling cause and effect are linked to uncertain patterns and consequences, and the persistence of disadvantage indicates its intractability. Disadvantage can therefore be situated as a prototypical complex or wicked problem. To overcome disadvantage, solutions must recognise its complex architecture and address the many interconnected causes. The next section explores traditional responses to disadvantage and their compatibility with insights about managing complex and wicked problems.

## 2.3 Responses to disadvantage

The literature outlines a variety of public policy reforms that can help to address disadvantage, which invariably cover public housing, taxation, education, transport, justice and community strengthening (e.g. Vinson & Rawsthorne, 2015). Early intervention is commonly emphasised, due to the powerful effects of disadvantage on young children (CEDA [Committee for Economic Development of Australia], 2015; Vinson & Rawsthorne, 2015). Other literature advocates for public policy to take a life-course approach and focus on education and areas of entrenched disadvantage (CEDA, 2015). The OECD (2010) recommends educational reforms to promote economic and social mobility, urban planning interventions and a review of taxation approaches (as cited by Hayes & Hacker, 2017).

While there is consensus that structural interventions are needed to address disadvantage, to date, they have not been able to overcome the persistence of disadvantage in Australia. The complexity literature provides several insights about why these reforms are necessary but insufficient. First, the wide ranging and interdependent causes of complex problems suggests a comprehensive or holistic response is required to simultaneously address multiple factors (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014; Head & Alford, 2015). A comprehensive approach crosses organisational boundaries and therefore requires coordinated action from different people. Thus, second, responses to complex problems require social or participatory processes so as to build trust and enable coordinated action by a range of people (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014; Conklin, 2006). As Conklin notes "you don't so much 'solve' a wicked problem as you help stakeholders negotiate shared understanding and shared meaning about the problem and its possible solutions. The objective of the work is coherent action, not final solution" (Conklin, Basadur, & VanPatter, 2007, p. 5). Third, the uncertainty and unpredictability of complex problems requires experimentation and continuous monitoring and adaptation (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014; Head & Alford, 2015). As a seminal paper by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) concludes, "tackling wicked problems is an evolving art. They require thinking that is capable of grasping the big picture, including the interrelationships among the full range of causal factors underlying them. They often require broader, more collaborative and innovative approaches" (APSC, 2007, p. iii).

'Place', or a defined geographical location, provides a useful framework for organising and applying such comprehensive, coordinated, participatory and experimental processes. This is because place offers a clearer boundary for untangling the interacting causes and

manifestations of complex issues, and a more manageable scale for devising and implementing collaborative responses (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014). The next section explores the potential of 'place-based' responses as a means for tackling disadvantage.

## 2.4 Place-based approaches

Place-based approaches are broadly understood to involve "stakeholders engaging in a collaborative process to address issues as they are experienced within a geographic space, be it a neighbourhood, a region, or an ecosystem" (Bellefontaine & Wisener, 2011, p. 6). They have been used extensively internationally and in Australia to tackle a wide-range of complex issues. In the Australian context, earlier forms of place-based approaches can be traced back to the 1940s and the range of issues targeted includes poverty, crime, economic development, employment, Indigenous disadvantage, community strengthening and social exclusion (Wilks, Lahausse, & Edwards, 2015).

In addition to diverse issues, place-based approaches tackle diverse objectives. Broadly, these objectives relate to place, people, community development, service coordination, innovation and complexity. Approaches focused on 'place' typically seek to improve the physical infrastructure or environment of a location and may also involve stimulating regional economic development (Griggs, Whitworth, Walker, McLennan, & Noble, 2008; Taylor & Buckley, 2017). Those focused on 'people' aim to enhance the lives of local residents living in a particular location and the local causes of disadvantage (Griggs et al., 2008). Community development oriented approaches have typically focused on improving community capacity and involvement in decision making (Taylor & Buckley, 2017). Place-based approaches emphasising service coordination have sought to improve local services to remediate disadvantage (Moore et al., 2014; Taylor & Buckley, 2017). More recently, place-based approaches can be seen as a way to 'try, test and learn' or trial local solutions that can inform broader policy change (Hogan et al., 2018b). Linked to this, place-based approaches can also be positioned as a framework for enhancing collaboration that is needed to tackle complex issues (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014). These categories are not mutually exclusive and there is evidence to suggest a focus on multiple objectives, such as people and place, is necessary to address disadvantage (Moore & Fry, 2011; Wilks et al., 2015). However, an emphasis on one particular objective ahead of another can influence the nature of the response and the suite of strategies implemented.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are many different terms used to describe place-based approaches, which are influenced by context and objectives. Terms can include but are not limited to comprehensive community initiatives, local community development, systems change, government area based approaches, neighbourhood initiatives, complex adaptive systems, area based initiatives, collective impact and community change (Bellefontaine & Wisener, 2011; Taylor & Buckley, 2017; Moore et al., 2014). Some liken place-based approaches to a meta-approach, within which various methods such as collective impact and community change efforts can be situated (Moore et al., 2014).

The diversity of place-based approaches has led to challenges in establishing an agreed set of characteristics. A review of the international literature concluded the following characteristics were common to place-based approaches: spatial targeting or a focus on geographical areas; social targeting or a focus on particular population groups; flexible interventions and funding expenditure; local autonomy or community involvement in decision making; joined-up working, or coordinated or integrated partnerships; governance mechanisms that balance the tension between increased flexibility and local devolution and funding accountability;

capacity development at both local and government levels; lead times prior to implementation for relationship development, design of interventions and capacity building; and a long-term focus (Wilks et al., 2015). Alternatively, a Canadian review emphasises a local design, diverse participants, collaborative decision-making processes, adaptive learning, a focus on aligning efforts, leveraging assets and changing behaviour as key features of place-based approaches (Bellefontaine & Wisener, 2011).

This section positions place-based approaches as a 'family' of collaborative responses that are applied within a defined geographical space and respond flexibly to complex issues such as disadvantage. Although there are many different terms used to describe place-based approaches, the various forms do not appear to be distinctive in character. The abundance of place-based frameworks suggests there is considerable ambiguity about the practices or characteristics that can best guide more effective place-based responses. The next section explores collective impact, a widely-used contemporary type of place-based approach.

### *2.4.1 Collective impact: A popular type of place-based approach*

In the past few years, many place-based approaches addressing disadvantage in Australia have employed or 'retrospectively fitted' (Salignac, Wilcox, Marjolin, & Adams, 2017) the collective impact framework (Kania & Kramer, 2011). The collective impact framework originated in the United States in 2011 and purports five features or conditions are necessary to successfully address complex problems. They include: a common agenda, or shared vision for change; mutually reinforcing activities, or aligned action by participants; continuous communication to build trust and engagement; a shared measurement system to encourage accountability and alignment; and a dedicated 'backbone' or organisational support for coordinating the work of the partnership (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Since its initial conception, collective impact has evolved to include pre-conditions that should be in place before the five features can be successfully applied. The pre-conditions include adequate resources, influential leaders and a sense of urgency for change (Hanleybrown, Kania, & Kramer, 2012). More recently, a set of practice principles emphasising equity, community engagement, leadership and systems thinking have been developed to complement the five original conditions (Collective Impact Forum, 2016). In 2016, Cabaj and Weaver highlighted different aspects of the five conditions, re-framing them to emphasise community engagement and strategic learning. Salignac and colleagues (2017) suggest that collective impact differs from other place-based approaches in its focus on shared measurement and dedicated organisational support.

Critics have highlighted several limitations of the collective impact model, which may indicate other points of difference. These include a limited focus on community engagement and policy and systems change (Flood, Minkler, Hennessey Lavery, Estrada, & Falbe, 2015; Hogan et al., 2018b; Smart, 2017a; Wolff, 2016). Collective impact has also been criticised for failing to draw on existing evidence from relevant fields such as community development, community organising, interorganisational collaboration and networks, and coalition building (Christens & Inzeo, 2015; Wolff, 2016) and public health prevention (Smart, 2017a).

In the Australian context, collective impact is argued to have a strong focus on community engagement, which may be due to the historical association of community development as a central philosophy of Australian place-based approaches (Graham, 2017, as cited by Smart, 2017a). Hogan and colleagues (2018b) go further to suggest that collective impact, when applied in the Australian context to address disadvantage, takes a unique form – *place-based* collective impact. They believe the development of place-based collective impact models is a

"contemporary expression of an older Australian discourse of [social] governance" (Hogan et al., 2018b, p. 52). The features of place-based collective impact include: a cross-sector leadership group; skilled backbone or organisational support; engaged and mobilised cross-sector partners and networks; co-design and robust planning; continuous strategic learning; cross-sector capacity building; and collaborative mindsets and practices (Hogan et al., 2018b).

Overall, there are various definitions and features of collective impact. In the Australian context, collective impact has been positioned as a contemporary expression of a place-based approach and there are mixed views about the distinctiveness of its characteristics. However, collective impact has been criticised for failing to build on existing evidence about place-based approaches. The next section explores current challenges shared by place-based approaches.

### *2.4.2 Common challenges of place-based approaches*

Despite the promise of place-based approaches as a response to disadvantage, there are a number of challenges associated with the methodology. First, there is limited evidence about the efficacy of place-based approaches, but this is not to say place-based approaches are ineffective (Bellefontaine & Wisener, 2011; Hogan et al., 2018b; Moore et al., 2014; Smart, 2017a). A series of methodological challenges has hindered efforts to evaluate place-based approaches. In particular, it has been difficult to prove impact due to the complex nature of place-based approaches and the issues they seek to address, and the long term time frame required to achieve change (Bellefontaine & Wisener, 2011). In addition, there is often unclear theory, data gaps, attribution issues and measurement challenges (see Bellefontaine & Wisener, 2011 for more detail). Evaluation funding and capacity has also hindered efforts to build the evidence base (Fry et al., 2014). Wilks and colleagues (2015) note particular gaps in both international and Australian place-based approaches in regards to causality, attribution, cost-effectiveness and how the approach works. Notwithstanding these challenges, a recent investigation into collective impact shows promising results. The study of 25 North American collective impact initiatives found that well designed and implemented collective impact efforts can produce positive population impacts (Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018).

Despite limited evidence about their efficacy, place-based approaches have 'proliferated' in Australia and there is recognition of their potential from government, research and practice alike (Department of Social Services [DSS], 2017; Smart, 2017a). A central issue plaguing their progression, however, is a lack of an accepted definition, set of key features and the underpinning theory of change and action (Bellefontaine & Wisener, 2011; Hogan et al., 2018b). Additionally, implementation frameworks are often criticised for ambiguity and the absence of instructions about how to apply a place-based approach (Hogan et al., 2018b). Contested understandings and terminology have created inconsistencies in how research is categorised and can limit the integration of relevant knowledge into policy, research and practice and hinder the growth of the evidence base. The wide-ranging disciplines associated with place-based research can further splinter knowledge and lead to challenges in locating and using relevant existing research. Collective impact provides a recent example of the missed opportunity to better integrate existing evidence into place-based approaches (Flood et al., 2015; Smart, 2017a; Wolff, 206).

Place-based approaches require long-term time frames and sufficient resources to achieve impact (Ware, Gronda, & Vitis, 2010). As their success requires sustained action across

multiple political cycles, they are vulnerable to changes in politics and policy, adding to the challenge (Ware et al., 2010). A final limitation is that place-based approaches alone cannot address the disparate causes of complex issues such as disadvantage. They must be combined with aligned macro policy interventions to create the necessary structural and systems changes (Ware et al., 2010).

### *2.4.3 Summary*

Place-based approaches are flexible, multi-faceted and collaborative responses that have been used in Australia and beyond to address complex issues such as disadvantage for several decades. Most recently, collective impact joins comprehensive community initiatives, area-based interventions, community change efforts and more as a member of the place-based approaches family. Despite the limited evidence of efficacy, place-based approaches remain a popular response for tackling a wide range of complex issues. Their potential impact is hindered by contested definitions and features, competing objectives, and a lack of ambiguity about 'how' to implement place-based approaches. Consensus about the core features, in particular, is a priority for advancing the design, implementation and evaluation of place-based approaches. Knowledge from different types of place-based approaches and different evidence sources may provide additional insights to the academic literature, given the typically modest research and evaluation undertaken in the Australian context.

## 2.5 Implications for the study

This chapter has established disadvantage as a wide-ranging challenge that blocks people from achieving a decent standard of living. Disadvantage manifests in different ways and can exert harmful effects over time. The costs imposed by disadvantage on individuals, families, communities and society at large demand a more effective response. However, the complex nature of disadvantage is proving resistant to various policy efforts and an alternative approach is needed to complement structural reform and overcome its multiple and interlocking causes.

Collaborative 'place-based' approaches show promise as a multi-faceted and flexible way of addressing disadvantage, but there is limited proof of concept and contested implementation frameworks. The lack of consensus about effective practices not only hinders the potential of place-based approaches to effect change, but also restricts the growth of knowledge across practice, policy, evaluation and research. There is an opportunity to clarify the key characteristics of promising place-based approaches, but a broad research approach is required to canvas the best available knowledge from a limited evidence base.

# Chapter 3.0 Research design and methods

Place-based approaches are a popular response to disadvantage and other complex issues. They have been used in different forms and in diverse contexts for several decades, which has established a broad knowledge base. However, definitions, theory and practical frameworks are contested and there are missed opportunities to incorporate existing knowledge into contemporary forms of place-based approaches and, in turn, improve the likelihood of positive impact.

In response to this problem, the study sought to clarify:

> *What characteristics are associated with promising place-based responses to disadvantage in the Australian context?*

This chapter sets out the study's design and methods used to answer the research question and produce a set of simple rules to enhance the application of place-based approaches to disadvantage in Australia.

## 3.1 Research aim and perspective

Despite the rich history of place-based approaches, there is a lack of consensus about what constitutes good practice. Various frameworks for place-based approaches offer different perspectives about important features and the research and/or theoretical assumptions on which they are based is often unclear or limited, as highlighted by the previous chapter. Moreover, guidance for implementing place-based approaches is ambiguous and can hinder the potential of this wide-spread intervention. There is a need to untangle the core pieces of evidence across different types of place-based approaches to improve the design, development and evaluation of place-based approaches. Establishing areas of consensus across the literature will provide a framework for advancing and accelerating future research, policy and practice efforts.

The study's aim was therefore to clarify the key characteristics of promising place-based approaches to improve the design, development and evaluation of responses to disadvantage. There were two objectives. The first was to identify the common characteristics of promising place-based approaches to clarify core evidence and promote the transferability of knowledge across different conceptual frameworks. The second was to translate these results into flexible and actionable guidelines to support place-based approaches to disadvantage in the Australian context.

The study's approach and methods were shaped by a pragmatic frame, which privileged meaningful results that could enable action ahead of perfect knowledge (Creswell, 2009). The pragmatic perspective recognised the practical limits of the thesis, such as time, and helped to design and execute feasible research procedures. This was particularly important given the complex nature of place-based approaches and disadvantage, which are multi-dimensional, interconnected, emergent and unpredictable, as discussed in Chapter Two. The study also embraced complexity theory, which gave the study the flexibility to refine and adjust the research focus over time as new understandings unfolded, and to explore new relationships and types of place-based approaches as they emerged. The study's pragmatic and complexity lenses lent themselves to a focus on 'promising' place-based approaches, or those with lower levels of evidence, to promote the inclusion of relevant studies given the limited evidence base and evaluation challenges.

### 3.2 Research design

Stand-alone literature reviews are a suitable method for aggregating, interpreting, explaining or integrating existing research (Rousseau, Manning, & Denyer, 2008). As the study sought to clarify core pieces of evidence across place-based approaches, a stand-alone literature review was selected as an appropriate and credible approach for identifying the key characteristics of place-based approaches and answering the study's research question.

Literature review methodology should be informed by the purpose of the study and the type of literature (Xiao & Watson, 2019). The purpose of this study was to clarify the key characteristics of promising place-based approaches to inform the design, development and evaluation of place-based approaches responding to disadvantage in the Australian context. The study sought to achieve this aim by generating holistic, meaningful and saturated research findings, which involved synthesising diverse and complex literature about place-based approaches, often involving qualitative data. The study initially selected a best fit framework synthesis (Carroll, Booth, & Leaviss, & Rick, 2013) as the literature review's approach, informed by Xiao and Watson's (2019) systematic literature review typology and recommendations. The question used as a starting point for the research was:

> *What characteristics are associated with promising place-based responses to disadvantage in the Australian context?*

A best fit framework synthesis offers an efficient method for synthesising diverse literature by mapping empirical studies against an a priori theoretical framework (Caroll et al., 2013). The study therefore sought to develop a theoretical a priori framework as a first step. However, exploratory searches of the literature identified increasingly diverse types of place-based approaches and it became apparent that it was no longer efficient to develop a theoretical a priori framework and that there was a need to examine the theoretical literature in greater depth than had been attempted up until this point in time. The best fit framework synthesis approach was further challenged by the small number of empirical studies examining the impact of place-based approaches that were located in the exploratory searches. Insights gained from the exploratory searches therefore adapted the study's literature review approach.

The refined approach shares many similarities with qualitative systematic reviews or qualitative evidence syntheses, which consistent with the study's aim, are typically used to broaden understanding or generate theory (Grant & Booth, 2009). Qualitative systematic reviews integrate or compare findings across qualitative studies, may employ purposive sampling, typically appraise the quality of messages rather than the studies, and use thematic analysis that may include conceptual models (Grant & Booth, 2009). There are different views about the appropriateness of adopting qualitative research concepts such as emergence, non-linearity and purposive sampling to systematic reviews (Grant & Booth, 2009). However, guided by the study's pragmatic approach and Xiao and Watson's (2019) advice that "reviewers should not be constrained by or 'siloed' into synthesis methodologies" (p.11), the study chose methods best suited to its purpose, research question and literature type.

Inspired by standards developed for meta-narrative reviews (see Wong, Greenhalgh, Westhorp, Buckingham, & Pawson, 2013), a literature review method for the synthesis of complex bodies of literature, the study identified a set of principles to guide method selection and execution and promote validity and trustworthiness. They included:

1. Pragmatism—privilege methods and decisions that promote useful and actionable knowledge (Creswell, 2009)
2. Emergence—adopt an iterative approach to allow for adaptation as knowledge grows (Patton, 2015)
3. Pluralism—appreciate and illuminate different knowledge and perspectives (Greenhalgh & Wong, 2013)
4. Reflexivity—embrace regular reflection to enhance understanding and quality (Greenhalgh & Wong, 2013).

These principles shaped decisions about the study's procedures, including the exploratory literature searches, an evolving search strategy, flexible selection and appraisal processes, purposeful sampling, iterative data extraction and analysis, and sensitivity checking, as outlined in the following section. These strategies are also well suited to qualitative literature reviews (Finfgeld-Connett & Johnson, 2013). Figure 1 summarises the study's literature review approach, including the principal research question, guiding principles and procedures.

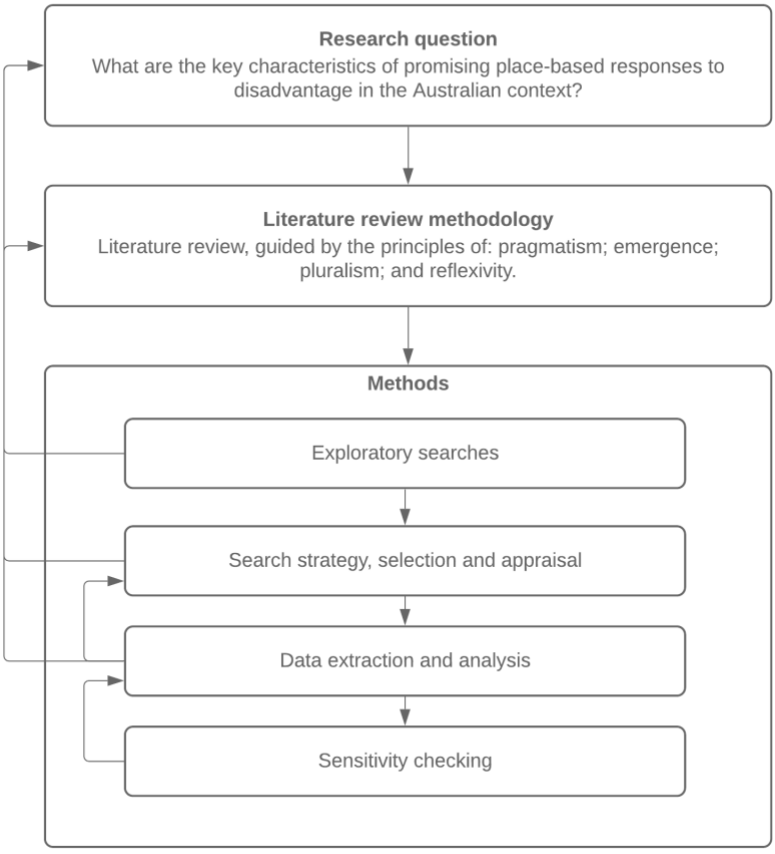


**Figure 1: Research design**

## 3.3 Research procedures

The guiding principles' effects on study procedures is provided in Table 1 followed by further detail about each procedure.

**Table 1: Guiding principles and study implications**

| Guiding principle | Methodological implications |
|---|---|
| **Pragmatism** | • Flexibility was given to the search strategy, inclusion criteria, data extraction, analysis and synthesis processes.<br>• Search methods beyond traditional academic database searches were used to locate eligible documents.<br>• Search methods did not seek comprehensive coverage of the literature, consistent with the study's purpose.<br>• Subject matter experts and personal knowledge gained through research projects on similar topics were used to locate seminal articles.<br>• Inclusion criteria focused on relevance and drew on the researcher's judgement about quality. |
| **Emergence** | • Literature review methodology, research question and objective were refined as a deeper understanding of the phenomenon was gained.<br>• Preliminary scoping of the literature was undertaken to inform the search strategy.<br>• Inclusion criteria were refined as the study progressed.<br>• Iterative searching, extraction and analysis processes were used. |
| **Pluralism** | • Different types of place-based approaches and research disciplines were actively sought.<br>• Grey literature and literature drawing on practice evidence were included to offer additional insights to the academic literature and research evidence. |
| **Reflexivity** | • The researcher frequently reflected on the findings and methodology and used memos and notes to document emerging insights and adaptations. |

### *3.3.1 Exploratory searches*

Initially the study undertook exploratory searches of the literature to locate theoretical frameworks for the best fit framework synthesis, which were used to inform the search strategy design. These searches were inclusive of academic and grey literature and involved multiple databases, varied search strings and targeted grey literature search engines such as Analysis and Policy Observatory. Preliminary academic database searches produced high numbers of records, but initial screening suggested many articles were of limited relevance. Grey literature searches revealed substantial documents of varying quality and relevance. Together, these findings suggested exhaustive coverage was not feasible and flexible appraisal methods were needed to ensure grey literature could be included within the review. They also highlighted inconsistent terminology across academic and grey literature and that the study's results may be limited if a fixed search protocol was employed.

### *3.3.2 Search strategy, selection and appraisal*

The search strategy sought to generate holistic, meaningful and saturated research findings rather than comprehensively cover the literature. The study therefore used an iterative search strategy, emergent selection and appraisal processes, and purposive sampling, described as follows.

#### *Search strategy*

Multiple search tactics are recommended for complex and heterogenous bodies of evidence (Greenhalgh & Peacock, 2005; Greenhalgh, Wong, Westhorp, & Pawson, 2011) and knowledge-building systematic qualitative reviews (Finfgeld-Connett & Johnson, 2013). In

addition, snowballing techniques are likely to be more effective and efficient than fixed database searches when searching complex and heterogenous literature (Greenhalgh & Peacock, 2005). The search strategy therefore incorporated the three tactics of seminal articles, backwards and forwards snowballing, and protocol driven database searches, as shown in Figure 2.

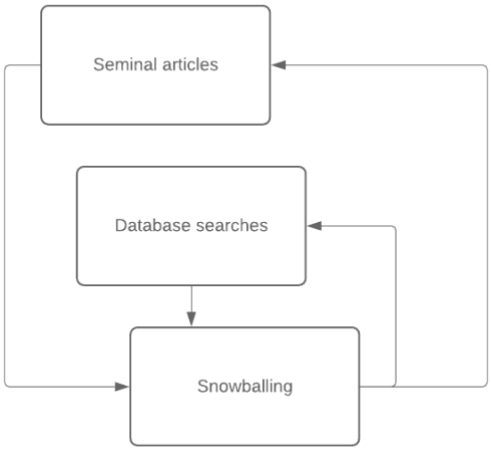


**Figure 2: Search strategy components**

The search commenced by identifying seminal articles, which were defined as conceptual or empirical publications that were perceived to have been influential in understanding, designing or implementing place-based approaches for practice, policy or researchers. To identify seminal articles, five subject matter experts were identified through the researcher's networks, contacted via email and asked to nominate seminal articles. The researcher's personal knowledge of the literature, informed by several research projects with a similar subject matter, was also used to locate seminal articles. These foundational documents sought to build core knowledge about the topic and to help inform and refine the searching process.

The search then applied backwards and forwards snowballing to the seminal articles. Backwards snowballing involved scanning the reference lists of full text papers and using the researcher's own judgement to determine whether to pursue further or not. Forwards snowballing involved using special citation tracking databases (Web of Science and Google Scholar) to locate subsequent publications of seminal articles published more than three years ago. Only backwards snowballing was applied to the results of database searches to manage the study's scope and feasibility.

Protocol-driven database searches, including academic databases and Google Scholar, complemented the above tactics. Academic database searches were informed by librarian consultation and involved electronic searches of three academic databases: Web of Science; Proquest Central; and Proquest dissertations and theses. These searches were undertaken with the Boolean search terms adjusted according to the search options of each database. Proquest dissertations and theses was specifically selected to capture research into a recent type of place-based approach, collective impact, first published in 2011. The following search terms were combined by AND to form a search string, entered under 'key words' in the academic databases with limits to English language, publication date (the year 2000 or beyond) and peer-reviewed articles:

- "place based" OR "collective impact" OR "community coalition" OR coalition OR collabor* OR partnership,

- "health promotion" OR prevention OR "community development",
- "best practi*e*" OR "effective" OR "efficacy" OR "evidence", and
- framework OR model OR principle* OR feature*.

Google Scholar was searched to identify relevant academic and grey literature. For pragmatic reasons, Google Scholar results were scanned until five consecutive pages of no relevant results were reached. Search terms were:

- "collective impact" OR "place based" AND practice OR implementation OR principles OR features OR framework.

The reference lists of retrieved full text papers were scanned and the researcher's own judgement used to determine whether to pursue further. As described above, forwards snowballing was not applied to database search results. All duplicates were removed.

*Selection techniques*

The inclusion criteria were deliberately broad in the early stages of the study to ensure relevant types of place-based approaches and different research disciplines were captured. This meant place-based approaches targeting complex social problems other than disadvantage and such approaches implemented in contexts other than Australia were included. Identified documents were assessed against the following inclusion criteria:

- Published in English.
- Published in 2000 or later.
- Any country of origin.
- The document is about a promising or effective place-based approach, defined as a collaborative approach involving multiple sectors addressing a complex problem.
- The document is about any type of complex social problem.
- The document develops, tests or explores a place-based approach framework, model or theory or the factors contributing to promising or effective place-based approaches.
- Full text file available through the University of Melbourne library access or publicly available website.

*Appraisal processes*

Fixed quality criteria were difficult to apply due to the nature of the literature and the mix of theoretical and empirical documents. Appraisal processes therefore largely concerned 'relevance' to the research question (Wong, Greenhalgh, Westhorp, & Pawson, 2014). Consideration was also given to 'rigour' or credible and trustworthy data (Wong et al., 2014) in that a number of eligible documents were noted to make minor adaptations to pre-existing models. These documents were excluded unless they produced noteworthy adaptations. Consistent with the study's guiding principle of pluralism, influential models informed by substantial practice-based evidence, rather than research evidence, were not excluded on the basis of rigour. However, documents that did not meet one or more of the following criteria were excluded: peer-reviewed; informed by a comprehensive literature review; or informed by substantial practice-based evidence.

As an increasing number of documents were located through the iterative search methods, there was a need to further limit the study's documents to ensure the study did not become unwieldy. Due to the number of eligible articles, the inclusion criteria was modified to include only place-based approaches focused on complex social problems, rather than other types of complex problems. This helped to discern the most relevant documents for the study.

### *3.3.3 Data extraction and analysis*

The following document characteristics were extracted during full text scanning and recorded in Microsoft Excel, providing transparency about the included articles and enabling the potential development of post-hoc criteria. They included:

- author/s, year of publication, title,
- country of origin,
- document source (primary research, secondary research or grey literature),
- type of place-based approach (as described by the author/s),
- type of problem (e.g. locational disadvantage; systems change; community wellbeing),
- setting,
- design, methods, sampling approach (if available),
- main findings about key characteristics, and
- relationship to other documents (e.g. included studies).

Comments about the document's quality were also recorded in this spreadsheet to enable further sorts if required.

Several attempts to develop a data extraction template relating to the 'main findings about key characteristics' were made. For example, earlier categories included antecedents, processes, outcomes, principles, relationships between characteristics and importance of these characteristics. However, this approach was felt to be inefficient and reductionist given the complex and variable nature of the literature and instead 'main findings about characteristics' were extracted into word and imported into NVivo12.

The data was analysed thematically using an iterative process, which involved familiarisation with the literature and the gradual development of themes at a descriptive level. Once higher-level themes emerged across the data, themes were organised as 'characteristics' within a table, with an accompanying narrative that defined the characteristic and its attributes, how it influenced the quality of place-based approaches, and the relationships with other characteristics or influences. Sensitivity checking was then undertaken (see 3.3.6 below).

As a final step, the study's results were interpreted through a complexity theory lens to ensure results were theoretically coherent with the complex nature of disadvantage. This involved the development of a set of simple rules, or non-prescriptive guidelines, often used by complexity theorists for managing complex situations (Holden, 2005). The following recommendations for generating simple rules informed their development:

- Focus on matters of greatest importance.
- Enable user discretion, but provide sufficient direction.
- Ensure the rules are modifiable.
- Limit the total number of simple rules (Sull & Eisenhardt, 2012).

### *3.3.6 Sensitivity checking*

Carroll and colleagues (2013) recommend qualitative evidence syntheses seek negative or disconfirming cases to test the robustness, representativeness and validity of results. Negative cases of the study's identified characteristics were therefore sought by re-scanning all included documents and any instances were recorded. The study's results were also assessed for sensitivity to document variables including country of origin, type of place-based approach, age of publication and study duplication.

## 3.4 Summary

The study was designed to clarify the key characteristics of promising place-based approaches to advance the design, development and evaluation of place-based responses to disadvantage in Australia. As there is a rich body of existing knowledge, but one that is highly contested, the study undertook a literature review to identify features of consensus across different types of place-based approaches. Qualitative systematic reviews with a knowledge building purpose are emergent in nature and depart from the linear processes used in more traditional systematic reviews (Finfgeld-Connett & Johnson, 2013). As this study sought to advance knowledge about the characteristics of promising place-based approaches, iterative processes were undertaken that allowed for meaningful and holistic findings to emerge. Research procedures were also guided by the principles of pragmatism, reflexivity and pluralism to promote rigour and relevance. The study's procedures searched, identified, appraised, analysed and synthesised the literature to produce a set of simple rules or flexible guidelines for place-based approaches addressing disadvantage in the Australian context. The following chapter sets out these findings.

# Chapter 4.0 Results

Recent frameworks for place-based approaches have failed to capitalise on the rich and diverse knowledge base built over the last few decades. There is a need to synthesise existing knowledge to overcome contested typologies and provide clarity about the characteristics of promising place-based approaches to advance policy, practice, evaluation and research efforts.

This chapter outlines results from the literature searches and interprets the findings through a complexity lens, providing a set of simple rules for place-based approaches responding to disadvantage in the Australian context. Appendix A provides supplementary information about the study's included literature.

## 4.1 Search results

Searches of academic and grey literature, as well as expert recommendations, identified more than 4000 records. After the removal of duplicates, 223 documents were acquired and assessed against the inclusion criteria, including those identified through backwards and forwards snowballing. Eligible documents were sorted twice. The first sort excluded 160 documents on the basis of relevance to the research question and consideration of rigour (see Chapter Three for details). The second sort excluded a further 23 documents on the basis of relevance, which had evolved due to a modification of the inclusion criterion from place-based approaches addressing complex problems to place-based approaches addressing complex *social* problems, and greater familiarity with the literature. The author's personal knowledge of the literature identified one additional grey literature document published towards the study's conclusion, which was included in the study. Figure 3 displays the study's flow chart.

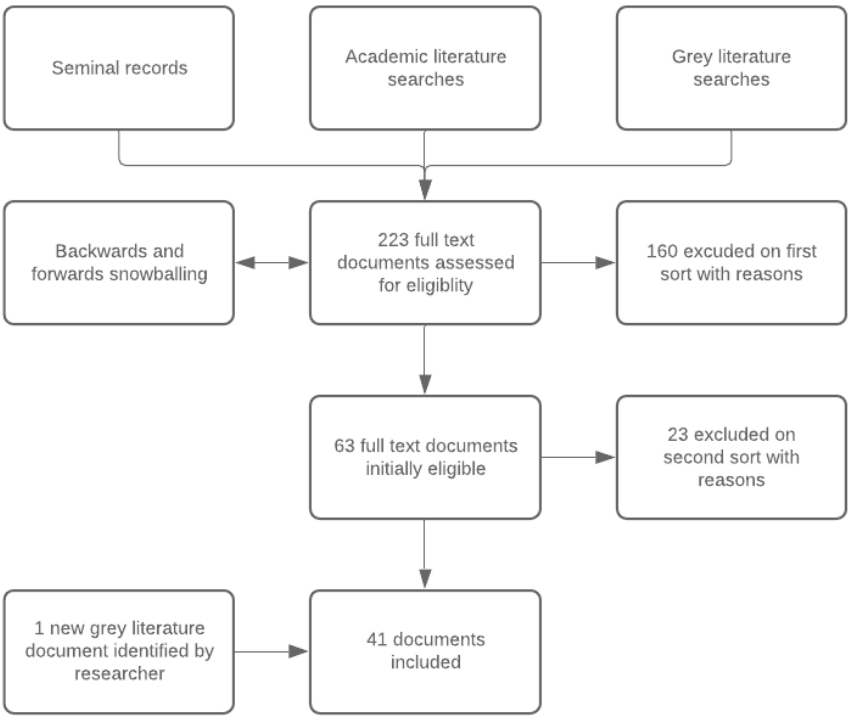


**Figure 3: Study flow chart**

The breakdown of included document sources is detailed in Table 2. Primary research refers to original empirical studies published in peer-reviewed articles, dissertations and theses and evaluation reports. Secondary research is defined as literature reviews or theoretical articles published in peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. Grey literature refers to non-peer reviewed literature reviews, policy documents, government reports, working papers, practice briefs and practice guidelines. Most of the publications were secondary research (n = 16), followed closely by grey literature (n = 15) and primary research (n = 10). These results are reflective of the limited empirical evidence for place-based approaches and the study's focus on locating existing reviews and theoretical models to gain insights across different types of place-based approaches.

**Table 2: Type of included documents by search method**

| Search method | Document source | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Primary research | Secondary research | Grey literature | |
| **Expert recommendations** | 2 | 1 | 8 | **11** |
| **Snowballing** | 5 | 11 | 5 | **21** |
| **Protocol driven searches** | 3 | 4 | 1 | **8** |
| **Identified by researcher** | 0 | 0 | 1 | **1** |
| **Total included** | **10** | **16** | **15** | **41** |

Adapted from Greenhalgh and Peacock (2005)

As the study's search methods initially focused on identifying seminal articles through expert recommendations and backwards and forwards snowballing from eligible articles, these methods generated high numbers of included sources (11 included documents were located through expert recommendations and 21 included documents from snowballing). In comparison, protocol driven searches identified eight included documents, noting that duplicates were excluded from this figure.

## 4.2 Document characteristics

Included documents are summarised in Appendix A, including the authors, document source, type of place-based approach (as described by the author/s), country of origin, type of issue addressed by the place-based approach, design, context or setting, sample, main findings and connection to other included documents. All documents were published between 2000 and 2018 and met the study's inclusion criteria of addressing a complex social problem using cross sector collaboration. All issues were complex social problems, spanning disadvantage and social inclusion, community wellbeing and health, domestic violence, crime and other health specific issues (e.g. tobacco use, obesity, children's development). All documents referenced collaboration involving multiple sectors, but the extent to which community organisations or local residents/citizens comprised one such sector was not always clear.

Terms used to describe the type of place-based approach were diverse. They were grouped into the following categories: collaboration (n = 12); collective impact (n = 11); community coalition (n = 5); place-based initiative (n = 7); systems change (n = 2); and other (n = 4). The particular classification of place-based approach, however, did not appear to indicate any fundamental difference in the approach. Document country of origin spanned US (n = 27), Australia (n = 9), Canada (n = 4) and Brazil (n = 1). However, secondary research documents and several grey literature documents included studies from various countries, including the

UK, several European countries, New Zealand, South Africa and global/world-wide initiatives. Included Australian documents favoured terminology relating to place-based initiatives (seven of 10 included documents). Included US documents were more diverse in terminology use, but were most commonly represented by the terms of collaboration (33 per cent), collective impact (26 per cent) and community coalitions (19 per cent). Table 3 displays the different terms used by included documents and their country of origin.

**Table 3: Type of place-based approaches and country of origin included in the study**

| Category | Author's description | Country of origin | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | US | Australia | Other | |
| **Collaboration** | Collaboration/s | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| | Collaborative | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Collaborative partnership | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Collaborative governance | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Community collaborative | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Community-based collaboration | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Cross-sector collaboration | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | **Sub-total** | **9** | **1** | **2** | **12** |
| **Collective impact** | Collective impact | 7 | 2 | 2 | 11 |
| | **Sub-total** | **7** | **2** | **2** | **11** |
| **Community coalition** | Community coalition | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | **Sub-total** | **5** | **0** | **0** | **5** |
| **Place-based initiative** | Place-based initiative/approach | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| | Place-based approach and collective impact | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| | Place-based service delivery initiative/approach | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Location-based initiative | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | **Sub-total** | **1** | **6** | **0** | **7** |
| **Systems change** | Systems change | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Systems of care | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | **Sub-total** | **2** | **0** | **0** | **2** |
| **Other** | Comprehensive community initiative | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Learning community | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Community health governance | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Not specified | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | **Sub-total** | **3** | **0** | **1** | **4** |
| **Total** | | **27** | **9** | **5** | **41** |

Primary studies employed a range of designs including cross-sectional, case study, quasi-experimental and mixed methods. Secondary and grey literature documents broadly employed theoretical innovation (incorporating either research and/or practice evidence), literature review and other type of review methods (e.g. policy review). Theoretical

innovation was generally supported by literature reviews, except for the collective impact models (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Hanleybrown et al., 2012; Cabaj & Weaver, 2016), which were derived from practical evidence and research methods not specified. Literature reviews often included both empirical and theoretical literature. Tactics to minimise the duplication of studies and information were employed, however several reviews were used within other documents included in this study (see Appendix A for detail). The most frequently repeated documents were Roussos and Fawcett's (2000) literature review (five occasions) and Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson and Allen's (2001) literature review (three occasions). This issue is discussed in further detail in 'sensitivity checking' in this chapter.

In summary, the study drew on 41 documents that included primary and secondary research and grey literature sources and were a mix of theoretical and/or empirical studies. The documents spanned multiple types of place-based approaches addressing complex social problems through cross sector collaboration. Together, all but five of the study's documents originated in the US or Australia, but drew on primary sources in a broader number of countries. Research designs varied in quality, reflective of the research and evaluation challenges faced by place-based approaches.

## 4.3 Key characteristics of promising place-based approaches

Individual documents described characteristics of promising place-based approaches addressing complex issues in diverse ways. For example, terms used to describe leadership included systems leadership, facilitative leadership, collaborative leadership, adaptive leadership, adaptive management and leadership. The definitions of these terms, and their associated properties or attributes, were not always clear nor consistent. Despite the variation, there were some prominent themes about factors that were likely to facilitate positive results. This study defined characteristics of promising place-based approaches as factors that were consistently associated with promising or successful place-based approaches and had very few or no negative cases across the included documents. The following characteristics were identified: trusting relationships; facilitative leadership; shared vision and goals; diverse participation and inclusive processes; effective communication; community engagement; sufficient resources; supportive governance structures and processes; holistic planning; multi-level capacity building; and effective learning. These characteristics were described as interdependent and interrelated, and reasons for their importance were often not studied or theorised. They are described in further detail as follows.

### *4.3.1 Trusting relationships*

Trusting relationships between people and organisations was commonly identified as both a fundamental condition for, and by-product of, promising place-based approaches (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Collective Impact Forum, 2016; Crooks et al., 2018; Flood et al., 2015; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Gillam, Counts, & Garstka, 2016; Homel, Freiberg, & Branch, 2015; Salignac et al. 2017; Stolp et al., 2017; Twiss, Kleinman, & Hafey, 2013). Alongside trust, common elements of effective relationships were respect, inclusivity, openness, reciprocity and authenticity (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Keast & Mandell, 2014; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Moore & Fry, 2011). Trusting relationships were seen to be the central mechanism for achieving success because they enabled coordination and collaboration (Crooks et al. 2018; Gillam et al., 2016). More specifically, trusting relationships were reported to promote: meaningful dialogue; the sharing of honest perspectives; a shared purpose and collective orientation to the work; a sense of belonging; access to information and resources; learning; accountability; conflict resolution; decision-making efficiency; and increased social capital and networks (Cramer, Atwood, & Stoner,

2006; Danaher, 2011; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Salignac et al., 2017; Seaton et al., 2017; Tonelli, Sant'Anna, Barcelar Abbud, & Aparecida de Souza, 2018; Wilks et al., 2015). Together, these effects help to create an effective working culture and climate in which members are engaged, satisfied and committed and therefore promote the viability and sustainability of the initiative (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Salignac et al., 2017; Seaton et al., 2017; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006).

Given the dynamic nature of communities and the importance of relationships, ongoing relationship building efforts was reported to be a critical aspect of promising place-based approaches (Bryson et al., 2006; Hogan et al., 2018b; Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact (2018); Tonelli et al., 2018). This includes a focus on internal members as well as external stakeholders such as underrepresented groups or sectors, influential leaders and policy makers (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hogan et al., 2018b; Salignac et al., 2017). Relationship building was noted to require resources and time (DSS, 2017; Moore et al., 2014; Salignac et al., 2017; Seaton et al., 2017). Forming networks with similarly focused place-based approaches was also seen to be beneficial in terms of improving access to relevant knowledge and information (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001).

In sum, relationships characterised by trust, respect, cooperation, openness and authenticity were identified as a fundamental feature of promising place-based approaches. Success requires ongoing efforts to build relationships between individuals and organisations, especially with underrepresented groups or sectors. Trusting relationships are tightly coupled with facilitative leadership, community engagement and communication.

### *4.3.2 Facilitative leadership*

Leadership was one of the most commonly identified characteristics of promising place-based approaches, supported by primary research (e.g. Allen, 2005; Flood et al., 2015; Hey, 2017; Keast & Mandell, 2014; Nowell & Foster-Fishman, 2011; Salignac et al., 2017; Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018) and numerous literature reviews (e.g. Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Seaton et al., 2017; Stolp et al., 2017; Tonelli et al., 2018; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). However, the identified key qualities, functions or competencies and their descriptions varied widely. Aspects of leadership covered by the literature included: management; organisational skills; communication; negotiation; framing; advocacy; visioning; cultural competence; facilitation and convening; networking; engagement and relationship building; and decision making (Allen, 2005; Collective Impact Forum, 2016.; Danaher, 2011; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Jolin, Schmitz, & Seldon, 2012; Keast & Mandell, 2014; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Seaton et al., 2017; Tonelli et al., 2018).

Most documents described a form of facilitative leadership that appreciates and engages diverse perspectives, uses inclusive processes, builds trust, draws on the distributed knowledge and insights of members, and shares power in decision-making (Allen, 2005; Butterfoss & Kegler, 2012; Bryson et al., 2006; Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Moore & Fry, 2011; Moore et al., 2014; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Salignac et al., 2017; Seaton et al., 2017; Tonelli et al., 2018; Twiss et al., 2013). Several collective impact documents referred to this style of leadership as 'systems leadership', which also seeks to foster shared understandings of the 'big picture' (Collective Impact Forum, 2016; Weaver, 2016). Some literature indicated managerial approaches, which coordinate action and direct processes, were needed to complement a facilitative approach (Keast & Mandell, 2014; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006).

The literature highlighted that different leadership skills are likely to be needed at different stages of development. For example, at earlier stages listening and facilitation skills may be particularly important as part of the engagement process. At later stages, advocacy and negotiation skills may be useful for building acceptability and organisational support for particular strategies (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). The wide range of leadership skills and qualities required for success, as well as the likely changes in membership over time, suggests that dispersed leadership and leadership development are important factors for promising place-based approaches (Bryson et al., 2006; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). Place-based approaches with leadership diversification may be "less vulnerable to manipulation, reduced efficacy or dissolution" (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000, p. 386).

Diverse leadership was also seen to offer other benefits to place-based approaches, such as promoting increased legitimacy and a broad base of support. Many documents reported securing the engagement of a mix of influential leaders, such as local leaders and sponsors, was important for building trust and relationships different sectors (Bryson et al., 2006; Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable, 2016; Hanleybrown et al., 2012; Salignac et al., 2017). Sponsors with authority were seen to play a crucial role in removing barriers or accessing resources, while local leaders and champions helped to promote engagement, momentum and achievement of goals (Bryson et al., 2006; Salignac et al., 2017).

Overall, effective leadership appears to be a particularly salient factor and may contribute to an improved working climate and culture, increased member satisfaction and broader community participation, and in turn the achievement of results (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). Loss of leadership may adversely affect the rate of community change (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). Facilitative leadership closely intersects with all other common facilitators identified in this study.

### *4.3.3 Shared vision and goals*

A shared vision that transcends individual and organisational interests and unites stakeholders around a common purpose or mission was associated with positive results for place-based approaches (Allen, 2005; Crooks et al., 2018; Flood et al., 2015; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hey, 2017; Kubisch, Auspos, Brown, & Dewar, 2010; Moore et al., 2014; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Salignac et al., 2017; Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018). The vision should be engaging to foster motivation and support (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Jolin et al., 2012.; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000) and sufficiently ambitious so that collaboration is perceived to be vital for success (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Seaton et al., 2017; Tonelli et al., 2018). In addition to developing a shared vision and mission, it is also important to establish shared, clear and attainable goals (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Jolin et al., 2012; Kubisch et al., 2010; Tonelli et al., 2018). Common goals provide direction and help to align action and resources and (Danaher; 2011; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Salignac et al., 2017). They can be particularly important when there is a history of mistrust between partners (Seaton et al., 2017), as they can be broken down to clarify expectations about the extent and pace of change over time and provide milestones along the way (Kubisch et al., 2010). Collective impact documents typically framed a shared vision, mission and goals as a common agenda (Kania & Kramer, 2011), which was perceived to be a critical input for achieving population impacts in multiple initiatives (Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018).

The process of developing a shared vision and goals was suggested to be as critical as the product because it builds a foundation for working together (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001;

Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). Broad participation from cross sector stakeholders and community was identified as an important element of the process (Bryson et al., 2006; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Salignac et al., 2017). Some documents with a focus on systems change tended to focus on problem definition rather than visioning, but involved similar dialogic processes with multiple stakeholders (Foster-Fishman, Nowell, & Yang, 2007; Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2012).

Leadership abilities were unanimously considered to influence the development of a shared vision and goals (e.g. Salignac et al., 2017). Time, linked closely to trust and relationships, was noted to be an enabler of a shared vision and goals where it was sufficient or a constraint where it was restricted (Seaton et al., 2017). Because divergent interests can cause tension and inhibit collaboration in the long term, regular review of the vision and goals was reported to be important to address any unresolved differences in perspectives and address emerging concerns (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Tonelli et al., 2018). The review process was also suggested to aid the engagement of new stakeholders and retain the focus of the partnership (Kubisch et al., 2010). Building commitment to the vision and goals therefore occurs throughout the lifespan of the initiative, particularly given the likely change in actors and context over time.

Overall, a shared vision and goals was seen to be important for engaging and mobilising partners, focusing action and resources, and reducing conflicting agendas and opposition (Moore et al., 2014; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Seaton et al., 2017; Tonelli et al., 2018). It was closely related to diverse participation and facilitative leadership.

#### *4.3.4 Diverse participation and inclusive processes*

Diverse stakeholders were described as an important feature of place-based approaches so as to ensure wide ranging expertise and perspectives. Participants should include people from different backgrounds, organisations, disciplines, levels and parts of the community (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Collective Impact Forum, 2016; Cramer et al., 2016; DSS, 2017; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hogan et al., 2018b; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Moore & Fry, 2011; Moore et al., 2014; Salignac et al., 2017). Participants should also reflect the demographic diversity of the community and include people most affected by the issue/s (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2012; Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable, 2016; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Twiss et al., 2013; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006) (see community engagement for further detail). In the Australian context, Hogan and colleagues (2018b) argue multi-level government participation is also critically important due to government's role as a major funder of place-based approaches, services and infrastructure and its role in influencing policy and practice change.

Diverse participation requires skills in engagement, facilitation, communication, consensus building and conflict resolution (Bryson et al., 2006; Butterfoss & Kegler, 2012; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hogan et al., 2018b; Seaton et al., 2017). Gillam and colleagues (2016) report that developing rules of engagement and guidelines for working together can facilitate increased trust and greater tolerance for ambiguity. Hey (2017) indicated tools such as social network analysis and power mapping could help to identify gaps or issues in stakeholder dynamics that may challenge diversity. Several documents highlighted the need to remove practical barriers that may hinder broad participation such as transportation, financial reimbursement and translation services (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Lasker & Weiss, 2003).

The literature highlighted several challenges associated with diverse perspectives and a loss of autonomy. These included: differences in values, interests and preferences; high transaction costs; power differentials; and conflict (Bryson et al., 2006; Hogan et al., 2018b; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Seaton et al., 2017). The literature also cautions that participation must provide the opportunity to influence, which requires the sharing of decision making with less powerful participants (Collective Impact Forum, 2016; Lasker & Weiss, 2003) and can be facilitated and constrained by attitudes, behaviours, processes and structures (Bryson et al., 2006; Flood et al., 2015; Kubisch et al., 2010).

Diverse participation is important for several reasons. First, it enables the pooling of resources (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2012). Lasker and Weiss (2003) note partnerships with diverse participants have a greater variety of nonfinancial resources than partnerships with high homogeneity. Second, diverse perspectives, knowledge and expertise creates opportunities for synergy or breakthroughs in thinking and action (Bryson et al., 2006; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Lasker & Weiss, 2003) and facilitates a holistic view of the situation (Collective Impact Forum, 2016). These diverse perspectives can help to mitigate 'siloing', often associated with unsuccessful attempts at collaboration (Salignac et al., 2017). Third, diverse participation encourages broad-based support and ownership, critical for legitimacy and sustainability (Hogan et al., 2018b; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). Fourth, it can contribute to capacity building at an individual and community level (Lasker & Weiss, 2003). Fifth, diverse participation can bridge social ties and build relationships between people (Lasker & Weiss, 2003). Finally, it can help create public value by ensuring a focus on public benefits rather than pursuit of an individual organisation's agenda (Bryson et al., 2006; Hogan et al., 2018b).

The results therefore indicate cross sector participation fostered by inclusive processes is an essential characteristic of successful place-based approaches. It influences all other characteristics and is heavily influenced by the style and quality of leadership, relationships and connections, community engagement, communication and governance.

#### *4.3.5 Effective communication*

Informal and formal communication processes that promote the timely sharing of information, dialogue and deliberation, successfully resolve conflict, build trust and motivation, and contribute to individual and organisational knowledge learning were associated with promising place-based approaches (Flood et al., 2015; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Gillam et al., 2016; Salignac et al., 2017; Seaton et al., 2017; Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). Given the importance of diverse participation, multiple communication channels and a focus on both external and internal communication were suggested to enhance communication. Examples of channels included social media, personal connections, online platforms and face to face meetings (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Salignac et al., 2017). Communication mechanisms were required at both the organisational and individual level (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2012; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001) and should be regularly reviewed in light of new information and changes in the environment (Salignac et al., 2017).

The promotion of the place-based approach and its achievements to community groups, funders and influential leaders was reported as another critical communication function. Outwards communication was seen as important for building and maintaining legitimacy, commitment and human and financial support (Bryson et al., 2006; Roussos & Fawcett,

2000; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006), which in turn was enabled by regular documentation and evaluation of success (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000).

Open and frequent communication was perceived to require considerable resources and time, especially given the need to cater to the different preferences and styles of diverse actors within a place-based approach (Kubisch et al., 2010). The development of common terminology (Kania & Kramer, 2011), use of accessible language (Danaher, 2011) and reducing the formality of communication (Lasker & Weiss, 2003) was seen to enhance communication, especially with local citizens.

Communication is closely linked to trusting relationships, diverse participation and inclusive processes and it is suggested that the interplay of these factors can be the critical success factor, rather than one standalone characteristic (Gillam et al., 2016).

#### *4.3.6 Community engagement*

Community engagement or citizen involvement in place-based approaches was discussed widely across the literature, positioned as both a value or philosophy and a set of actions (Kubisch et al., 2010; Wolff et al., 2017). Despite little empirical evidence of its contribution to long-term impacts, there was general consensus that meaningful community engagement is a key characteristic of place-based approaches (e.g. Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; DSS, 2017; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hogan et al., 2018b; Kubisch et al., 2010; Salignac et al., 2017; Wilks et al., 2015).

Documents described community involvement in aspects such as governance, planning, implementation and evaluation (e.g. Collective Impact Forum, 2016; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001), but varied in the extent of involvement described. For example, some documents referred to community 'input' (e.g. Seaton et al., 2017), whereas others argued for higher levels of involvement, depicting the role of community members as 'active participants' (e.g. Wilks et al., 2015), equal partners in decision making (e.g. DSS, 2017) or in control of decision making (e.g. Wolff et al., 2017). Moore and colleagues (2014) described the differences in community engagement as a spectrum of community control, with community engagement at one end and community empowerment and ownership at the other. Christens and Inzeo (2015) theorise that a smaller focus on citizen engagement is appropriate for initiatives seeking to achieve greater alignment and interorganisational service coordination. If the intention, however, is to reorganise or reorient institutions, then more extensive engagement of community, intentional consideration of power and skilled management of conflict is required (Christens & Inzeo, 2015). In the Australian context, Hogan and colleagues (2018b) argue there is a strong temptation for place-based approaches to emphasise community development as the central design principle. However, because of the strong role of government in the funding, design and delivery of services in Australia, Hogan et al. (2018b) suggest that shared decision making powers between community and government are needed to retain government's interest in the development and sustainability of place-based approaches.

Community engagement requires a variety of mechanisms (Salignac et al., 2017) and consideration of the community's diversity to ensure representative engagement (Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable, 2016). The engagement of less powerful community members or groups requires skills, time and effort (e.g. Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018). It also requires strategies and skills for managing power imbalances that may hinder participation (Bryson et al., 2006; Hey, 2017), overlapping with the dimension of

communication. Many documents emphasised the need for community building or empowerment in addition to engagement (e.g Kubisch et al., 2010; Wolff et al., 2017). However, there was a lack of clarity as to whether community capacity building was a means to an end or an end in itself. Kubisch and colleagues (2010) cautioned that the contribution of community capacity building to promising place-based approaches lacks conclusive evidence:

> There is still no empirical evidence demonstrating that increases in community capacity lead to improved outcomes at the individual, family, or community level. Such evidence would require sophisticated demonstration research and evaluation, which to date has not been a priority for funders and other leaders in the field. (p. vii)

The benefits of community engagement were reported to be a better understanding of relevant community needs, the issue/s and its causes, the identification of more appropriate actions, improved cultural competence, and enhanced community capacity, support and ownership, and in turn, sustainability (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2012; Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Collective Impact Forum, 2016; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hogan et al., 2018b; Moore & Fry, 2011; Moore et al., 2014; Salignac et al., 2017; Seaton et al., 2017). Community participation may play an important role in building social capital (e.g. Jolin et al., 2012). Conversely, non-participation is noted to be damaging to health and wellbeing (The Marmot Review, 2010 as cited by Hogan et al., 2018b).

Overall, the engagement of community was commonly identified as a characteristic of place-based approaches for both philosophical and theoretical reasons. The extent of community engagement was contested, however, many place-based approaches emphasised the importance of community building and empowerment.

#### *4.3.7 Sufficient resources*

Financial and human resources were commonly identified as success factors for place-based approaches. In regards to human resources, dedicated and appropriately skilled staff, most recently described in the form of a 'backbone' organisation, was a prominent theme across the literature (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2012; Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Danaher, 2011; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hanleybrown et al., 2012; Hogan et al., 2018b; Jolin et al., 2012; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Moore et al., 2014; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Salignac et al., 2017; Seaton et al., 2017; Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). The role or functions of the backbone varied, but all had a focus on supporting the day to day work of the initiative and administrative support. Some of the more frequently described backbone functions included guiding vision and strategy, coordination, relationship building, securing funding, facilitation, communications support, data collection and reporting, technical assistance and engagement (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Flood et al., 2015; Hanleybrown et al., 2012; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Salignac et al., 2017; Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018). Backbone staff leadership skills, perceived credibility and personal qualities, such as enthusiasm, commitment and humility, were seen to contribute to the success of a backbone (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hanleybrown et al., 2012; Hogan et al., 2018b; Kania & Kramer, 2011, Moore & Fry, 2011).

Sufficient financial resources were also identified as facilitators of place-based approaches (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Seaton et al., 2017; Spark Policy & ORS Impact, 2018; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). Multi-level, long-term government commitment was often linked to ensuring adequate resourcing in the Australian context (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2011; Moore & Fry, 2011; Moore et al., 2014; Hogan et

al., 2018b; Wilks et al., 2015). The ability to secure funding and effective resource use were other important dimensions of resources described in the literature, overlapping with good governance below (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Seaton et al., 2017).

Adequate human and financial resourcing was seen to enable all of the identified key characteristics of place-based approaches, and conversely, insufficient resourcing was identified as a common barrier to success.

### *4.3.8 Supportive governance structures and processes*

Effective governance structures and processes were broadly identified as an important characteristic of place-based approaches, however, varied in regards to the specific elements associated with promising place-based approaches. For example, one study found formal governance structures did not contribute to the perceived effectiveness of place-based approaches (Allen, 2005), however other documents suggested formalised structures were an important aspect of good governance (Hogan et al., 2018b). More common aspects of good governance discussed in the included literature were a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Homel et al., 2015; Seaton et al., 2017; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006), cross sector representation in decision making (Bryson et al., 2006; Hogan et al., 2018b; Homel et al., 2015; Wilks et al., 2015), and appropriate accountability mechanisms (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2011; DSS, 2017; Homel et al., 2015; Wilks et al., 2015). Good governance was seen to promote fairness and transparency and help to improve trust, which is particularly important in a network arrangement where accountability is diffused among members and joined up working is required to deliver on the initiative's goals (Hogan et al., 2018b; Wilks et al, 2015). The importance of both formal and informal procedures or processes was raised, to provide both clarity and flexibility in dynamic contexts (Bryson et al., 2006).

There was considerable discussion in the Australian literature about the devolution of decision making, given the substantive role of government and the multiple tiers of government in this context (Keast & Mandell, 2014). Strategies to enable devolution included mechanisms for sharing risk and power, and the investment of resources and time to build community capacity (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2011; Hogan et al., 2018b; Moore & Fry, 2011; Moore et al., 2014; Wilks et al., 2015). Elsewhere participatory decision making or community involvement in decision making was regarded as a facilitator of success (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006).

Governance structures and processes that support cross sector partnerships and community decision making were closely linked to facilitative leadership and community engagement.

### *4.3.9 Holistic planning*

Holistic planning that considers the 'big picture' or the interplay of different issues was another theme identified within the literature. A holistic, comprehensive, systemic, ecological or multi-level approach was identified as important because of the complexity of issue(s) addressed by place-based approaches (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2011; Bryson et al., 2006; Butterfoss & Kegler, 2012; Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; DSS, 2017; Hogan et al., 2018b; Kubisch et al., 2010; Moore & Fry, 2011; Moore et al., 2014; Weaver, 2016; Wolff et al., 2017). Several authors cautioned that the breadth and depth of the approach needs to be moderated by a realistic assessment of local capacity (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Kubisch et al., 2010; Twiss et al., 2013). Most documents emphasised that planning should be intentional, ongoing and iterative, incorporate a range of perspectives, clarify responsibilities and

accountabilities, and develop tactics for gaining support and minimising implementation barriers (e.g. Bryson et al., 2006; Butterfoss & Kegler, 2012; Kubisch et al., 2010; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). Some highlighted the importance of building on existing activities or opportunities (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Kania & Kramer, 2011). More recent documents recommended incorporating systems thinking into place-based approaches, such as explicitly considering system components, connections, resources, power dynamics, norms and so on (Collective Impact Forum, 2016; Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2010; Hey, 2017; Weaver, 2016; Wolff et al., 2017).

Better use of existing resources, such as services and investments, and a dual focus on economic and social policy was important from a government perspective (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2011; DSS, 2017). Others highlighted that planning should consider the community's interaction with regional and macro level factors and in particular the geopolitical context (Twiss et al., 2013; Wilks et al., 2015). Documents also highlighted the need to ensure planning is driven by community needs and priorities, is culturally competent in design and builds on community strengths and existing resources (Collective Impact Forum, 2016; Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable, 2016; Foster-Fishman et al, 2001). They generally reinforced the need for flexibility to adapt programs, services, policies or practices to suit the local community and needs (Moore et al., 2014; Wilks et al., 2015) and to respond to changes in context (Bryson et al., 2006; Kubisch et al., 2010).

Planning may facilitate internal conflicts, invite potential opposition and contribute to the dissolution of a partnership (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). Difficulties in reaching consensus may be exacerbated by the imposition of time limits (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). Quick wins, or producing small achievements within a short period of time, were regarded by multiple documents as important for building and/or maintaining legitimacy and momentum, both of which can be particularly challenging when addressing complex issues that take a long time to overcome (Bryson et al., 2006; Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2012; Kubisch et al., 2010).

Broadly, planning that supports an in-depth understanding of the issue and its causes, considers systemic interventions and adapts as the situation changes were found to support place-based success. Holistic planning is reliant on diverse participation, and in turn community engagement, and is shaped by leadership and management styles.

#### *4.3.10 Multi-level capacity building*

The cultivation of individual, organisational, community and system capacity, involving the development of capabilities and relationships and shifts in attitudes and behaviour, was generally regarded as critical to facilitating change and building the expertise required to collaboratively tackle complex problems (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hogan et al., 2018b; Homel et al., 2015; Moore et al., 2014; Wilks et al., 2015). Capacity building across sectors was particularly prominent in the Australian literature, recognising the need for behavioural and cultural change in service, government and community sectors to enable successful collaboration (e.g. Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2011; DSS, 2017; Hogan et al., 2018b; Moore & Fry, 2011; Wilks et al., 2015). Wilks and colleagues (2015) recommended the inclusion of capacity building targets to maintain an appropriate focus on capacity building as a core function of the initiative.

Various methods of capacity building were identified and included external or internal technical assistance (e.g. backbone organisation or another partner), training or support, knowledge collection and sharing, and communities of practice (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2012;

Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Wilks et al., 2015; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). While backbone functions often incorporated some type of capacity building role, the need for local staff to have appropriate skills and expertise was emphasised (e.g. Wilks et al., 2015). Some documents therefore extended capacity building for local backbones, particularly given the wide ranging organisational support functions that may be needed for success (Hogan et al., 2018b; Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018). Roussos and Fawcett (2000) argue the ability of the partnership to identify its own capacity building needs may be more important than receipt of the actual assistance.

Multi-level capacity building therefore underpins the development of place-based approaches but requires appropriate resourcing (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2011; DSS, 2017; Wilks et al., 2015) and a focus on attitudes as well as expertise.

#### *4.3.11 Effective learning*

Given the dynamic and complex nature of issues that place-based approaches seek to address, effective learning was identified as an important contributor to place-based success. Some positioned learning as collaborative learning processes and outcomes, while others focused on the notion of a learning culture or orientation (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hey, 2017; Kubisch et al., 2010). There were conflicting views about the most beneficial methods. Different methods or approaches identified included action learning, fast cycle iteration, prototyping, developmental evaluation, monitoring and evaluation, evaluative thinking, evaluation, shared measurement, strategic learning, reflection, continuous improvement and quality improvement and so on (e.g. Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2012; Hey, 2017; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Moore et al., 2014; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). The collective impact literature had a heavy emphasis on shared measurement, which was argued to be important for establishing a sense of urgency during the formation of the initiative and contribute to accountability as the initiative progressed (Hanleybrown et al., 2012; Kania & Kramer 2011; Weaver, 2016). However, many challenges in measurement were reported (e.g. Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable, 2016; Jolin et al., 2012; Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018). Cabaj and Weaver (2016) suggested that shared measurement is a lower-order concept and that it contributes to the initiative's strategic learning, which is critical for ongoing development and improvement. Recent research into collective impact initiatives indicates shared measurement was not as critical as other collective impact characteristics, such as the backbone organisation and development of a common agenda, for achieving population impact (Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018).

Challenges were reported about incorporating rigorous evaluation and measurement methods into practice (Crooks et al., 2018), with multiple publications emphasising the importance of ensuring evaluation and measurement methods match local capacity and add value and meaning (Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable, 2016; Kubisch et al., 2010). Elsewhere, traditional evaluation methods were reported to be ill-suited to place-based approaches (Kubisch et al., 2010). Action learning, or ongoing cycles of action and learning, was identified as a promising approach that has been applied in different types of place-based approaches for many years (Crooks et al., 2018; Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2012; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000).

Particular tactics for supporting learning included: documenting progress (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000); a focus on more proximal outcomes (Zakocs & Edwards, 2006); use of individual and ecological data to adapt and measure progress

(Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable, 2016; Hogan et al., 2018b); and building in feedback loops (Kubisch et al., 2010; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000).

Overall, the literature indicated effective learning in place-based approaches requires experimentation to respond to the dynamic and constantly evolving issues (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2012; Kubisch et al., 2010) and robust and systemic methods, tailored to the needs of local stakeholders. Effective learning in place-based approaches can support the achievement of goals, provide feedback to stakeholders about progress, help to overcome barriers and enable adaptation (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Nowell & Foster-Fishman, 2011; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). It is dependent on resourcing, capacity building and diverse participation.

#### *4.3.12 Summary*

Table 4 provides a summary of each of the identified characteristics, commonly associated dimensions or attributes, factors that affected the characteristic and effects of the characteristic. Confirming sources and negative cases (see 'sensitivity checking' below) from the study's included documents are also provided in Table 4.

**Table 4: Common characteristics of place-based approaches**

| Characteristic | Key dimensions or attributes | References supporting the identified characteristic | Negative or disconfirming references | Influenced by … | Affects the quality, nature or extent of … |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Trusting relationships** | • Relationships between individuals and organisations are characterised by trust, respect, cooperation, openness and authenticity<br>• There are ongoing relationship building efforts, especially with underrepresented groups or sectors | Primary: Crooks et al. (2018); Flood et al. (2015); Gillam et al. (2016); Keast and Mandell (2014); Salignac, et al. (2017); Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact (2018)<br>Secondary: Bryson et al. (2006); Butterfoss and Kegler (2012); Cramer et al. (2006); Foster-Fishman et al., (2001); Foster-Fishman et al. (2007); Homel et al. (2015); Lasker and Weiss (2003); Seaton et al. (2017); Stolp et al. (2017); Tonelli et al. 2018); Zakocs and Edwards (2006)<br>Grey: Cabaj and Weaver (2016); Collective Impact Forum (2016); Danaher (2011); DSS (2017); Hogan et al. (2018b); Moore and Fry (2011); Moore et al. (2014); Twiss et al. (2013); Wilks et al. (2015) | | • Community context, especially existing relationships and social capital, history of collaboration, and institutional rules and norms<br>• Resourcing and time<br>• Communication<br>• Leadership<br>• Governance structures and rules | • Communication, including knowledge sharing, dialogue, conflict resolution<br>• Community engagement<br>• Member satisfaction, commitment and participation<br>• Member networks and social capital<br>• Network cohesion and cooperation |
| **Facilitative leadership** | • Participation of multiple leaders from different sectors and at different levels, including sponsors and local leaders<br>• Presence of skilful facilitative leadership abilities and qualities, such as good communication, facilitation and use of | Primary: Allen (2005); Flood et al. (2015); Hey (2017); Keast and Mandell (2014); Nowell and Foster-Fishman (2011); Salignac et al. (2017); Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact (2018)<br>Secondary: Butterfoss and Kegler (2012); Bryson et al. (2006); Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable (2016); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Lasker and Weiss (2003); Roussos and Fawcett (2000); Seaton et al. (2017); Stolp et al. (2017); Tonelli et al. (2018); Weaver (2016); Zakocs and Edwards (2006) | | • Community context<br>• Capacity building<br>• Participatory processes<br>• Resources<br>• Governance structures and rules | • Stakeholder engagement and participation, including community engagement<br>• Visioning<br>• Governance structures and rules<br>• Broad base of support<br>• Legitimacy<br>• Member satisfaction and commitment<br>• Community change |

| Characteristic | Key dimensions or attributes | References supporting the identified characteristic | Negative or disconfirming references | Influenced by … | Affects the quality, nature or extent of … |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | consensus decision making methods<br>• Leadership capacity-building | Grey: Cabaj and Weaver (2016); Collective Impact Forum (2016.); Danaher (2011); Hanleybrown et al. (2012); Jolin et al. (2012); Moore and Fry (2011); Moore et al. (2014); Twiss et al. (2013) | | | |
| **Shared vision and goals** | • Develop and maintain a shared and aspirational vision<br>• Representative participation in the development of the vision and mission<br>• Develop a common understanding of key issue/s<br>• Realistic goal setting<br>• Regular review of the vision, mission and goals | Primary: Allen (2005); Crooks et al. (2018); Flood et al. (2015); Hey (2017); Salignac et al. (2017); Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact (2018)<br>Secondary: Cramer et al. (2006); Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable (2016); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Roussos and Fawcett (2000); Seaton et al. (2017); Tonelli et al. (2018); Zakocs and Edwards (2006)<br>Grey: Cabaj and Weaver (2016); Danaher (2011); Jolin et al. (2012); Kania and Kramer (2011); Kubisch et al., (2010); Moore and Fry (2011); Moore et al. (2014) | Systems change literature tended to focus on problem definition rather than visioning (e.g. Foster-Fishman et al., 2007; Foster-Fishman &Watson, 2012).<br>The interplay of characteristics such as common goals, resources and communication are critical rather than the individual feature (Gillam et al., 2016; Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018) | • Leadership<br>• Community engagement<br>• Resources, including time<br>• Participatory processes<br>• Diverse participation | • Rate of community change<br>• Focus, scope and alignment of action<br>• Engagement, commitment and support<br>• Ways of working together |

| Characteristic | Key dimensions or attributes | References supporting the identified characteristic | Negative or disconfirming references | Influenced by … | Affects the quality, nature or extent of … |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Diverse participation and inclusive processes** | • Cross sector participation<br>• Broad public, funder and institutional support<br>• Inclusive processes to engage and mobilise diverse and strategic actors<br>• Tactics for sharing power and resolving conflict | Primary: Allen (2005); Hey (2017); Flood et al. (2015); Salignac et al. (2017); Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact (2018)<br>Secondary: Butterfoss and Kegler (2012); Bryson et al. (2006); Cramer et al. (2006); Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable (2016); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Foster-Fishman et al. (2007); Lasker and Weiss (2003); Zakocs and Edwards (2006)<br>Grey: Cabaj and Weaver (2016); Collective Impact Forum (2016); DSS (2017); Hogan et al. (2018b); Homel et al. (2015); Jolin et al. (2012); Kania & Kramer (2011); Moore and Fry (2011); Moore et al. (2014); Twiss et al. (2013) | | • Leadership<br>• Resources<br>• Governance<br>• Relationships | • Visioning<br>• Planning<br>• Learning<br>• Relationships<br>• Community engagement<br>• Broad base of support<br>• Legitimacy |
| **Effective communication** | • Open and frequent communication<br>• Enhanced sharing of information<br>• Multiple communication processes and channels, tailored to user needs<br>• Advocacy | Primary: Flood et al. (2015); Gillam et al. (2016); Salignac et al. (2017); Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact (2018)<br>Secondary: Butterfoss and Kegler (2012); Cramer et al. (2006); Dankwa-Mullan and Perez-Stable (2016); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Seaton et al. (2017); Weaver (2016); Zakocs and Edwards (2006)<br>Grey: Danaher (2011); Hanleybrown et al. (2012); Jolin et al. (2012); Kania and Kramer (2011); Moore et al. (2014) | Collective impact elements contributed to desired population change in eight sites. However, continuous communication was only rated as mature in a small proportion of a broader sample. Communication was positioned as a function of the backbone role, where it was less of a central element / of lower | • Relationships<br>• Leadership<br>• Resources | • Knowledge sharing<br>• Dialogue and deliberation<br>• Conflict resolution<br>• Shared understanding<br>• Organisational learning<br>• Broad base of support<br>• Legitimacy<br>• Resources |

| Characteristic | Key dimensions or attributes | References supporting the identified characteristic | Negative or disconfirming references | Influenced by … | Affects the quality, nature or extent of … |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | importance. (Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018) | | |
| **Community engagement** | • Those most affected by the issue/s are meaningfully engaged<br>• Representative engagement by different sections of the community<br>• Active community involvement in decision-making<br>• Multi-level capacity-building to support engagement<br>• Different mechanisms to support engagement | Primary: Flood et al. (2015); Salignac et al. (2017); Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact (2018)<br>Secondary: Bryson et al. (2006); Butterfoss and Kegler (2012); Christens and Inzeo (2015); Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable (2016); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Lasker and Weiss (2003); Roussos and Fawcett (2000); Weaver (2016)<br>Grey: Australian Social Inclusion Board (2011); Cabaj and Weaver (2016); Collective Impact Forum (2016); DSS (2017); Hanleybrown et al. (2012); Hogan et al. (2018b); Jolin et al., (2012); Kania and Kramer (2011); Kubisch et al. (2010); Moore et al. (2014); Moore and Fry (2011); Twiss et al. (2013); Wilks et al. (2015); Wolff et al. (2017) | Community participation rather than community control emphasised (Seaton et al., 2017) | • Participatory processes<br>• Governance<br>• Resources<br>• Relationships<br>• Leadership | • Diverse participation<br>• Planning (understanding of issues and suitability of solutions)<br>• Community readiness<br>• Community enthusiasm, commitment and ownership<br>• Broad base of support<br>• Social capital/networks |
| **Sufficient resources** | • Sufficient financial and human resources<br>• Able to secure new resources<br>• Dedicated and appropriately skilled backbone staff or organisation(s)<br>• Clear backbone role / functions | Primary: Crooks et al., (2018); Flood et al. (2015); Salignac et al. (2017); Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact (2018)<br>Secondary: Butterfoss and Kegler (2012); Cramer et al. (2006); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Foster-Fishman et al. (2007); Roussos and Fawcett (2000); Seaton et al. (2017); Tonelli et al. (2018); Zakocs and Edwards (2006) | | • Community context<br>• Leadership<br>• Governance<br>• Legitimacy | • Capacity building<br>• Visioning<br>• Member engagement<br>• New projects/programs<br>• Legitimacy<br>• Sustainability |

| Characteristic | Key dimensions or attributes | References supporting the identified characteristic | Negative or disconfirming references | Influenced by … | Affects the quality, nature or extent of … |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Grey: Australian Social Inclusion Board (2011); Cabaj and Weaver (2016); Danaher (2011); Jolin et al. (2012); Hanleybrown et al. (2012); Hogan et al. (2018b); Kania and Kramer (2011); Moore and Fry (2011); Moore et al. (2014); Wilks et al. (2015) | | | |
| **Supportive governance structures and processes** | • Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities<br>• Informal and formal rules and procedures underpinned by collaborative values<br>• Accountability mechanisms that appropriately manage risk and promote transparency<br>• Adaptive structures supporting cross sector partnerships<br>• Devolved resources and decision making<br>• Community involvement in decision making | Primary: Crooks et al., (2018); Keast and Mandell (2014); Salignac et al. (2017)<br>Secondary: Butterfoss and Kegler (2012); Bryson et al. (2006); Cramer et al. (2006); Dankwa-Mullan and Perez-Stable (2016); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Lasker and Weiss (2003); Roussos and Fawcett (2000); Seaton et al. (2017); Tonelli et al. (2018); Zakocs and Edwards (2006)<br>Grey: Australian Social Inclusion Board (2011); Danaher (2011); DSS (2017); Hogan et al. (2018b); Homel et al. (2015); Moore and Fry (2011); Moore et al. (2014); Twiss et al. (2013); Wilks et al. (2015) | Formal structures not found to contributed to perceived effectiveness of place-based approaches (Allen, 2005) | • Leadership<br>• Resources<br>• Community engagement<br>• Capacity building | • Relationships<br>• Community engagement<br>• Accountability<br>• Legitimacy<br>• Norms, behaviour<br>• Distribution of information, power, resources<br>• Resources<br>• Planning |

| Characteristic | Key dimensions or attributes | References supporting the identified characteristic | Negative or disconfirming references | Influenced by … | Affects the quality, nature or extent of … |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Holistic planning** | • Comprehensive understanding of issue/s, causes and interrelationships<br>• Holistic, systemic or multi-level strategies<br>• Adaptive approach | Primary: Crooks et al., (2018); Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact (2018)<br>Secondary: Bryson et al. (2006); Butterfoss and Kegler (2012); Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable (2016); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Foster-Fishman et al., (2007); Foster-Fishman and Watson (2012); Roussos and Fawcett (2000); Weaver (2016); Zakocs and Edwards (2006)<br>Grey: Australian Social Inclusion Board (2011); Cabaj and Weaver (2016); Collective Impact Forum (2016); DSS (2017); Hanleybrown et al. (2012); Hogan et al. (2018b); Moore et al. (2014); Moore and Fry (2011); Twiss et al. (2013); Wilks et al. (2015); Wolff et al. (2017) | | • Capacity building<br>• Backbone<br>• Leadership<br>• Participatory processes<br>• Resources<br>• Community engagement<br>• Diverse participation | • Participation, satisfaction, commitment<br>• Relationships and conflict<br>• Responsiveness and appropriateness of actions<br>• Achievement of goals<br>• Accountability<br>• Legitimacy<br>• Broad base of support<br>• Rate of community change<br>• Sustainability of actions |
| **Multi-level capacity building** | • Capacity building of multiple sectors, including government, other funders, community and service providers<br>• Intentional approach<br>• Targets values and beliefs as required | Primary: Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact (2018)<br>Secondary: Butterfoss and Kegler (2012); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Roussos and Fawcett (2000); Zakocs and Edwards (2006)<br>Grey: Australian Social Inclusion Board (2011); DSS (2017) Hogan et al. (2018b); Homel et al. (2015); Moore et al. (2014); Moore and Fry (2011); Wilks et al. (2015); | | • Community engagement<br>• Backbone<br>• Resourcing | • Development of skills, behaviour, efficacy, agency<br>• Quality of the processes<br>• Community control<br>• Sharing of power |

| Characteristic | Key dimensions or attributes | References supporting the identified characteristic | Negative or disconfirming references | Influenced by … | Affects the quality, nature or extent of … |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Effective learning** | • Foster a learning and improvement orientation<br>• Incorporate robust and feasible evaluation methods | Primary: Hey (2017); Nowell and Foster-Fishman (2011); Salignac et al. (2017)<br>Secondary: Dankwa-Mullan and Perez-Stable (2016); Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Foster-Fishman and Watson (2012); Weaver (2016)<br>Grey: Cabaj and Weaver (2016); Hanleybrown et al. (2012); Hogan et al. (2018b); Jolin et al. (2012); Kubisch et al. (2010); Moore et al. (2014); Moore and Fry (2011) | Not emphasised by Spark Policy and ORS Impact (2018) | • Resources<br>• Capacity building<br>• Participatory processes<br>• Governance structures and rules | • Planning and adaptation<br>• Solving new challenges<br>• Capacity building<br>• Achievement of impact<br>• Member engagement and accountability |

## 4.4 Contextual factors affecting place-based approaches

Many documents reported a range of contextual factors that were likely to impact on the success of place-based approaches. The community context, including its civic, social, physical, economic and political conditions, was reported to have a significant influence on the formation and sustainability of place-based approaches (Bryson et al., 2006; Butterfoss & Kegler, 2012; Hogan et al., 2018b; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). Factors such as social capital, trust between community and organisations, geography and scale, resources for organising, policy and government coordination and normative, legal and regulatory environments were all reported to have a marked effect on the success or otherwise of a place-based approach (Bryson et al., 2006; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hogan et al., 2018b). There was limited evidence to indicate which of these factors may be more or less important than others.

In the early stages of development, Kegler, Rigler and Honeycutt (2010) found a history of collaboration, geography, demographic and economic makeup, community politics and history, and community norms and values were all factors that influenced the formation of place-based approaches. A history of collaboration had the broadest influence, with other factors affecting aspects such as membership, processes and structure, the selection of the backbone or partnership convener and staffing and leadership (Kegler et al., 2010).

Some documents suggested a certain degree of 'readiness' was required to successfully progress place-based approaches. There was little consensus on a definition of 'readiness', with the concept stretched to cover both low levels of maturity on common characteristics of place-based approaches and also broader community conditions. Factors associated with readiness were convener capacity, existing networks, funding, presence of influential leadership, lead times, extent of problem agreement and urgency for change (Bryson et al., 2006; Hogan et al., 2018b). Some documents noted the fluidity of place-based approaches and that initiatives may developmentally regress in 'readiness' (e.g. Hogan et al., 2018b).

Member characteristics were sometimes raised as general facilitators or inhibitors of promising place-based approaches and sometimes positioned as part of civic capacity and community conditions. Characteristics that were found to facilitate promising place-based approaches included: active member participation (Allen, 2005; Tonelli et al., 2018; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006); diverse membership (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Seaton et al., 2017; Tonelli et al., 2018); member expertise (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Tonelli et al., 2018; Seaton et al., 2017; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006); existing relationships (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Seaton et al., 2017); member influence and member commitment (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). These characteristics were recognised to in turn influence collaborative capacity (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Seaton et al., 2017; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006).

Overall, there was little agreement as to which contextual factors matter most, however, there is a need to recognise the influence of the community context on place-based approaches.

## 4.5 Sensitivity checking

Before interpreting the study's results through a complexity lens, negative or disconfirming cases of identified characteristics were sought to test the robustness and validity of the study's results (Carroll et al., 2013). All instances where the study's included documents disconfirmed the identified characteristics were captured in Table 4. The small number of identified cases indicated substantial changes in results were unlikely and it was therefore unnecessary to review further literature.

The influence of particular variables on the study's results were also assessed (Carroll et al., 2013). These variables included document country of origin, type of place-based approach, the age of the literature and study inclusion. In terms of the country of origin, the Australian literature was found to have a stronger emphasis on the importance of governance structures and processes such as devolved decision making and the need for capacity building to extend beyond community. The Australian literature also more explicitly discussed spatial targeting, or a clear geographical boundary, as a characteristic of place-based approaches. However, no change to the identified characteristics was warranted.

The included documents inconsistently categorised place-based approaches with the exception of collective impact initiatives. This type of place-based approach was the focus of the sensitivity analysis. Collective impact documents were found to have a stronger emphasis on shared measurement relative to the remaining included documents. However, even within collective impact initiatives, there were conflicting views about the importance of shared measurement, with some documents re-focusing shared measurement as a component of learning and thus no adjustments to identified themes were made. Many collective impact documents adopted a narrower set of characteristics as the investigating framework for the study. However, the attributes of these characteristics showed considerable overlap with the characteristics identified by other place-based approaches included in the study. Some collective impact documents appeared to have a smaller emphasis on community engagement, however this was also true for some other types of place-based approaches.

More recently published documents were more likely to identify a backbone organisation or staffing as important features of place-based approaches. However, older documents made reference to the same concept but described it in terms of technical and convening or lead agency support, thus confirming the identified theme of 'sufficient resourcing'. Newly published documents also tended to have stronger commentary on the contribution of systems thinking or a systems approach to place-based approaches. There was no reported empirical evidence to support systems thinking or a systems approach as yet.

Due to the study's inclusion of reviews, some studies were repeated within the study's included documents. The most frequently repeated documents were Roussos and Fawcett's (2000) literature review (five occasions) and Foster-Fishman and colleagues' (2001) literature review (three occasions). The Foster-Fishman and collagues' (2001) review supported 10 of the 11 identified characteristics, while Roussos and Fawcett's (2001) review supported five of the 11 identified characteristics. However, even with the removal of the repeated studies, there was substantial convergence from remaining primary, secondary and grey literature to support the identified themes.

Overall, sensitivity checking verified the study's results, finding only a small number of disconfirming cases and no significant influence of the document variables of type of place-based approach, country of origin, age of literature and study duplication on the characteristics associated with promising place-based approaches.

### 4.6 Guidelines for place-based approaches

To support the application of the results to the design, development and evaluation of place-based approaches, the identified characteristics were interpreted through a complexity lens and translated into a set of evidence-informed and actionable guidelines. This was an important step of the study, as place-based practice frameworks have often been criticised for

ambiguity and a lack of actionable guidance (Hogan et al., 2018b). It was also needed to ensure theoretical coherence and enhance study credibility.

This process identified interconnections between the 11 characteristics of promising place-based approaches, from which four foundational practices emerged. They included collaboration, community engagement, holistic thinking, and adaptation. The study's identified characteristics were developed into a set of evidence-informed simple rules to accompany each of these four underpinning practices, described as follows.

Seven rules were situated within the practice of collaboration, which seeks to build relationships, connections and cooperation across sectors. They were informed by the study's characteristics of trusting relationships (e.g. Salignac et al., 2017), diverse participation and inclusive processes (e.g. Allen, 2005), shared vision and goals (e.g. Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018), sufficient resources (e.g. Wilks et al., 2015), effective communication (e.g. Gillam et al., 2016), multi-level capacity building (e.g. Foster-Fishman et al., 2001) and facilitative leadership (e.g. Flood et al., 2015). The simple rules included:

1. Build trusting relationships and expand connections across sectors.
2. Nurture an inclusive, respectful and transparent culture.
3. Build a shared and uniting agenda.
4. Share information, resources and knowledge.
5. Invest in a dedicated and skilled backbone.
6. Build collaborative mindsets, skill sets and leadership across sectors.
7. Secure sufficient financial resources.

Four rules formed the basis of community engagement, which focuses on engaging community members and building community capacity. These rules were informed by the study's characteristics of community engagement (e.g. Salignac et al., 2017), supportive governance structures and processes (e.g. Wilks et al., 2015) and multi-level capacity building (e.g. Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018). They were:

1. Genuinely engage community.
2. Ensure community involvement in decision making.
3. Build community capacity.
4. Manage power and conflict to ensure diverse participation.

Holistic thinking and action seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue(s) and develop multi-faceted strategies to address the root causes. There were two rules to enable the application of holistic thinking and action:

1. Engage diverse perspectives to define and respond to issues.
2. Think holistically to pursue systemic action.

These rules were informed by the study's characteristics of diverse participation and inclusive processes (e.g. Salignac et al., 2017) and holistic planning (e.g. Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018) .

Adaptation refers to taking a responsive and flexible approach, consistent with the concepts of emergence, unpredictability and sensitivity. The study identified two rules to promote adaptive management, informed by the study's characteristics of supportive governance structures and processes (e.g. Keast & Mandell, 2014) and effective learning (e.g. Kubisch et al., 2010):

1. Develop clear and flexible structures and processes that support local collaboration.

2. Foster a culture of continuous learning.

The study's guidelines, basis for inference and links to the study's results and sources are summarised in Table 5.

**Table 5: Guidelines for place-based approaches and the basis for inference**

| Foundational practice | Simple rule | Basis for inference | Linked characteristic(s) & references |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Collaboration: Relate, connect and collaborate across sectors** | Build trusting relationships and expand connections across sectors | Trusting, respectful and authentic relationships between individuals and organisations are a central mechanism for collaboration (e.g. Salignac et al., 2017). Cross-sector participation and support is needed to implement and resource multi-level actions (e.g. Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018). | 'Trusting relationships' |
| | Nurture an inclusive, respectful and transparent culture | Inclusive and open processes were emphasised as critical to engage and mobilise diverse actors, including community (e.g. Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Salignac et al., 2017). | 'Diverse participation and inclusive processes' |
| | Build a shared and uniting agenda | Development and maintenance of a shared vision helps to unite stakeholders and provide direction (e.g. Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018). It is important to develop have representative participation in the development of the vision and to continuously build common understanding of key issue/s (e.g. Bryson et al, 2006; Salignac et al., 2017). | 'Shared vision and goals' |
| | Share information, resources and knowledge | Communication that promotes open and frequent sharing of information and collaboration was a common facilitator of place-based approaches (e.g. Gillam et al., 2016) | 'Effective communication' |
| | Invest in a dedicated and skilled backbone | Dedicated and appropriately skilled organisational support (or a 'backbone') has emerged as a critical enabler of promising place-based approaches (e.g. Salignac et al., 2017; Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018). | 'Sufficient resources' |
| | Build collaborative mindsets, skill sets and leadership across sectors | Capacity building of multiple sectors, including government, other funders, community and service providers was identified as an important facilitator of collaboration in place-based approaches (e.g. Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018; Wilks et al., 2015).<br>Skilful collaborative leadership promotes engagement, collaboration and ownership, and requires ongoing capacity-building to ensure it is dispersed across different sectors and levels (e.g. Flood et al., 2015). | 'Multi-level capacity building' and 'facilitative leadership' |

| Foundational practice | Simple rule | Basis for inference | Linked characteristic(s) & references |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Secure sufficient financial resources | Sufficient financial resources are critical for implementation and sustainability (e.g. Wilks et al., 2015). | 'Sufficient resources' |
| **Community engagement: Engage and empower community** | Genuinely engage community | Genuine engagement requires the involvement of those most affected by the issue (e.g. Foster-Fishman et al., 2001) and different sections of the community (e.g. Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact, 2018). | 'Community engagement' |
| | Ensure community involvement in decision making | Community involvement as a partner and decision maker enhances engagement and cooperation (e.g. Hogan et al., 2018b; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). | 'Community engagement' and 'supportive governance structures and processes' |
| | Build community capacity | Capacity building is required to enable devolution (e.g. Wilks et al., 2015) and ensure sufficient levels of community involvement in decision making (e.g. Hogan et al., 2018b). | 'Community engagement' and 'multi-level capacity building' |
| | Manage power and conflict to ensure diverse participation | Power imbalances and conflict need to be successfully managed to ensure community engagement (e.g. Kubisch et al., 2010). | 'Community engagement' |
| **Holistic thinking: Think and act holistically** | Engage diverse perspectives to define and respond to issues | Diverse participation was heavily emphasised across the literature (e.g. Cabaj & Weaver, 2016; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Salignac et al., 2017). | 'Diverse participation and inclusive processes' and 'holistic planning' |
| | Think holistically to pursue systemic action | Identification of issue/s and causes and the development of holistic strategies, customised to the local context are necessary to address complex place-based issues (e.g. Bryson et al., 2006; Moore et al., 2014). | 'Holistic planning' |
| **Adaptation: Take an adaptive and responsive approach** | Develop clear and flexible structures and processes that support local collaboration | Governance structures and rules that support cross-sector partnerships and community control, such as devolved decision making, clear roles and responsibilities, accountability mechanisms, structures for operationalising the work, are likely to enhance effectiveness (e.g. Wilks et al., 2015) | 'Supportive governance structures and processes' |
| | Foster a culture of continuous learning | A continuous learning culture the incorporates robust and feasible evaluation methods and an action learning approach promotes the likelihood of success (e.g. Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hey, 2017; Kubisch et al., 2010). | 'Effective learning' |

# Chapter 5.0 Discussion and implications

This study sought to address contested understandings about place-based approaches and clarify key characteristics of promising responses to advance efforts against disadvantage. The study found wide-ranging characteristics associated theoretically and empirically with promising place-based approaches and substantial variation in terminology and measurement, highlighting that foundational conceptual issues continue to plague place-based approaches. However, there was sufficient convergence across the literature to identify a number of characteristics that are likely to facilitate positive results when using a place-based approach. These characteristics were interpreted through a complexity theory lens to produce flexible guidelines or 'simple rules' for place-based approaches addressing disadvantage in Australia.

To conclude this body of work, this chapter tests the study's guidelines against the broader discourses of disadvantage and complex problems. It sets out the strengths and limitations of the research and provides implications for practice, policy, evaluation and research.

## 5.1 Simple rules for place-based approaches tackling disadvantage

Disadvantage is a complex problem in that it can be understood and defined in different ways, it manifests in various forms, the causes and effects are wide-ranging and interlocking, and despite varied policy and practice efforts it refuses to go away. There is general consensus that overcoming the disparate causes requires both systemic and structural changes, as well as localised efforts. This study has focused on characteristics of local or place-based approaches that can help to improve the effectiveness of responses to disadvantage and other complex problems.

The best available evidence from multiple types of place-based approaches indicates there are four practices that form a central organising framework for promising place-based responses:

1. Collaboration—relate, connect and collaborate across sectors.
2. Community engagement—engage and empower the community.
3. Holistic thinking—think and act holistically.
4. Adaptation—take an adaptive and responsive approach.

The four practices are interconnected and interdependent. They should be applied in different ways that are customised to the local community context, including consideration of the community's social, physical and economic conditions and the maturity of the place-based response.

Complexity theorists suggest that simple rules, or non-prescriptive guidelines for decision making, are an appropriate match for managing complexity because they allow for local customisation and provide flexibility to adapt the course of action as the situation changes and evolves. Common characteristics identified by the study were interpreted through a complexity lens to identify a set of simple rules that can support the implementation of these four overlapping practices. Together, the practices and simple rules provide guidelines for place-based approaches addressing disadvantage in Australia. They are summarised in Figure 4 and outlined below.

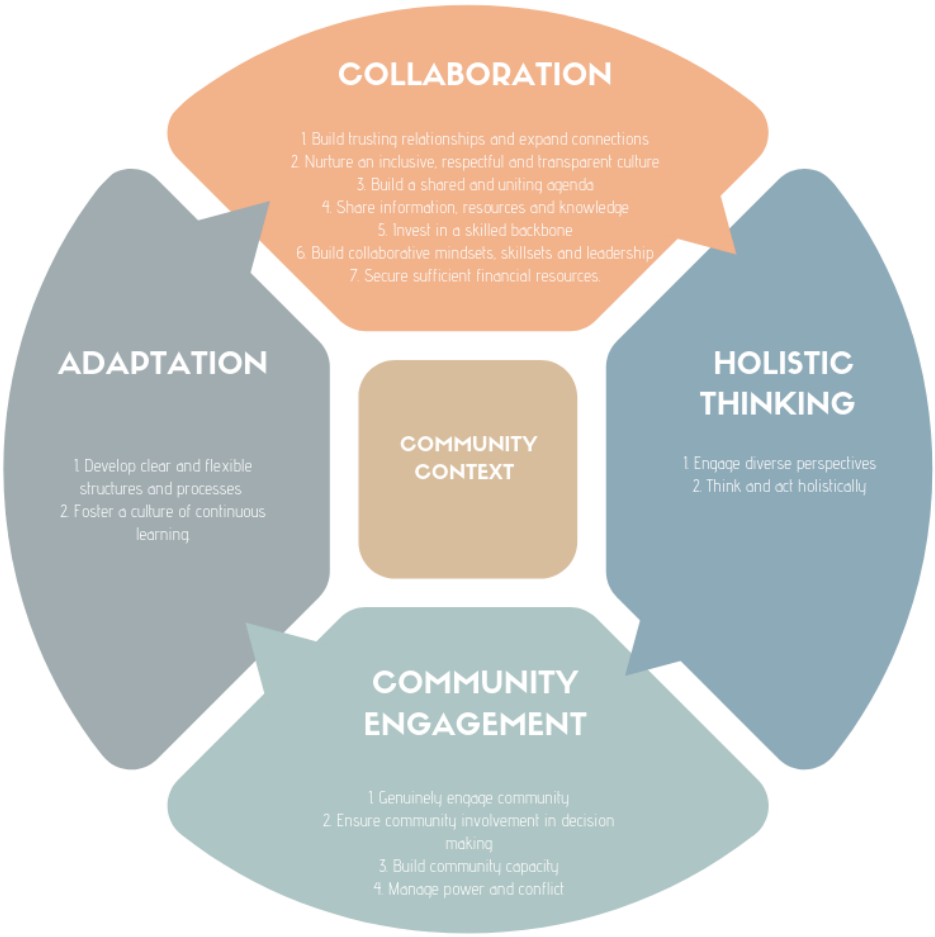


**Figure 4: Simple rules for place-based approaches**

### *5.1.1 Collaboration*

Relationships, connections and collaboration across sectors are central to the success of place-based approaches. Collaboration enables access to the different skills, resources and knowledge required for improved problem solving and promotes the likelihood that deeper and broader action can be taken, which is essential for managing complex issues like disadvantage. Collaboration also helps to promote agreement on the issue(s) and joint actions. Collaboration is ultimately achieved through cooperative relationships and connections, but is influenced by a number of factors such as facilitative or collaborative leadership, inclusive, respectful and transparent ways of working, shared understandings and vision, effective communication, conflict and power management, and resources including a dedicated and skilled backbone function. The following simple rules support the practice of collaboration and can enhance prospects of success:

- Build trusting relationships and expand connections.
- Nurture an inclusive, respectful and transparent culture.
- Build a shared and uniting agenda.
- Share information, resources and knowledge.
- Invest in a skilled backbone.
- Build collaborative mindsets, skill sets and leadership across sectors.
- Secure sufficient financial resources.

Collaboration offers other benefits in terms of enhanced individual and organisational networks and social capital, and the development or strengthening of a local infrastructure that can provide strengthened democratic practices and enhanced civic capacity.

### *5.1.2 Community engagement*

Involving those most affected by an issue in decision making not only provides important insights, but is a fundamental democratic principle. Community engagement is therefore both a value and a cornerstone practice. It is a pre-requisite for diverse collaboration, providing access to expanded and relevant resources, knowledge and perspectives. Engaging community requires people to be respectful of and value different insights, beliefs and priorities. Where there is a history of mistrust or low levels of social capital, additional emphasis on community engagement may be particularly important. Community engagement requires an investment in community capacity building to ensure local citizens have access to information, networks and connections, opportunities and resources that can build their capacity. This requires time, effort and skill.

Simple rules supporting community engagement in promising place-based approaches include:

- Genuinely engage community.
- Ensure community involvement in decision making.
- Build community capacity.
- Manage power and conflict to ensure diverse participation.

The benefits offered by community engagement include enhanced individual community member capacity and improved community ownership, and in turn, use and sustainability, enhanced social connections and networks, and enhanced community civic capacity.

### *5.1.3 Holistic thinking*

Complex issues are by definition difficult to define, unpredictable and diverse. They require ‘big picture’ thinking to better understand the nature of the problem and root causes and devise more appropriate responses. The interconnected nature of complex problems means that efforts must focus on root causes and strategic points for action. Simple rules guiding holistic practice include:

- Engage diverse perspectives to define and respond to issues.
- Think and act holistically to define and pursue systemic issues.

The benefits of holistic thinking and action are an increased likelihood that root causes of complex issues are managed, breakthroughs in thinking are achieved and that more appropriate, multi-level solutions are identified and tested.

### *5.1.4 Adaptation*

The nature of complex problems requires adaptive management, learning and action to work flexibly with complex issues in a dynamic, evolving and interconnected environment. Simple rules to guide adaptive and responsive practice include:

- Develop clear and flexible structures and processes that support collaboration
- Foster a culture of continuous learning.

## 5.2 Applying simple rules to disadvantage in the Australian context

The study's guidelines were generated from insights from place-based approaches addressing wide-ranging social complex problems in different countries. To ensure their relevance and appropriateness for addressing disadvantage in Australia, the guidelines need to be tested against the broader literature on disadvantage and complex problems. The next section compares and contrasts the study's guidelines against these discourses.

### *5.2.1 Collaboration*

Similar to the study's results, other types of responses tackling complex problems emphasise broad participation and cooperation as a fundamental strategy. The rationale for collaboration is also similar, premising collaboration as a means to obtain diverse knowledge, perspectives and resources to better understand and manage complex issues (APSC, 2007; Head & Alford, 2015; Xiang, 2013). Features of effective cooperation or collaboration raised in the broader literature included stakeholder engagement, the building of mutual trust, a shared purpose with some degree of interdependence and skilled facilitation and leadership (Head & Alford, 2015). Head and Alford (2015) suggest leadership styles that mobilise stakeholders and promote coherence are required for managing complex problems, citing transformational leadership, adaptive leadership and collaborative leadership as relevant styles. Xiang (2013) emphasises the importance of respecting different values and interests, developing respectful relationships and social capital over time, and skilled facilitation that promotes deliberation and manages conflict and power imbalances.

From an Australian social governance perspective, Reddel (2004) notes collaboration can be hindered when there is insufficient attention to power imbalances and/or dominance of professional cultures, and that a collaborative culture requires cultural change across political, policy making and organisational domains. The Australian social governance literature also highlights the need to institutionalise collaborative practice within government to provide legitimacy to local collaborations (Reddel, 2004). Reddel (2004) suggests that a mix of devolved and centralised collaborative infrastructure that can promote participatory democratic practices in the policy process, link local institutions to higher order structures and provide fertile ground within government is required to strengthen the sustainability of local collaborations. He also argues that new public servant skills, such as negotiative management and problem solving, are needed to promote the chances of success (Reddel, 2004).

Together, these findings reinforce the centrality of collaboration in the study's guidelines and draw connections to the simple rule of managing power imbalances within community engagement. They also underscore the importance of capacity building within government and the simple rule of developing collaborative mindsets, skill sets and leadership in all sectors.

### *5.2.2 Community engagement*

The study identified community engagement as a foundational practice for facilitating place-based approaches and suggested genuine community engagement practices, community involvement in decision making, community capacity building and the management of power and conflict as particular tactics to promote success. However, the study's literature revealed considerable diversity in the type of community engagement approach used within promising place-based approaches and conflicting views about the extent of community involvement in decision making. For example, community consultation, co-design, community development

(or community building) and community organising were all types of community engagement approaches raised in the study's literature. Despite the diversity of community engagement approaches within the study's literature, more often than not, the literature described a more intensive form of community engagement that involved community members actively involved in decision making. There is little empirical evidence, as yet, to support this preference (Kubisch et al., 2010).

Within the complexity literature, community engagement is largely discussed in terms of enabling diverse perspectives and cross-sectoral collaboration, which relates to the central approaches of collaboration and holistic thinking. Literature on disadvantage, however, provides some insights into the nature of desirable community engagement practices. Communities experiencing persistent disadvantage are often associated with lower levels of trust, social capital and civic capacity (Smart, 2017b). Given that enhanced trust and social capital are requirements for successful collaboration, there is a clear basis for suggesting place-based approaches addressing disadvantage should pay particular attention to building capacity and connections in order to support effective collaborative functioning. Further, there is a long association between locational disadvantage and community development approaches. Community development emphasises mediation of power imbalances, connecting and building local networks, and resourcing and empowering the community, resonating with the study's findings about managing power dynamics, building trusting relationships and developing capacity (Smart, 2017b). Community development differs from some of the study's included documents in that it clearly describes community control in identifying the issue to be addressed, rather than lower levels of community involvement in decision making such as community consultation. Longer term outcomes associated with community development initiatives relate to community cohesion, indicated by improvements in social capital, civic engagement, social cohesion, community safety, civic capacity and civic infrastructure and improved health (Smart, 2017b).

In the Australian context, Hogan and colleagues (2018b) argue there is a strong temptation for place-based approaches to emphasise community development as the central design principle. However, because of the strong role of government in the funding, design and delivery of services in Australia, they suggest shared decision making powers are needed to retain government's contribution to the development and sustainability of place-based approaches. This position is not inconsistent with the study's results, as collaboration is situated as one of the core practices alongside community engagement. Given the contested views and evidence, the degree to which community is in 'control' rather than a 'partner' may depend on the local context and objectives of the place-based approach. The study's guidelines appear to offer sufficient flexibility to cater to either of these positions.

The broader literature therefore reinforces community engagement, capacity building and the development of trust, relationships and connections in the community. In particular, it highlights how community engagement is affected by and influences collaboration, holistic thinking and adaptation, and emphasises community engagement as one of the central practices of the organising framework for place-based approaches addressing disadvantage.

### *5.2.3 Holistic thinking*

The study's simple rules to guide holistic thinking and action are to engage diverse perspectives and think holistically about the nature of the issue and possible solutions. Similarly, responses to complex problems, including those within the Australian context, emphasise the importance of diverse perspectives to change the nature and content of

discussions and thinking about the issue (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014), to enable better insights into issues and responses (APSC, 2007; Head & Alford, 2015) and to gain support for change (APSC, 2007). The nature of complex problems requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted strategy (APSC, 2007), which is consistent with the study's simple rules.

The broader literature highlighted a number of supplementary tools that may advance 'big picture' thinking, including frame reflection, systems thinking and complexity theory (Head & Alford, 2015). Frame reflection, (Schon & Rein, 1994, as cited by Head & Alford, 2015), surfaces and explores different values and perspectives to resolve conflict on difficult issues. The study's results suggested proactive management of conflicting attitudes and views could help to promote consensus and coordination action. Frame reflection may therefore be a useful tool for place-based approaches. In regards to systems thinking, Head and Alford (2015) argued the approach can help to gain a better appreciation of the interactions and interconnections of complex issues. While some of the study's documents advocated for systems approaches and systems thinking, it was not identified as a salient factor for advancing place-based approaches. Complexity theory is suggested as a way of better understanding emergence and interdependence and the need for feedback loops (Head & Alford, 2015). Again, the study's literature did not indicate using complexity theory as an explicit tool improved the success of place-based approaches, but there was considerable discussion about the need to acknowledge the complex nature of complex problems and adopt complexity-informed responses.

The broader literature therefore strengthens the support for holistic thinking and action as a fundamental strategy of place-based approaches. It also provides advice about tools that may assist the application of holistic thinking and action, which was not raised within the study's included documents.

### *5.2.4 Adaptation*

The literature on Australian public policy responses to complex problems highlight a series of structural and cultural issues within Australian government administration that hinder effective responses. They include strict budgeting rules, fixed reporting lines, traditional programmatic evaluation methods and gaps in personnel capability (APSC, 2007; Head & Alford, 2015). Head and Alford (2015) surmise that more nimble organisational structures, more flexible budgeting and financial systems, more complexity-appropriate monitoring and evaluation methods, and more thoughtful consideration of public servant knowledge, experience and skills are required to improve the likelihood of success. The APSC (2007) adds acceptance of long time frames, toleration of uncertainty and the development of new forms of accountability that balance risk without constraining innovation to this list. These findings underscore the importance of clear and flexible structures and processes that enable an adaptive and responsive place-based approach, which is consistent with the study's findings.

To take an adaptive and responsive approach, the study concluded it was necessary to foster a culture of continuous learning. Literature on addressing complex problems reinforces these guidelines, noting that learning and iteration are required to adapt to the dynamic nature of complex issues and rely on regular feedback to successfully shape its evolution (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014; APSC, 2007; Head & Alford, 2015; Xiang, 2013). The need for a participatory learning process was reinforced, with Xiang (2013) describing a "social learning culture" (p. 6) and an "open and heuristic process of collective learning, exploration and experimentation" (p. 2) as critical features of responding to complex issues.

The study's results about particular planning methods were mixed and did not identify tools that were consistently associated with improved practices. Complexity theory, however, is unsupportive of extensive up-front planning, due to the uncertain and unpredictable nature of complex problems. Instead, it promotes learning by doing and promotes innovation and experimentation as part of an adaptive response to complex issues (Auspos & Cabaj, 2014; Head & Alford, 2015).

The broader literature therefore suggests that greater weighting should be given to learning methods that align with the nature of complex issues such as experimentation and action learning. It also reinforces the simple rule of nurturing a culture of ongoing learning.

#### *5.2.5 Summary*

A comparison of the study's results against broader discourses finds support for the study's guidelines. There are clear grounds for collaboration, community engagement, holistic thinking and adaptation as the four central practices of place-based approaches. The broader literature reinforces the study's simple rules, emphasising their interconnected nature, and provides additional tools that could be tested to determine their utility into the future.

### 5.3 Strengths and limitations of the study

Overall, the study's strength of evidence is low due to the study's design, sources of bias and the nature of the included literature. However, limited strength of evidence is typical of research into place-based approaches due to the complex nature of the phenomenon and associated research challenges. The empirical validation of theory across multiple bodies of literature, and the resonance of the results with the broader literature, provides some confidence about the transferability and trustworthiness of the study's findings. Key strengths and limitations are discussed as follows.

#### *5.3.1 Research design*

The study's main strength is its triangulation of multiple types of place-based approaches, used in different contexts to address diverse issues, which strengthens the credibility and transferability of findings. However, this strength is also a limitation in that the nature of the response to complex problems is dependent on context. This study acknowledged that the specific characteristics of promising local place-based approaches would differ across contexts, but that patterns of good practices could be discerned and used to provide flexible guidelines that should be adjusted to the unique context of a particular community. The salience and relevance of particular rules for particular contexts is likely to vary. However, the study's four practices act as minimum guidelines and the simple rules are intended to be applied in different doses and in different ways, depending on context.

It is acknowledged that the characteristics of promising place-based approaches addressing disadvantage may differ to those addressing complex issues, and that the characteristics of a promising place-based approach in Australia may vary from those applied within other countries. The inclusion of different types of place-based approaches and various countries of origins may therefore have impacted on the study's results. Despite this limitation, the sensitivity analysis provides some re-assurance indicating the findings were generally consistent irrespective of the type of problem or country of origin. In addition, the study's findings were largely validated by the broader literature on responding to disadvantage and complex problems in the Australian context.

The inclusion of theoretical literature, in addition to empirical research, also reduces the certainty of the results. The rationale for including theoretical literature aligns with the aim of the study, which was to provide a stronger conceptual framework that could evolve over time, rather than to generate results with absolute certainty. Exclusion of the theoretical literature would have hindered the study's capacity to gain insights into the rationale underpinning identified factors, given the gaps in the empirical evidence.

Finally, it is also acknowledged that the consensus characteristics of promising place-based approaches may not necessarily lead to positive impacts without the presence of other factors, interventions and/or conditions. In other words, the study's characteristics are likely to only form part of a theory of action and change for place-based approaches addressing disadvantage. They can, however, act as an input to advancing theoretical development.

### *5.3.2 Sources of bias*

Extensive searching of the literature was beyond the scope of the study. Instead, a berry picking search approach was used to locate diverse studies and models that could provide insights across different types of place-based approaches. This may have biased the study's results, as some of the literature reviews were noted to draw on the same studies and important factors may have been missed due to the search methods employed. While instances of overlap were attempted to be identified and considered in the analysis, it is acknowledged duplicative studies may have biased the findings.

Researcher bias to authors, documents reinforcing particular themes and the researcher's interpretation of salient factors and dimensions must be acknowledged as potential sources of bias. However, consistent with recommendations about berry picking search approaches, the study's search continued until it was concluded that a small number of conflicting cases would be unlikely to substantially change the findings (Finfgeld-Connect & Johnson, 2013). Negative cases were also actively sought and tested against the study's findings.

### *5.3.3 Document quality and variability*

The considerable variation in the conceptualisation, definition and measurement of characteristics across the literature may have also affected the validity of the study's results. For example, Zakocs and Edwards (2006) note leadership style was measured in five different ways within literature included in their study. While this was largely unavoidable, it reduces the certainty of the study's results. Further, the majority of documents did not provide strong evidence that studied place-based approaches were successful or achieved long term outcomes, or that identified characteristics of the approach contributed to long-term success. Included empirical research often used a cross-sectional case study design and, consequently, did not focus on inferring causal relationships between factors and outcomes over time. Notwithstanding these limitations, there are many research challenges associated with place-based approaches, such as designing a sufficiently rigorous study that is well suited to complex and dynamic phenomenon, capturing changes over a long period of time, and gaining sufficient funding to do so. Thus, including documents with weaker evidence about place-based approaches or limited insights into causal relationships is largely unavoidable if seeking a sufficient sample size that will allow for patterns and insights to be detected.

It was also noted that many documents identified within the grey literature, but not included in this study, did not outline or did not sufficiently outline the methods by which results and

conclusions were reached. There is a need for greater transparency and better documentation of grey literature methods to support assessment of their quality, and in turn, use.

## 5.4 Implications

This study has sought to respond to the challenge of contested knowledge about place-based approaches and clarify the underpinning evidence and key characteristics. The findings provide several implications for practice, policy, research and evaluation efforts responding to disadvantage in the Australian context.

### *5.4.1 Guidelines for place-based approaches addressing disadvantage in the Australian context*

The study's findings have produced a set of guidelines for place-based approaches addressing disadvantage in Australia, which comprise of four interconnected cornerstone practices and supporting simple rules (see Figure 4 above). While the empirical evidence supporting these guidelines is limited, they have been informed by a robust literature review and substantiated by broader theoretical literature. As such, they are based on the best available information at this point in time. The guidelines are intended to be applied flexibly and customised to context, as factors such as financial and human resources, organisational support, long-term political and policy commitment, and institutional norms for collaboration and capacity will act as both enablers and constraints for a successful approach, depending on their nature and the situation. The guidelines should be tested to ensure validity, utility, relevance and meaningfulness.

### *5.4.2 A typology to advance knowledge building and clarify purpose*

Place-based approaches are diverse in definition and composition, but as this study highlights, share common characteristics. There is substantial literature on place-based approaches, yet it is fractured, challenging to locate and difficult to use due to its multidisciplinary origins, variations in terminology and differences in key words/search terms. More recent evolutions in place-based approaches, such as collective impact and the application of complexity theory, have added to the heterogeneity of language, theory and conceptual frameworks for place-based approaches. The absence of a uniting framework for place-based approaches means opportunities to capitalise on relevant literature are missed, there is likely to be duplication of efforts and building knowledge about place-based approaches may take longer and be more expensive.

As a body of knowledge, place-based approaches must address the absence of a commonly accepted definition and typology. This involves gaining agreement about central practices for place-based approaches and developing a transferable theoretical framework that can better capture lessons, insights and evidence at a meta-level. Moreover, a clearer way to differentiate the purpose and intended outcomes of place-based approaches is likely to support better design, implementation and evaluation efforts. There are various ways to organise and frame the interrelated characteristics of promising place-based approaches, however, the guidelines generated by this study should be used as an input for developing a consensus framework.

In building an agreed definition and typology for place-based approaches, it is useful to reflect on the name of place-based approaches themselves. The emphasis on 'place', rather than community, arguably detracts from the overall intention of the approach, particularly when addressing issues such as disadvantage which are intrinsically linked to community conditions and community strengthening. A descriptor that underscores community, rather

than one which emphasises physical infrastructure or physical environment, may be more relevant and meaningful.

### *5.4.3 A new way of thinking about place-based research*

The evidence base for place-based approaches addressing disadvantage is limited and there is the opportunity to craft a strategic research agenda to address priority knowledge gaps. The complexity of the subject matter demands sophisticated research techniques and adequate investment to ensure robust results. To ensure relevance and meaningfulness of the research, and ultimately impact, the study's practices should be used to develop a new way of undertaking research that involves collaboration, community engagement, holistic thinking and adaptation. Collaboration would help to share information and resources across different research disciplines and practice and policy, potentially advancing the design and implementation of meaningful, appropriate and robust research. Community engagement would seek to involve communities in the development of the research agenda and build local capacity in research. It would also ensure that data and information is returned to the community for their future use. Holistic thinking would draw attention to the need for multiple perspectives to identify the gaps from different angles and design the research agenda. Finally, consistent with the practice of adaptation, the research agenda should respond flexibly to emerging opportunities and use situationally appropriate methods.

### *5.4.4 Paradigm and practice shifts for government*

In Australia, place-based approaches addressing disadvantage are typically dependent on government cooperation and involvement as both a funder of existing infrastructure (such as service delivery and programs) and the initiative itself. Adopting a collaborative, holistic and adaptive approach that engages and empowers community requires a number of paradigm and practice shifts for government. First, it raises the need for greater consideration of how government can legitimise local collaborative infrastructures and provide links back into central government, to promote authority and required policy change. Second, there is a need to build public servants' skills, attitudes and knowledge to work in respectful, collaborative partnerships with communities, accompanied by structures and processes that enable devolved decision making. Third, different forms of accountability and risk management that are compatible with an adaptive approach must be developed. This includes more flexible funding practices, more flexible accountability and reporting processes that enable evolution in planning and operations, and flexibility in structure and design. Fourth, investing in and legitimising contextually-appropriate forms of evaluation and research that support robust learning and the building of transferable knowledge is needed.

Above all, government must set realistic expectations about the prospects of place-based approaches, given the complexity of disadvantage, the fragility of collaboration, and investment and time constraints. A typology that sets out the different objectives of place-based approaches may help to clarify purpose and manage expectations.

### *5.4.5 Evaluation that enables learning and synthesis*

Evaluation design and methods must balance the tension of meeting both accountability and learning requirements. However, the need to provide quick and robust feedback and support learning is paramount for addressing complex issues. Evaluation methods must be suited to complex situations, consider interconnections, diverse perspectives, anticipated and unanticipated effects and multiple sources of evidence. Participatory and capacity building evaluation approaches align with the principles of place-based approaches identified in this study.

Similar to research, evaluators need to find new ways of collaborating with policy, practice and research to better use insights from individual cases and address strategic knowledge gaps about place-based approaches addressing disadvantage.

## 5.5 Conclusion

There are wide-ranging definitions, conceptual frameworks and terminology for place-based approaches that have created confusion about good practice and hindered efforts to advance knowledge. This study identified common characteristics associated with promising place-based approaches, revealing four cornerstone practices that can be used to guide the design, development and evaluation of Australian place-based approaches addressing disadvantage. The practices include: collaboration—relate, connect and collaborate across sectors; community engagement—engage and empower community; holistic thinking—think and act holistically; and adaptation—take an adaptive and responsive approach. The study identified a series of evidence-informed simple rules that can support the application of these interconnected practices and improve the likelihood of effective action (see Figure 4). These rules should be applied flexibly and adjusted to the local context.

As with any exploratory study, there are limitations to the study's findings and there is a need for further in-depth research. However, the findings reflect the nature of the evidence available at this point in time and align with the broader literature on responding to complex problems and disadvantage. The study's guidelines should be tested to ensure their validity, utility, relevance and meaningfulness.

More broadly, the study found an overwhelming need for greater consensus on a typology for place-based approaches. A clearer way of categorising place-based efforts and practices will help to limit the fragmentation of the knowledge base and enable the incorporation of relevant evidence into policy, practice, evaluation and research efforts. In turn, this can help inform better responses to the significant issue of disadvantage in Australia.

## List of References


Allen, N. E. (2005). A multi-level analysis of community coordinating councils. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 35*(1-2), 49-63. doi:10.1007/s10464-005-1889-5

Auspos, P., & Cabaj, M. (2014). *Complexity and community change: Managing adaptively to improve effectiveness*. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute. Retrieved from https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/pubs/Complexity_and_Community_Change.pdf

Australian Government. (2010). *Social inclusion in Australia: How Australia is faring.* Canberra, Australia: Author. Retrieved from https://apo.org.au/node/20210

Australian Government. (2012). *Social inclusion in Australia: How Australia is faring* (2nd ed.). Canberra, Australia: Author. Retrieved from https://apo.org.au/node/30582

Australian Government. (2019). *Australian Early Development Census National Report 2018*. Canberra, Australia: Department of Education and Training. Retrieved from https://www.aedc.gov.au

Australian Public Service Commission. (2007). *Tackling wicked problems: A public policy perspective*. Canberra, Australia: Author. Retrieved from https://www.apsc.gov.au

Australian Social Inclusion Board. (2011). *Governance models for location based initiatives*. Canberra, Australia: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Bellefontaine, T., & Wisener, R. (2011). *The evaluation of place-based approaches: Questions for further research.* Ottawa, Canada: Policy Horizons Canada. Retrieved from http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/393723/publication.html

Brotherhood of St Laurence and Melbourne Institute. (2017). *Social Exclusion Monitor: 2017 Update*. Melbourne, Australia: Author. Retrieved from https://www.bsl.org.au/research/social-exclusion-monitor

Bryson, J. M., Crosby, B. C., & Stone, M. M. (2006). The design and implementation of cross-sector collaborations: Propositions from the Literature. *Public Administration Review, 66*(s1), 44-55. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00665.x

Butterfoss, F. D., & Kegler, M. C. (2012). A coalition model for community action. In M. Minkler (Ed.), *Community Organizing and Community Building for Health and Welfare* (pp. 309-328). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Cabaj, M., & Weaver, L. (2016). *Collective impact 3.0: An evolving framework for community change.* Ontario, Canada: Tamarack Institute. Retrieved from http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/collective-impact-3.0-an-evolving-framework-for-community-change

Carroll, C., Booth, A., Leaviss, J., & Rick, J. (2013). "Best fit" framework synthesis: Refining the method. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 13*(1). doi:10.1186/1471-2288-13-37

Christens, B. D., & Inzeo, P. T. (2015). Widening the view: Situating collective impact among frameworks for community-led change. *Community Development, 46*(4), 420-435. doi:10.1080/15575330.2015.1061680

Collective Impact Forum. (2016). *Collective Impact principles of practice*. Retrieved from https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/sites/default/files/Collective%20Impact%20Principles%20of%20Practice.pdf

Committee for Economic Development of Australia. (2015). *Addressing entrenched disadvantage in Australia.* Melbourne, Australia: Author. Retrieved from https://www.ceda.com.au/Research-and-policy/All-CEDA-research/Research-catalogue/Addressing-entrenched-disadvantage-in-Australia

Conklin, J. (2006). *Dialogue Mapping: Building Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Conklin, J., Basadur, M., & VanPatter, G. K. (2007). Rethinking wicked problems: Unpacking paradigms, Bridging Universes [Interview]. *NextD Journal, 10*, 1-30. Retrieved from https://www.nextd.org

Cramer, M. E., Atwood, J. R., & Stoner, J. A. (2006). A conceptual model for understanding effective coalitions involved in health promotion programming. *Public Health Nursing, 23*(1), 67-73.

Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crooks, C. V., Exner-Cortens, D., Siebold, W., Moore, K., Grassgreen, L., Owen, P., Rausch, A., Rosier, M. (2018). The role of relationships in collaborative partnership success: Lessons from the Alaska Fourth R project. *Evaluation and Program Planning, 67*, 97-104. doi:10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2017.12.007

Danaher, A. (2011). *Reducing health inequities: Enablers and barriers to inter-sectoral collaboration*. Toronto, Canada: Wellesley Institute. Retrieved from https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Reducing-Health-Inequities-Enablers-and-Barriers-to-Intersectoral-Collaboration.pdf

Dankwa-Mullan, I., & Pérez-Stable, E. J. (2016). Addressing health disparities is a place-based issue. *American Journal of Public Health, 106*(4), 637-639. doi:10.2105/ajph.2016.303077

Davidson, P., Saunders, P., Bradbury, B., & Wong, M. (2018). *Poverty in Australia, 2018* (Poverty and Inequality Partnership Report No. 2). Sydney, Australia: Australian Council of Social Service and University of New South Wales. Retrieved from https://www.acoss.org.au/poverty/

Department of Social Services. (2017). *Place-based approaches to disadvantage: Departmental policy approach.* Canberra, Australia: Author.

Finfgeld-Connett, D., & Johnson, E. D. (2013). Literature search strategies for conducting knowledge-building and theory-generating qualitative systematic reviews. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 69*(1), 194-204. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2012.06037.x

Flood, J., Minkler, M., Hennessey Lavery, S., Estrada, J., & Falbe, J. (2015). The collective impact model and its potential for health promotion: Overview and case study of a healthy retail initiative in San Francisco. *Health Education & Behavior, 42*(5), 654-668. doi:10.1177/1090198115577372

Foster-Fishman, P. G., Berkowitz, S. L., Lounsbury, D. W., Jacobson, S., & Allen, N. A. (2001). Building collaborative capacity in community coalitions: A review and integrative framework. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 29*(2), 241-261. doi:10.1023/a:1010378613583

Foster-Fishman, P. G., Nowell, B., & Yang, H. (2007). Putting the system back into systems change: a framework for understanding and changing organizational and community systems. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 39*(3-4), 197-215. doi:10.1007/s10464-007-9109-0

Foster-Fishman, P. G., & Watson, E. R. (2012). The ABLe change framework: a conceptual and methodological tool for promoting systems change. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 49*(3-4), 503-516. doi:10.1007/s10464-011-9454-x.

Fry, R., Keyes, M., Laidlaw, B., & West, S. (2014). *The state of play in Australian place-based activity for children*. Parkville, Victoria: Murdoch Children's Research Institute and The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health. Retrieved from https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/CCCH_Collaborate_for_Children_Report_State_of_Play_Nov2014.pdf

Gillam, R. J., Counts, J. M., & Garstka, T. A. (2016). Collective impact facilitators: how contextual and procedural factors influence collaboration. *Community Development, 47*(2), 209-224. doi:10.1080/15575330.2015.1133684

Graham, K., & Weaver., L. (2016). *Engage for impact* [Presentation]. Canberra, Australia: Department of Social Services.

Grant, M. J., & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: an analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, 26, 91-108. doi:10.1111/j.1471-1842.2009.00848.x

Greenhalgh, T., & Peacock, R. (2005). Effectiveness and efficiency of search methods in systematic reviews of complex evidence: audit of primary sources. *BMJ, 331*(7524), 1064-1065. doi:10.1136/bmj.38636.593461.68

Greenhalgh, T., & Wong, G. (2013). *Training materials for meta-narrative reviews*. London, United Kingdom: University of London. Retrieved from http://www.ramesesproject.org/media/Meta_narrative_reviews_training_materials.pdf

Greenhalgh, T., Wong, G., Westhorp, G., & Pawson, R. (2011). Protocol - realist and meta-narrative evidence synthesis: Evolving Standards (RAMESES). *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 11*(1), 1-10. doi:10.1186/1471-2288-11-115

Griggs, J., Whitworth, A., Walker, R., McLennan, D., & Noble, M. (2008). *Person- or place-based policies to tackle disadvantage? Not knowing what works*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/person-or-place-based-policies-tackle-disadvantage-not-knowing-what-works

Hanleybrown, F., Kania, J. H., & Kramer, M. K. (2012). Channeling change: making collective impact work. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/channeling_change_making_collective_impact_work

Hayes, A., & Hacker, A. (2017). *Persistent disadvantage in Australia: Extent, complexity and some key implications (*Australia's welfare series no. 13). Canberra, Australia: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Retrieved from https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/9592571c-801c-46be-9c9d-75d0faffbb5b/aihw-australias-welfare-2017-chapter1-6.pdf.aspx

Head, B. W. (2008). Wicked problems in public policy. *Public Policy*, *3*(2)*,* 101-118.

Head, B. W., & Alford, J. (2015). Wicked problems: implications for public policy and management. *Administration & Society, 47*(6), 711–739. doi:10.1177/0095399713481601

Hey, B. (2017). *Learning and working together: invoking systems' change through inter-organizational collaborative principles and a learning community framework* (Master's thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada). Retrieved from https://scholars.wlu.ca/etd/1936/

Hogan, D., Rubenstein, L., & Fry, R. (2018a). *Framing place-based collective impact principles: a public policy response to childhood developmental vulnerability* (Vol. 1). Melbourne, Australia: Opportunity Child. Retrieved from https://opportunitychild.com.au/download/framing-place-based-collective-impact-principles-a- public-policy-response-to-childhood-developmental-vulnerability-volume-1/.

Hogan, D., Rubenstein, L., & Fry, R. (2018b). *Framing place-based collective impact principles: a public policy response to childhood developmental vulnerability* (Vol. 2). Melbourne, Australia: Opportunity Child. Retrieved from https://www.opportunitychild.com.au/download/framing-place-based-collective-impact-principles-a-public-policy-response-to-childhood-developmental-vulnerability-volume-2/

Holden, L. M. (2005). Complex adaptive systems: concept analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 52*(6), 651-657. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/13652648

Homel, R., Freiberg, K., & Branch, S. (2015). CREATE-ing capacity to take developmental crime prevention to scale: a community-based approach within a national framework. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology, 48*(3), 367-385. doi:10.1177/0004865815589826

Jolin, M., Schmitz, M., & Seldon, W. (2012). *A promising approach to addressing America's biggest challenges: community collaboratives whitepaper*. Washington, DC: The White House Council for Community Solutions.

Kania, J., & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective Impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

Keast, R. & Mandell, M. (2014). The collaborative push: moving beyond rhetoric and gaining evidence. *Journal of Management and Governance, 18*(1), 9-28. doi:10.1007/s10997-012-9234-5

Kegler, M. C., Rigler, J., & Honeycutt, S. (2010). How does community context influence coalitions in the formation stage? A multiple case study based on the Community Coalition Action Theory. *BMC Public Health, 10*(1). doi:10.1186/1471-2458-10-90

Kubisch, A., Auspos, P., Brown, P., & Dewar, T. (2010). *Voices from the field III: lessons and challenges from two decades of community change efforts*. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute. Retrieved from https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/images/rcc/VoicesfromtheFieldIII.pdf

Lasker, R. D., & Weiss, E. S. (2003). Broadening participation in community problem solving: a multidisciplinary model to support collaborative practice and research. *Journal of Urban Health, 80*(1), 14-47. doi:10.1093/jurban/jtg014

McLachlan, R., Gilfillan, G., & Gordon, J. (2013). *Deep and persistent disadvantage in Australia.* Canberra, Australia: Productivity Commission of Australia. Retrieved from https://www.pc.gov.au/research/supporting/deep-persistent-disadvantage

Moore, T. G., & Fry, R. (2011). *Place-based approaches to child and family services: a literature review*. Parkville, Australia: Centre for Community Child Health. Retrieved from https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/Place_based_services_literature_review.pdf

Moore, T. G, McHugh-Dillon, H., Bull, K., Fry, R., Laidlaw, B., & West, S. (2014). *The evidence: what we know about place-based approaches to support children's wellbeing.* Parkville, Australia: Centre for Community Child Health. Retrieved from https://www.rch.org.au/ccch/research-projects/Collaborate_for_Children_scoping_project/

Nowell, B., & Foster-Fishman, P. (2011). Examining multi-sector community collaboratives as vehicles for building organizational capacity. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 48*(3-4), 193-207. doi:10.1007/s10464-010-9364-3

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Peters, B. G. (2017). What is so wicked about wicked problems? A conceptual analysis and a research program. *Policy and Society*, *36*(3), 385-396. doi:10.1080/14494035.2017.1361633

Pressman, J., & Wildavsky, A. (1973). *Implementation: how great expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Productivity Commission. (2018). *Rising inequality? A stocktake of the evidence*. Canberra, Australia: Author. Retrieved from https://www.pc.gov.au/research/completed/rising-inequality

Reddel, T. (2004). *Exploring the institutional dimensions of local governance and community strengthening: linking empirical and theoretical debates*. Brisbane, Australia: Griffith University.

Rittel, H. W. J., & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences*, *4*, 155-169.

Rousseau, D. M., Manning, J., & Denyer, D. (2008). Evidence in management and organizational science: assembling the field's full weight of scientific knowledge through syntheses. *The Academy of Management Annals, 2*(1), 475-515. doi:10.5465/19416520802211651

Roussos, S. T., & Fawcett, S. B. (2000). A review of collaborative partnerships as a strategy for improving community health. *Annual Review of Public Health, 21*(1), 369-402. doi:10.1146/annurev.publhealth.21.1.369

Salignac, F., Wilcox, T., Marjolin, A., & Adams, S. (2017). Understanding collective impact in Australia: A new approach to interorganizational collaboration. *Australian Journal of Management, 43*(1), 91-110. doi:10.1177/0312896217705178

Saunders, P., Naidoo, Y., & Griffiths, M. (2007). *Towards new indicators of disadvantage: Deprivation and social exclusion in Australia*. Sydney, Australia: Social Policy Research Centre. Retrieved from https://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/

Saunders, P., & Sutherland, K. (2006). *Experiencing poverty: The voices of low-income Australians*. Sydney, Australia: Social Policy Research Centre. Retrieved from http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/reports/FinalReportMarch06.pdf

Saunders, P., & Wong, M. (2014). Locational differences in material deprivation and social exclusion in Australia. *The Australasian Journal of Regional Studies, 20*(1), 131-158.

Seaton, C. L., Holm, N., Bottorff, J. L., Jones-Bricker, M., Errey, S., Caperchione, C. M., … Healy, T. (2018). Factors that impact the success of interorganizational health promotion collaborations: a scoping review. *American Journal of Health Promotion, 32*(4), 1095-1109. doi:10.1177/0890117117710875

Smart, J. (2017a). *Collective impact: evidence and implications for practice*. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Institute of Family Studies. Retrieved from https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/collective-impact-evidence-and-implications-practice

Smart, J. (2017b). *What is community development?* (CFCA Resource Sheet). Melbourne, Australia: Child Family Community Australia information exchange, Australian Institute

of Family Studies. Retrieved from https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/what-community-development

Snowden, D., & Boone, M. (2007). A leader's framework for decision-making. *Harvard Business Review*, *85*(11), 68–76.

Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact. (2018). *When collective impact has an impact: a cross-site study of 25 collective impact initiatives*. Denver, CO: Author.

Stolp, S., Bottorff, J. L., Seaton, C. L., Jones-Bricker, M., Oliffe, J. L., Johnson, S. T., … Lamont, S. (2017). Measurement and evaluation practices of factors that contribute to effective health promotion collaboration functioning: a scoping review. *Evaluation and Program Planning, 61*, 38-44. doi:10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2016.11.013

Sull, D., & Eisenhardt, K. M. (2012). Simple rules for a complex world. *Harvard Business Review, September*. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2012/09/simple-rules-for-a-complex-world

Taylor, M., & Buckley, E. (2017). *Historical review of place based approaches*. London, United Kingdom: Lankelly Chase. Retrieved from https://lankellychase.org.uk/resources/publications/historical-review-of-place-based-approaches/

Tomlinson, M., & Walker, R. (2009). *Coping with complexity: Child and adult poverty*. London: Child Poverty Action Group. Retrieved from https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/coping_with_complexity.pdf

Tonelli, D. F., Sant'Anna, L., Barcelar Abbud, E., & Aparecida de Souza, S. (2018). Antecedents, process, and equity outcomes: a study about collaborative governance. *Cogent Business & Management, 5*(1). doi:10.1080/23311975.2018.1469381

Twiss, J. M., Kleinman, T., & Hafey, J. M. (2013). California Healthy Cities and Communities. *National Civic Review, 102*(4), 20-25. doi:10.1002/ncr.21146

valentine, k. (2016). Complex needs and wicked problems: how social disadvantage became multiple. *Social Policy & Society, 15*(2), 237-249. doi:10.1017/S1474746415000342

Vinson, T. (2007a). *Dropping off the edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia.* Richmond, Australia: Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia. Retrieved from https://dote.org.au/

Vinson, T. (2007b). The web of disadvantage. *Developing Practice*: *The Child, Youth and Family Work Journal, 19*, 56-65. Retrieved from http://www.acwa.asn.au/dp/

Vinson, T., & Rawsthorne, M. (2015). *Dropping off the edge 2015: persistent communal disadvantage in Australia.* Richmond, Australia: Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia. Retrieved from https://dote.org.au

Ware, V., Gronda, H., & Vitis, L. (2010). *Addressing locational disadvantage effectively.* Melbourne, Australia: AHURI. Retrieved from https://www.ahuri.edu.au/

Weaver, L. (2016). Possible: transformational change in collective impact. *Community Development, 47*(2), 274-283. doi:10.1080/15575330.2016.1138977

Wilks, S., Lahausse, J., & Edwards, B. (2015). *Commonwealth place-based service delivery initiatives: key learnings project* (Research Report No. 32). Melbourne, Australia: Australian Institute of Family Studies. Retrieved from https://aifs.gov.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/rr32.pdf

Wolff, T. (2016). Ten places where collective impact gets it wrong. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice, 7*(1), 1-11. Retrieved from https://www.gjcpp.org/

Wolff, T., Minkler, M., Wolfe, S. M., Berkowitz, B., Bowen, L., Butterfoss, F. D., … Lee, K. S. (2017). Collaborating for equity and justice: moving beyond collective impact. *Nonprofit Quarterly*. Retrieved from https://nonprofitquarterly.org/collaborating-equity-justice-moving-beyond-collective-impact/

Wong, G., Greenhalgh, T., Westhorp, G., Buckingham, J., & Pawson, R. (2013). RAMESES publication standards: meta-narrative reviews. *BMC Medicine, 11*(1). doi:10.1186/1741-7015-11-20

Wong, G., Greenhalgh, T., Westhorp, G., Pawson, R. (2014). Development of methodological guidance, publication standards and training materials for realist and meta-narrative reviews: the RAMESES (Realist And Meta-narrative Evidence Syntheses – Evolving Standards) project. *Health Service Delivery Research, 2*(30). doi:10.3310/hsdr02300

Xiang, W. N. (2013). Working with wicked problems in socio-ecological systems: awareness, acceptance, and adaptation. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, *110*, 1-4. Retrieved from https://www.journals.elsevier.com/landscape-and-urban-planning

Xiao, Y., & Watson, M. (2019). Guidance on conducting a systematic literature review. *Journal of Planning Education and Research, 39*(1), 93-112. doi:10.1177/0739456X17723971

Zakocs, R. C., & Edwards, E. M. (2006). What explains community coalition effectiveness? A review of the literature. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 30*(4), 351-361. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2005.12.004

# Appendix A: Included documents

The following table provides further detail about the study's included documents, including author(s), type of source, type of place-based approach (as described by the author[s]), the country of origin, study setting and issue, study design, methods and sample, key findings and connection with other included studies.

**Table 6: Included document characteristics**

| Author/s | Document source | Type of place-based approach | Country of origin | Setting and type of issue examined | Design / methods / sample | Key findings | Connection with other studies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Allen (2005)** | Primary research (peer-reviewed) | Coordinating council or collaborative partnership | US | Multiple councils in one US midwestern state<br><br>Domestic violence | Cross sectional multi-site study<br><br>Mixed methods<br><br>552 participants from 43 councils | Councils were more likely to be rated as effective when they were characterized by an inclusive climate and diverse active membership. In particular, councils require (a) effective leadership that is organized, efficient, and skilled at encouraging the voices and input of all stakeholders (strongest predictor of perceived effectiveness), (b) shared power in decision-making, and (c) the presence of a shared mission. Further, council membership must not only be broad, but characterized by active participation by a diverse set of key stakeholders. Conflict resolution and formality of structure was not related to perceived council effectiveness. | Roussos and Fawcett (2000) and Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) informed the framework of council climate factors to investigate |
| **Australian Social Inclusion Board (2011)** | Grey literature (policy paper) | Location based initiative | Australia | Australian locations of 5000 inhabitants or less<br><br>Social inclusion and disadvantage | Policy review<br><br>Desktop research and consultation<br><br>Literature sourced predominantly from Australia, UK and Canada; consultation with Australian experts | Place-based approaches should incorporate five elements: (1) align economic and social policy and programs at a local level; (2) a framework for providing integration of effort across governments; (3) a level of devolution that allows significant and meaningful local involvement in determining the issues and solutions; (4) capacity development at both local level and in government, to allow engagement and devolution; (5) funding, measurement and accountability mechanisms designed to support long term, whole of government and community aims | Includes studies of Wiseman (2006), research by Vinson (2007, 2009), Griggs et al (2008) and literature reviews of Burton et al. (2004). This publication is referenced in Wilks et al. (2015). |
| **Bryson et al. (2006)** | Secondary research (review) | Cross sector collaboration | US | Cross sector partnerships<br><br>Complex public problems | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Substantial and transparent referencing of peer-reviewed collaboration literature but literature review methods not stated | Twenty two theoretical propositions about cross sector collaboration, covering initial conditions, process components, structure and governance, contingencies and constraints, outcomes and accountabilities. | |
| **Butterfoss & Kegler (2012)** | Secondary research (book chapter) | Community coalitions | US | Community coalitions operating in neighbourhoods, towns, cities or counties | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Not specified, but refers to practice evidence and literature | Twenty one theoretical propositions, including community context, convener, membership, process components, outcomes | |

| Author/s | Document source | Type of place-based approach | Country of origin | Setting and type of issue examined | Design / methods / sample | Key findings | Connection with other studies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Complex community problems | | | |
| **Cabaj & Weaver (2016)** | Grey literature (practice brief) | Collective impact | Canada | Cross sector collaboration<br><br>Complex problems | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Not specified, but refers to practice evidence | Six propositions related to a movement building paradigm; community aspiration; strategic learning; high leverage activities; inclusive community engagement; and a container for change. | Updates Kania and Kramer (2011) model. References Hanleybrown et al. (2012). |
| **Christens & Inzeo (2015)** | Secondary research (theoretical overview) | Collective impact, community organising, community coalitions | US | Not specified<br><br>Not specified | Theoretical overview | (1) Successful collaborations can rarely be effectively initiated from the outside; (2) positive internal relationships between participants are critical to success; (3) member diversity and formalisation of rules and procedures are important in achieving goals (4) involvement of residents is likely to build capacity at multiple levels for sustaining positive community change; (5) be aware of roles that power plays in coalition formation, maintenance and achievement of goals. | Draws on many of the included sources, but offers a theoretical perspective. |
| **Collective Impact Forum (2016)** | Grey literature (practice brief) | Collective impact | US | Not specified, but refers primarily to US and Canadian organisations<br><br>Complex problems | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Included input from practitioners in the US, Canada and United Way Worldwide | Eight new principles to supplement collective impact:<br>1. Design and implement the initiative with a priority placed on equity<br>2. Include community members in the collaborative<br>3. Recruit and co-create with cross-sector partners<br>4. Use data to continuously learn, adapt and improve<br>5. Cultivate leaders with unique system leadership skills<br>6. Focus on program and system strategies<br>7. Build a culture that fosters relationships, trust and respect across participants<br>8. Customise for local context | Builds on Kania and Kramer's (2011) model. |
| **Cramer et al. (2006)** | Secondary research (review) | Community coalitions | US | Not specified<br><br>Health issues | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Not specified | Seven key constructs: (1) resources; (2) activities; (3) participation; (4) relationships; (5) knowledge and training; (6) efficient practices; (7) social vision | |
| **Crooks et al. (2018)** | Primary research (peer-reviewed) | Collaborative | US | State-wide initiative, targeting particular communities in Alaska<br><br>Health inequity | Cross sectional<br><br>Qualitative study<br><br>Five leaders from key organisations | Relationships are a mechanism for success, in particular: flexibility (individual, organisational, systems, collaboration), transparency, and prioritization of relationships. Taking the time to build deep and authentic relationships, and then developing a shared vision and mission within the context of relationships that are flexible, transparent and prioritized, provided a strong foundation for future success in this collaborative. | Explores the seven factors identified by Roussos and Fawcett (2000). |
| **Danaher (2011)** | Grey literature (working paper) | Community-based collaboration | Canada | Settings relevant to Canadian population health initiatives | Review<br><br>Literature review and key informant interviews | Key factors grouped as: relationships among partners; shared vision; leadership; resources; structure; process | References Roussos and Fawcett (2000) study |

| Author/s | Document source | Type of place-based approach | Country of origin | Setting and type of issue examined | Design / methods / sample | Key findings | Connection with other studies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Health disparities | Database literature sources not stated. Website sources spanned Europe and Canada. Twenty three interviews from diverse settings and sectors in Canada | | |
| **Dankwa-Mullan & Perez-Stable (2016)** | Secondary research (review) | Place-based approaches | US | Not specified<br><br>Population health | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Not specified | (1) establish an inclusive participatory community-based strategy as the basis for action, planning and implementation; (2) develop and implement a plan of action that includes ecological multilevel approaches to address conditions that influence health and health disparities; (3) create a framework for evaluation of health outcomes, program effectiveness, continuous improvement; (4) adopt a plan for continuous, responsive and meaningful communication between community and stakeholders | References Flood et al. (2015) |
| **DSS (2017)** | Grey literature (policy document) | Place-based approaches and collective impact | Australia | Disadvantaged communities in Australia<br><br>Disadvantage | Policy review<br><br>Not specified | 11 guiding principles across the following categories: (1) Take a systems approach; (2) Focus on data, evidence and outcomes; (3) Long-term investment; (4) Understand the place; (5) Partner with others; (6) Local community-decision making. | |
| **Flood et al. (2015)** | Primary research (peer-reviewed) | Collective impact | US | District within San Francisco, US<br><br>Health (tobacco and healthy foods) | Qualitative case study<br><br>Interviewees from different disciplines (n = 18), five focus group participants, multisource documents, observation over nine month period | Collective impact was a relevant framework, but required augmenting by CCAT. Case study identified importance of creating a common agenda and backbone role in playing a leadership role in stressing the vision. Backbone skills in building group trust and addressing tensions, and commitment to equalising participation, greatly enhanced group dynamics and functioning. Various means for continuous communication were important for building trust. Limitations of collective impact: lack of focus on policy and advocacy, additional information and explicit meaning of shared measurement required. | |
| **Foster-Fishman & Watson (2012)** | Secondary research (review) | Systems of care | US | Community setting, Michigan, US<br><br>Improve systems of care | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Literature from systems thinking, organisational change, implementation theory and comprehensive community change. Tested in a single case study. | Argues key approaches are to: infuse theory of change with systems concepts; build implementation capacity with a focus on readiness, capacity, diffusion, sustainability; use action learning, quick wins and simple rules to facilitate change | Foster-Fishman et al. (2001); Kubisch et al. (2010) |
| **Foster-Fishman et al. (2001)** | Secondary research (review) | Community coalitions | US | Community setting<br><br>Not specified | Literature review<br><br>80 articles (including grey literature), published between 1975 - 2001, with 15 examined in more detail. | Four critical levels of collaborative capacity—member capacity, relational capacity, organizational capacity, and programmatic capacity—are described and strategies for building each type are provided. | Roussos and Fawcett (2000) included as part of the literature review |

| Author/s | Document source | Type of place-based approach | Country of origin | Setting and type of issue examined | Design / methods / sample | Key findings | Connection with other studies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Foster-Fishman et al. (2007)** | Secondary research (review) | Systems change | US | Community systems | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Systems thinking, comprehensive community initiative and organisational change literature | Four principal steps to transformative systems change: (1) bound the system; (2) understand fundamental parts as potential root causes; (3) assess system interactions; (4) identify levers for change. The framework highlights the importance of a dialogic process, varied perspectives, attending to deep and apparent characteristics that shape behaviour within a system, sustained change in pattern and/or nature of interactions between parts. | |
| **Gillam et al. (2016)** | Primary research (peer-reviewed) | Collective impact | US | Focus on interagency collaboration, federal, state and foundation funded initiatives in three US states<br><br>Complex problems, early childhood focus | Quasi-experimental<br><br>126 early childhood community stakeholders in federally, state and foundation funded initiatives in Nebraska, Missouri and Virginia | Findings show that: (1) policy mandates have a significant, positive correlation with collaboration; and (2) the only significant predictor of collaboration is informal relationships. This analysis suggests a hybrid process, combining key elements of collective impact with a focus on relationship building, to support effective collaboration practice. | |
| **Hanleybrown et al. (2012)** | Grey literature (practice brief) | Collective impact | US | Settings of different scale (e.g. multi-country focus, single community focus)<br><br>Complex problems | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Not specified | Adds three phases and four components of success (governance and infrastructure; strategic planning; community involvement; evaluation and improvement) to the five conditions of collective impact | |
| **Hey (2017)** | Primary research (dissertation) | Learning community | Canada | Community setting, Ontario, Canada<br><br>Immigration and social inclusion issues. | Qualitative case study<br><br>10 key informants and documents | Learning community framework includes five key components: (1) lens; (2) structure; (3) processes; (4) practices; (5) outcomes. Describes facilitating factors; hindering factors; mixed factors. | |
| **Hogan et al. (2018b)** | Grey literature (working paper) | Place-based approach and collective impact | Australia | Australian communities experiencing deep and persistent disadvantage<br><br>Childhood developmental vulnerability and social disadvantage | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Literature review<br><br>Extensive referencing but methods not specified | Organisational theory of action with seven key principles, embedded in larger system level theory of change at the community level. Principles include:<br>1. Create and sustain a cross-sector decision-making partnership<br>2. Establish and sustain skilled backbone support<br>3. Engage and mobilise cross-sector partners and networks<br>4. Engage in co-design and robust planning<br>5. Engage in continuous strategic learning<br>6. Build capacity in all sectors<br>7. Develop collaborative mindsets and practices | Draws on Wilks et al (2015); Moore et al. (2014); Moore and Fry (2011); Kania and Kramer (2011); Cabaj and Weaver (2015); DSS (2017); Salignac et al. (2017) |

| Author/s | Document source | Type of place-based approach | Country of origin | Setting and type of issue examined | Design / methods / sample | Key findings | Connection with other studies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Homel et al. (2015)** | Secondary research (model) | Collective impact | Australia | Disadvantaged region of Brisbane, Australia<br><br>Crime and disadvantaged communities | Theoretical innovation<br><br>CREATE model developed as an outcome of the Pathways to Prevention project (2002 - 2011) | CREATE model suggests that relationships, outreach, trust with community are fundamental; evidence-based practice is critical; need to address governance arrangements that divide schools, community agencies and families. | |
| **Jolin et al. (2012)** | Grey literature (working paper) | Community collaboratives | US | Community setting (US)<br><br>Complex social problems | Review<br><br>More than 100 collaboratives, interviews with leaders from subset of 12 exemplary collaboratives | Findings organised into: core principles; characteristics of success; supportive resources | |
| **Kania & Kramer (2011)** | Grey literature (practice brief) | Collective impact | US | Community setting, education setting<br><br>Complex problems | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Unclear, but four initiatives described including US and Cote d'Ivoire | Five conditions are needed for collective impact: backbone organisation; common agenda; mutually reinforcing activities; continuous communication; and shared measurement | |
| **Keast & Mandell (2014)** | Primary research (peer-reviewed) | Collaboration | Australia | Queensland, Australia. Mix of federal, state and local government involvement. Two cases excluded the community sector<br><br>Intractable issues | Multi-site (n=8) case study<br><br>Mixed methods<br><br>181 interviews<br>17 focus groups<br>200 questionnaires | Collaboration is found to be a distinctive form of working together, characterised by intense and interdependent relationships and exchanges, higher levels of cohesion (density) and requiring new ways of behaving, working, managing and leading. These elements are configured into a practice framework consisting of three elements: organisational; systems and processes; personal competencies. | |
| **Kegler et al. (2010)** | Primary research (peer-reviewed) | Community coalitions | US | California, US.<br><br>Health cities and communities | Multple case study methodology (n=8).<br><br>76 semi-structured interviews with local coordinators and coalition leaders<br>23 focus groups with coalition members | History of collaboration influenced all four coalition factors examined, from lead agency selection to coalition structure. Geography influenced coalition formation largely through membership and staffing, whereas the demographic and economic makeup of the community had an impact on coalition membership, staffing, and infrastructure for coalition processes. The influence of community politics, history, norms and values was most noticeable on coalition membership. | Draws on Community Coalition Action Theory and other literature to inform data analysis framework |

| Author/s | Document source | Type of place-based approach | Country of origin | Setting and type of issue examined | Design / methods / sample | Key findings | Connection with other studies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Kubisch et al. (2010)** | Grey literature (working paper) | Comprehensive community initiatives | US | Poor communities<br><br>Complex social issues and disadvantage | Review<br><br>Literature scan, observations, consultations, practice expert opinions<br><br>48 initiatives;<br>96 meeting participants and interviewees. | Overarching lessons: (1) be as clear as possible about goals, definition of success and theory of change; (2) invest in intentional strategies for achieving the clearly defined goals; (3) have a clear theory of scale and make sure investments are proportional to the type and scale of desired outcomes; (4) focus on effective implementation, be willing to invest in capacity building and make sure capacities and objectives are aligned; (5) treat comprehensiveness as a principle, not a goal - it is impractical to do everything simultaneously; (6) embrace community building as both a guiding principle and a set of actions; (7) expand the definition and purpose of evaluation to assist in planning, managing and learning; (8) rethink the comparative advantage of philanthropy in community change and adapt accordingly | |
| **Lasker & Weiss (2003)** | Secondary research (review and model) | Community health governance | US | Community health problems | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Model developed through work with 9 communities | Domains in the model include: leadership and management; critical characteristics of the process; proximal outcomes; distal outcomes. | |
| **Moore & Fry (2011)** | Grey literature (working paper) | Place-based approaches | Australia | Specific focus on service reconfiguration and coordination in Australian communities<br><br>Wicked problems facing children and families | Literature review<br><br>Conceptual and empirical literature | Key components of a comprehensive community-based service framework include: universal; tiered; integrated; multi-level; place-based; relational; partnership-based; governance structure. | Shares some studies in common with Wilks et al. (2015), e.g. Cytron (2010); Harlem Children's Zone publications. Shares some publications in common with Hogan (e.g. Griggs et al [2008], Wiseman [2006]) |
| **Moore et al. (2014)** | Research report | Place-based approaches and collective impact | Australia | Community setting<br><br>Wicked problems facing children and families | Literature review | Key strategies include: multi-level approaches; integrated services; communication between communities and services; co-design; build capacity; adapt to local needs; help people change; use evidence-based interventions; long term focus | Draws on many of the sources included in Moore & Fry (2011) |
| **Nowell & Foster-Fishman (2011)** | Primary research (peer-reviewed) | Collaborative | US | Community setting, one mid-western US state<br><br>Domestic violence | Mixed methods study<br><br>15 initial interviewees; confirmatory analysis with 614 different organisations within 51initiatives | Framework of organisational outcomes: knowledge and awareness; social capital; opportunity and impact; resources | |

| Author/s | Document source | Type of place-based approach | Country of origin | Setting and type of issue examined | Design / methods / sample | Key findings | Connection with other studies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Roussos & Fawcett (2000)** | Secondary research (literature review) | Collaborative partnerships or coalitions | US | Community setting<br><br>Community health concern | Literature review<br><br>34 unique studies describing the effects of 252 partnerships | Factors include: clear vision and mission; action planning for community and systems change; developing and supporting leadership; documentation and ongoing feedback on progress; technical assistance and support; securing financial resources for the work; making outcomes matter. Broader contributors include: social and economic factors; social capital; context of the partnership; community control in agenda setting. | |
| **Salignac et al. (2017)** | Primary research (peer-reviewed) | Collective impact | Australia | Australian communities<br><br>Complex social problems | Multiple case study methodology (n = 5)<br><br>Qualitative<br><br>34 interviews, multiple document sources | Success features grouped into three categories. Leadership: champion(s); adaptive leadership processes; servant leadership; shared vision; passion. Relational factors: robust relationships; honesty; high levels of trust; mutual respect; professionalism. Organisational elements: mechanisms for community engagement; effective backbone; diversity of representation; clear business and governance processes; mechanisms for ongoing review. | Explores Kania and Kramer's (2011) model |
| **Seaton et al. (2017)** | Secondary research (literature review) | Collaborations | US | Health focus | Scoping review<br><br>25 studies across 8 countries, published between 2001 and 2015 | Facilitating factors: shared vision, goals; leadership; member characteristics; organisational commitment; availability of resources; clear roles and responsibilities; trust, communication and relationships; engaging the target population | |
| **Spark Policy Institute & ORS Impact (2018)** | Primary research (evaluation report) | Collective impact | US | US and Canada<br><br>Complex problems | Cross-site study<br><br>25 sites, 8 of which studies in more depth, 3 equity case studies. All operating for 3+ years. | Demonstrates cases when the CI approach contributed to documented population changes, clarified ways that systems changes occur to support collective impact common agendas, largely reinforced the importance of four of the five conditions, and pointed to better understanding of what equity approaches and outcomes can look like | Draws on Kania and Kramer's (2011) model as underpinning framework |
| **Stolp et al. (2017)** | Secondary research (literature review) | Collaborations | US | Community level<br><br>Health promotion focus | Scoping literature review<br><br>14 studies from 3 countries (US, Ireland, Holland) | 14 studies examined 113 factors, 88 of which were only measured once. Leadership was the most commonly studied factor but was conceptualized differently across studies. Six factors were significantly associated with outcome measures across studies; leadership (n = 3), gender (n = 2), trust (n = 2), length of the collaboration (n = 2), budget (n = 2) and changes in organizational model (n = 2). | |
| **Tonelli et al. (2018)** | Secondary research (literature review) | Collaborative governance | Brazil | Collaborative governance settings<br><br>Complex situations | Scoping literature review<br><br>35 papers | Organises findings into antecedents, collaboration process and equity outcomes. Discusses properties, influences and effects. | Includes Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) as a paper |

| Author/s | Document source | Type of place-based approach | Country of origin | Setting and type of issue examined | Design / methods / sample | Key findings | Connection with other studies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Twiss et al. (2013)** | Grey literature (practice brief) | Not specified | US | Communities range in size from 5,000 to almost 500,000<br><br>Community health | Practice review<br><br>Project included 20 sites | Lessons learnt highlight the importance of particular factors including: leadership; community participation; respectful relationships; geopolitical and contextual factors; attending to community priorities; attending to the principle of diffusion of innovation; visibility; long-term commitment; planning for sustainability from the outset; transparent and meaningful evaluation. | |
| **Weaver (2016)** | Secondary research (review) | Collective impact | Canada | Community setting<br><br>Complex problems | Review<br><br>Not specified | Discussed six elements. (1) Practice system leadership. (2) Embrace a framework (e.g. CI framework). (3) Assess community readiness. (4) Focus on data and measurement. (5) Communicate and engage. (6) Ask what's next (future orientation). | Extends on collective impact framework (Kania & Kramer, 2011) |
| **Wilks et al. (2015)** | Grey literature (review) | Place-based service delivery initiatives | Australia | Community setting, Australian and international initiatives<br><br>Complex social problems | Conceptual policy review<br><br>Majority of international literature from US, UK, EU. | Groups factors into: design and delivery; program implementation; evaluation. | References findings from Australian Social Inclusion Board (2011). Shares some studies in common with Moore & Fry (2011), eg, Cytron (2010) |
| **Wolff et al. (2017)** | Grey literature (practice brief) | Cross sector collaboration | US | Community setting<br><br>Social change | Theoretical innovation<br><br>Not specified | Principles include: (1) Explicitly address issues of social and economic injustice and structural racism; (2) Employ a community development approach in which residents have equal power in determining the coalition's or collaborative's agenda and resource allocation; (3) Employ community organizing as an intentional strategy and as part of the process. Work to build resident leadership and power; (4) Focus on policy, systems, and structural change; (5) Build on the extensive community-engaged scholarship and research over the last four decades that show what works, that acknowledge the complexities, and that evaluate appropriately; (6) Construct core functions for the collaborative based on equity and justice that provide basic facilitating structures and build member ownership and leadership. | References Foster-Fishman & Watson (2010), Community Coalition Action Theory |
| **Zakocs & Edwards (2006)** | Secondary research (literature review) | Community coalitions | US | Targeted local geographic areas in the US (neighbourhoods, towns, cities or counties)<br><br>Health issues | Literature review<br><br>26 studies published between 1980 and 2004 | Fifty five coalition-building factors found to be associated with indicators of coalition effectiveness. Six coalition-building factors were found to be associated with indicators of effectiveness in five or more studies: formalization of rules/procedures, leadership style, member participation, membership diversity, agency collaboration, and group cohesion. | Roussos and Fawcett (2000), Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) reference list used to source studies |