

# A systematic review of the public administration literature to identify how to increase public engagement and participation with local governance

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A systematic review of the public administration literature on public engagement and participation is conducted with the expressed intent to develop an actionable evidence base for public managers. Over 900 articles, in nine peer-reviewed public administration journals are screened on the topic. The evidence from 40 articles is classified, summarized, and applied to inform the managerial practice of activating and recruiting the participation of the public in the affairs of local governance. The review also provides brief explanation on how systematic reviews can fill a need in governance from the evidence-based management perspective.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Public engagement and participation are critical topics in the literatures of governance and public administration (Nabatchi, 2012; Bryson, Crosby, & Bloomberg, 2014; Fung, 2015) for a variety of reasons, including, their practical relevance (Escobar, 2017, Escobar, 2013; Dourse et al., 2016). Given the importance of government engagement with the public, it appears prescient to examine what we know about how to engage—the practices taken by agents of governance to shape the drivers and challenges for individuals to participate (Ryfe & Stalburg, 2012). Yet no one has conducted a systematic review and synthesis of the evidence with the expressed intent to identify and apply evidence to practice.

I seek to identify what we know about how to increase the attention, attendance, and participation of the public in the affairs of local government. This review is more narrow compared with others that broadly examine multiple rationales, mediums, and outcomes of engagement (Bingham, Nabatchi, & O'Leary, 2005; Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004; Nabatchi, 2010; Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014; Rowe & Frewer, 2005). Instead, the review is guided by the developing fields of evidence-based management (Rousseau, 2006) and behavioral public administration (Grimmelikhuijsen, Jilke, Olsen, & Tummers, 2017) in that the review is undertaken for the explicit purposes of providing an actionable and useable evidence base to inform practice (Jilke, Van de Walle, & Kim, 2016; Lavis, Robertson, Woodside, McLeod, & Abelson, 2003).

## 2 | FRAMEWORK

Evidence-based management is the act of translating principals derived from science into the practices of organizing and managing (Rousseau, 2006). The premise for this style of management is that the adoption of clear and well evidenced-based practices will be more likely to produce the results expected as compared with practices that are less well evidenced, for instance, anecdotal, instinctual, and limited or localized experience (Cairney, Oliver, & Wellstead, 2016). A variety of efforts exist to support the application of evidence-based management to government; however, the research practice gaps are still largely evident throughout governance (Head, Ferguson, Cherney, & Boreham, 2014; Landry, Lamari, & Amara, 2003; Lundin & Öberg, 2014).

Research on the dissemination and application of evidence to practice have highlighted the role systematic reviews can play in filling the research practice gap (Boaz & Pawson, 2005; Lavis et al., 2005; Levin, 2013). However, in order to influence practice, reviews must be carefully focused and formulated with the expressed intent to disentangle the influence of contextual factors on behavioral change (Jilke et al., 2016; Mulrow, 1994; Pawson, 2002; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003) and develop actionable messages for decision makers (Lavis et al., 2003). For instance, Dobbins, Cockerill, and Barnsley (2001) demonstrate increased use of evidence in practice when systematic reviews are provided to practitioners. Logic models provide a particularly acute way of focusing systematic reviews for building a management evidence base (Anderson et al., 2011; Pawson, Greenhalgh, Harvey, & Walshe, 2005).

Figure 1 is adapted from the “framework for understanding differences in local direct public engagement” by Nabatchi and Amsler (2014, p. 665) and repurposed as a logic model (Anderson et al., 2011) to demonstrate the analytic focus of this systematic review. The figure demonstrates how context and setting as well as sponsors conveners and their motivations for public engagement are inputs that in turn affect the outputs/process design and outcomes of engagement. For this review, the focus is on the critical linkage between inputs and outputs. How do context, setting, sponsors, conveners and their motivation for public engagement as well as direct activation and recruitment of the public impact turnout and participation? As Ryfe and Stalburg (2012) explain “After all, deliberative civic engagement cannot have an effect or generate legitimacy if people do not actually participate in the activity” (p. 43). I will note that recruitment is one topic included in “process design” in the review of direct public engagement in local government by Nabatchi and Amsler (2014); however, the review covers a much broader range of topics and is not designed to inform practice.

Next, I describe the research methods adopted to identify and analyze records, largely following the PRISMA 2009 guidelines for transparent reporting in systematic reviews, including, eligibility criteria, information sources, search strategy, and study selection (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & Prisma Group, 2009). Then, I provide a brief classification and overview of the operationalizations of engagement in the studies reviewed in full. The results section describes the influential factors that drive or challenge the participation of persons in governance processes. In reporting, I give deference to the hierarchy of evidence (Davies & Nutley, 1999; Jilke et al., 2016; Perry, 2012) by noting and providing denser summary of studies that are experimental in design ( $n = 4$ ) and thus provide robust causal evidence. The review concludes with a discussion of how to apply the findings to the practice of local governance and notations about the deficits of the review.

### 3 | ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In the process of developing the eligibility criteria for the study, several key terms require definition. Generally, the field is concerned with

“... the practice of involving members of the public in the agenda setting, decision making, and policy forming activities of organizations/institutions responsible for policy development” (Rowe & Frewer, 2005, p. 253). The broad definition leads to a wide array of operationalizations and measures, as will be demonstrated and are included in the systematic review. However, an explanation for engagement compared with participation and why both might be included in the study is necessary. The literature tends to distinguish these concepts by the extent and intensity of the involvement of the public (Arnstein, 1969). Engagement refers to more passive mechanisms, such as communicating information to the public or consulting preferences (Lukensmeyer & Torres, 2006). In contrast, participation necessitates expansive opportunities for dialog and deliberation or the public being a part of the provision or action of the service, also called coproduction (Bovaird, 2007). Despite distinction in terms, both engagement and participation require activation of the public's interest and therefore are included in the study and results regarding influential factors are generalized to both areas in order to learn from a wider array of studies.

### 4 | SEARCH STRATEGY

To identify empirical studies, searches for four topics were conducted, “citizen engagement,” “citizen participation,” “public participation,” and “public engagement.” Both citizen and public are used as qualifiers to draw in a broader scale of articles. First, three top public administration journals websites were searched directly, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *Public Administration Review*, and *Administration and Society*. All are in the top five rankings of public administration journals by Bernick and Krueger (2010). Each term was searched separately, in quotations, and could appear anywhere in the article. All years the journal was published were included. An excel file was used to enter all titles from all searches and used to identify redundancies in articles returned as a result of using multiple search terms.

Then, a JSTOR search was applied using a modified search strategy. The JSTOR advanced search limited the location of the search terms to abstracts and used “or” between the search terms. The search

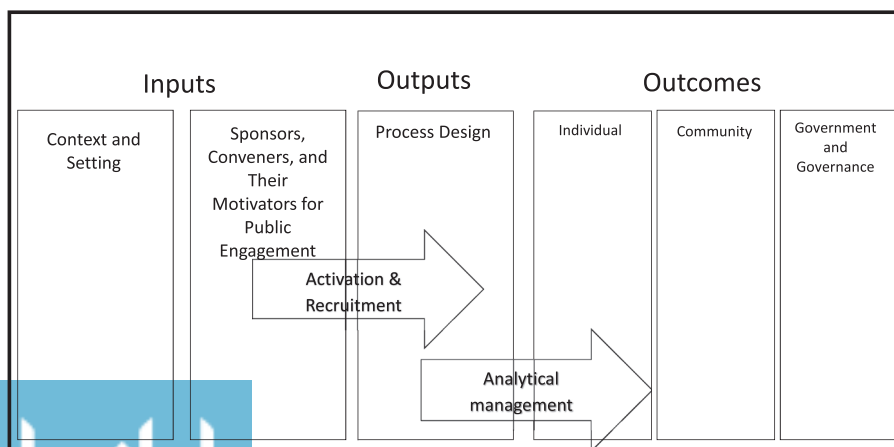


FIGURE 1 Logic model of public engagement

was also limited to “articles” in item types and English as the language. Finally, the JSTOR search was journal filtered to include journal titles in the JSTOR classification of “public policy and administration,” that are also ranked by Bernick and Krueger (2010), and were not included in the prior journal specific search. The journals included in the JSTOR search have limited availability by years as indicated in parentheses, next. The journals included in the JSTOR search are, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* (1981–2012), *Journal of Public Policy* (1981–2012), *Public Administration Quarterly* (1935–2015), *Public Performance and Management Review* (2000–2010), *Publius* (1971–2012), and *State and Local Government Review* (1976–2014). The search processes adopted ensure that studies that appear in high-quality peer-reviewed journals are included. The search was limited to public administration journals because of the fields' dedication to understanding and supporting practice. An overview of the results of the search and screening process are presented in Figure 2.

## 5 | STUDY SCREENING AND SELECTION

In total, 916 articles were returned. First, articles were screened for redundancies due to using related search terms. Then, article titles and abstracts were screened for broad topical relevance and if they met the empirical requirement. The review is limited to empirical studies in order to insure an empirical knowledge base (Pawson, 2006), which is central to the evidence-based movement.

The reduced number of articles ( $n = 180$ ) were screened in full for the extent to which engagement or participation was clearly operationalized and considered as an outcome variable in the study. To be useful to the research question asked, public engagement, in all its forms, had to be a dependent or outcome variable because the

purpose is to understand what factors or interventions changed public engagement. The study had to be able to demonstrate that some influential factor changed who or how many persons were engaged. The total number of articles that are coded and included in the qualitative synthesis is 40.

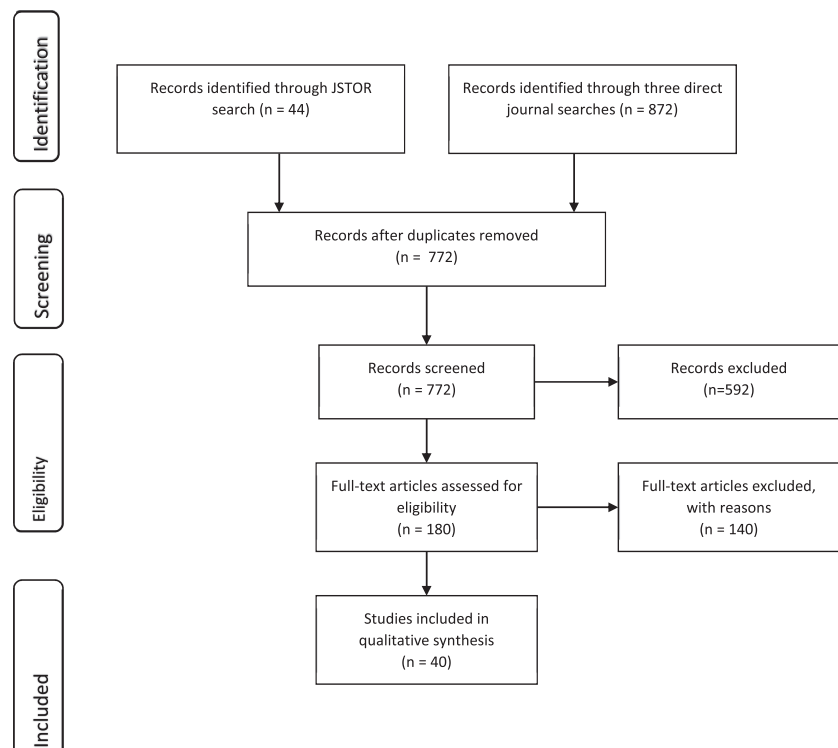
A deductive coding scheme for operationalizations of engagement and influential factors was adopted, drawn from other review articles, including, Rowe and Frewer (2005), Nabatchi and Amsler (2014), and Ebdon and Franklin (2006). However, a nonreductionary approach to coding was adopted in order to provide more accurate and meaningful categories when necessary. Within influential factors, reporting is focused on identifying drivers and challenges to engagement.

## 6 | OPERATIONALIZATION OF ENGAGEMENT

To help in the interpretation of the factors that influence engagement, I first report all the ways in which engagement is operationalized in the studies reviewed.

Attendance at a city council meeting was the operationalization of engagement in one study (Hock, Anderson, & Potoski, 2013). In contrast, several studies examined attendance and/or participation in more involved meeting types, including, participatory budgeting (Hong, 2015), deliberative and collaborative decision making (Berner, Amos, & Berner, 2011; Coleman, 2014; Koontz, 1999; Schachter, 2005), particularly, working on grant proposals (Handley & Howell-Moroney, 2010; Buckwalter, 2014), rural governance (Eversole, 2011), and nonprofit working groups (LeRoux, 2009).

A similar differentiation between engagement mechanisms was made in a study by Yang and Callahan (2007). They report findings



**FIGURE 2** Flow diagram of search and screening outcomes

from a survey that was used to construct two index measures of engagement in local governments as reported by city managers. The first index, use of participation mechanisms, was comprised of public hearings, community or neighborhood meetings, citizen surveys, citizen focus groups, citizen advisory boards or committees, and issue oriented committees. For more about the adoption and use of participation mechanisms by local governments, see Yang and Callahan (2005); Wang (2001); Huang and Feeney (2016); Coursey, Yang, and Pandey (2012); Neshkova (2014); Aikins and Krane (2010); and Berner (2003). The second index represented managers perceptions of the extent to which citizens are actually engaged in any of these activities. While I note the first measure here, in reporting, the focus is on the second measure as it captures perceived increases in participation.

Another distinct code was created for online participation. This included commenting on environmental issues (Royo, Yetano, & Acerete, 2014), commenting on strategy documents of a transportation agency via an online discussion forum (Yetano & Royo, 2017), Facebook engagement (Bonsón, Royo, & Ratkai, 2017), government websites (Scott, 2006), and internet use for civic and political purposes (Kim, Kavanaugh, & Hult, 2011).

Coproduction was the largest categorization of engagement methods in the review. By definition coproduction is "... the provision of services through regular, long term relationships between professionalized service providers (in any sector) and service users or other members of the community where all participants make substantial resources contributions" (Bovaird, 2007, p. 847). The review identified operationalizations of coproduction, including, use of 311 and Fix My Street type applications that require the public to provide input on issues in the community (O'Brien, Offenhuber, Baldwin-Philippi, Sands, & Gordon, 2017; Sjoberg, Mellon, & Peixoto, 2017; Clark, Brudney, & Jang, 2013), recycling (Folz, 1991; Folz & Hazlett, 1991; Riccucci, Van Ryzin, & Li, 2016), giving (Adres, Vashdi, & Zalmanovitch, 2016), and network community partnerships (Bovaird, 2007; Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2016) including, stakeholders and patients in health care provision (Sorrentino, Guglielmetti, Gilardi, & Marsilio, 2017). In addition, Bifulco and Ladd (2005) examine various ways that parents participate with schools, which they also refer to as coproduction. Principals were asked about the extent of parent involvement in open house or back to school nights, school wide parent teacher conferences, subject area events, parent education workshops, written school parent contracts, parents as volunteers in school, parents involved in instructional issues, parents involved in governance, and parents involved in budget decisions. The authors created two indexes: (a) involvement in school events and (b) involvement in school operations. Lastly, I identified two studies that self-described their focus as "volunteering" (Nesbit & Reingold, 2011; Simon & Wang, 2002).

Serving on boards is another operationalization identified. An experiment by Arceneaux and Butler (2016) asked if participants would serve on local government boards. A broad qualitative study that examined a sample of Hispanic persons experiences with government included their experiences serving on citizen advisory councils (de Lancer Julnes & Johnson, 2011) as well as, "conferences," "policy change," "town hall forums," and "government partnerships with community-based organizations" (pp. 227–228). Another mixed methods study, that was included, was Mosley and Grogan (2013) who examine

public perceptions of the representativeness of nonprofit organizations and leaders on governing boards, including, religious congregations, alderman's office, local schools, and local business and community organizations.

Another code was made to include both informal and formal methods of consultation. Two studies examined the conditions under which the public contacted the government directly (Glaser, Yeager, & Parker, 2006; Thomas & Melkers, 2001), and one examined how often neighborhood associations responded to formal notifications from a city (Adler & Blake, 1990). Three studies examined formal methods of consultation, including rule making (Woods, 2009; Balla, 2000) and appealing rulings made by public welfare bureaucracies (Lens, 2007).

Finally, a study by Vigoda-Gadot (2006) was included. The study created an index of political participation, including being a member of a political party, keeping informed about politics, voting regularly in general elections, sending support/protest letters to politicians or different newspapers, taking part in demonstrations or political meetings, engaging in public discussions, being a candidate for public office, and signing petitions on political issues. The index measure also asked about being an active member of a public organization and thus was included.

## 7 | INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

In order to inform the practices of public managers in their efforts to engage the public, the emphasis in what follows is identifying and explicating the influential perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors that can be demonstrated to impact the extent to which the public engages. When examining and synthesizing the influential factors, I focus on drivers and challenges within five theoretically and analytically informed categories: public administrators' perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors, representativeness of the bureaucracy, recruitment strategies, individuals' rationality, perceptions, beliefs and behavior and institutional and structural features of the agency. In areas in which there is experimental evidence, I indicate that the study is experimental in nature and provide more dense synthesis of the study settings and findings in order to provide context that can help practitioners make judgments about if and how the studies' findings apply to them.

### 7.1 | Public administrators' perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors

Public administrators' perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors are a critical influential factor in increasing engagement. The bureaucratic attitudes and behaviors that support engagement, as measured in the studies reviewed, include, responsiveness (Sjoberg et al., 2017; Mosley & Grogan, 2013), ethics (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006), efficacy (Berner et al., 2011; Clark et al., 2013; Sjoberg et al., 2017; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006), buy-in (Buckwalter, 2014), trust (Mosley & Grogan, 2013), and accountability (Handley & Howell-Moroney, 2010). For instance, Sjoberg, Mellon, and Peixoto (2017) find that if a bureaucrat timely and completely responds to a person who uses the Fix My Street application for the first time, that person is more likely to continue to report.

Mosley and Grogan's (2013) qualitative study helps to explain these factors in practice. They suggest that listening, getting things done, and authenticity on the part of organizational representatives is necessary in order for persons to feel legitimately represented. Similarly, Sorrentino et al. (2017) suggests coproduction results and findings must be integrated into managerial practices. Berner et al. (2011) report that citizens' want their input to be followed up by feedback from staff or elected officials. In addition, experienced staff (Folz & Hazlett, 1991) and managers with a democratic leadership style (LeRoux, 2009) may aide in demonstrating these values externally.

In contrast, Eversole's (2011) study of rural engagement in Australia notes ways in which bureaucrats decreased engagement. The authors find that governance entities often have beliefs, behaviors, language, processes, and culture that vary from those they try to engage and as a result deter rather than facilitate participation even when trying to engage. Similarly, Lens (2007), in a study of when and why persons appeal welfare agencies' findings, suggests that people did not exercise their rights to appeal as result of the "cumulative effect of being ignored or disbelieved throughout their interaction with the agency ..." (p. 395). de Lancer Julnes and Johnson (2011) note that Hispanics in Utah interviewed for their study, feel "unwelcome," explained by cultural differences.

- Drivers—responsiveness, efficacy, ethics, buy-in, accountability, authenticity, experience, and democratic leadership style
- Challenges—bureaucratic norms, including, language, processes, and culture, failure to demonstrate an ability to use information from the public meaningfully, and a failure to nurture positive relationships over time.

## 7.2 | Representativeness of the bureaucracy

Representativeness of the bureaucracy and elected officials is a well-articulated theory in terms of outcomes of public administration (Hong, 2016; Riccucci & Van Ryzin, 2017), here, we note its ability to drive participation broadly and particularly of persons that are often less likely to engage (de Lancer Julnes & Johnson, 2011; Riccucci et al., 2016).

Riccucci et al. (2016) conducted an online survey experiment of the willingness of participants to coproduce, specifically, participate in a recycling program, intended to test the theory of representative bureaucracy. Online survey takers were asked if they were willing to participate in a hypothetical local recycling initiative. Survey takers were randomly assigned to four groups. Each of the four groups received a message from four public officials asking them to participate. The messages differed in how many of the public officials names were female, in contrast to male. The authors' find that women's willingness to participate is significantly higher when all of the four names of the public officials on the message are women, compared with all male names. In contrast, across three types of recycling (hard plastics, light composting, and heavy composting), men were just slightly less willing to coproduce as the names of the public officials became more female, except for a slight increase in participation (2%) in the hard plastics grouping. In conclusion, the evidence suggest that greater symbolic representation of women in a governing agency increases

willingness to coproduce among women. Moreover, based on the reported male rates of willingness, the authors suggest, "... greater gender diversity may in some cases produce positive effects for everyone in the society, which is significant given the general underrepresentation of women in government leadership positions." (p. 127).

de Lancer Julnes and Johnson's (2011) in-depth interviews with Hispanic persons in Utah suggest an unwillingness to engage as a result of a lack of representation in governance. The authors suggest that increasing participation among the Hispanic population must begin by hiring and maintaining a more diverse workforce, because such an effort would be seen as a real commitment to engagement.

## 7.3 | Recruitment

Two of the studies in the review use an experimental design to test recruitment methods, both demonstrating causality in how to increase and decrease participation. Hock et al. (2013) conduct a field experiment in which a local government manager made direct phone calls to the public to test if it increased the number of attendees at a public meeting. The meeting was about a downtown redevelopment project in a local government in Iowa. The meeting was announced through typical means, including, local newspaper, radio, invitation letters to individuals and businesses, city newsletter, city website, and public access television. In addition, the City's planning and housing department identified stakeholders in the downtown area. One group of stakeholders ( $n = 100$ ) received a direct phone call about the meeting from a mid-level, city, government manager. The manager reads a script explicating the purposes of the meeting and why it is important to the stakeholder. A voicemail was left if no one answered the phone. In addition, a similarly scripted postcard was sent to stakeholders. Among those that received the phone call the attendance rate was 8.3%. Of those that did not receive a phone call, the attendance rate was 4.7%. Thus, the treatment group, receiving the phone call, was significantly and twice as likely to attend. Among those that received the post card, compared with no post card, there was no difference in attendance rate.

Arceneaux and Butler (2016) examine willingness to participate on local government boards and committees. Their survey experiment was integrated into a citizen satisfaction survey, with a response rate of 11.3%. At the end of the online satisfaction survey, a prompt asked residents if they are willing to serve on committees. Residents were randomly assigned to three different prompts. The control group received a baseline message stating: "Mayor and City Council are seeking members to serve on a number of City committees" (p. 135). Another group received a message offering recognition for their efforts. In addition to a headline stating, "Serve on a City Committee, Be a Hero to Your Community!" the prompt said, "... we will publicly honor those who apply to serve the community in this way by identifying them in a special post on the city website" (p. 135). The third group received a prompt titled "Serve on a City Committee. We'll Invest to Make you Effective!" The prompt goes on to suggest that the city will provide training for participants: "At the first meeting there will be a special training session to make you more effective at obtaining your goals and minimizing your time commitment." (p. 135). The analysis looked at willingness to serve as a result of the

three messages and across income groupings, high (above median) and low. Of those that received the baseline message 18.4% were willing to serve, 17.8% as a result of the recognition message, and 11.3% as a result of the training message, the differences are not significant. However, the training message resulted in the least interest and the difference in interest from the baseline message was significant for lower income persons. The authors believe that the training message signaled a greater time commitment on the part of the residents and thus served as deterrent to participate.

The Hock study adopts a targeted approach to recruitment while Arceneaux and Butler (2016) adopts a random, yet biased by self-selection approach to sampling. Other forms of recruitment are also noted in the studies reviewed, with varying levels of effectiveness. For instance, Hong (2015) study of participation in South Korea's regional budgeting processes finds that the average attendance rate is higher when citizens are openly recruited. Unsurprisingly, participation was increased in recycling programs when mandated but sanctions and reminders increased participation as well (Folz, 1991).

Others look at means of notification to participants. Woods (2009) challenges the assumption that legal means of public notification on state rulemaking are ineffective and finds (a) great variety in state requirements and (b) states that are required and use more public notifications have increases in stakeholders being engaged. In contrast, Bonsón, Royo, and Ratkai (2017) indicate that more Facebook posting by municipalities does not lead to a higher level of engagement by the public on Facebook. However, Clark, Brudney, and Jang (2013) demonstrate that smart phone applications extend the audience of local government to a historically unengaged population, students/youth. In addition, several studies note that connecting notifications with other agencies increased engagement in some ways (Folz, 1991; Kim et al., 2011). Finally, clear communications with clear identifying information for getting involved is a critical driver (Buckwalter, 2014; Schachter, 2005; Arceneaux & Butler, 2016; Folz, 1991; Thomas & Melkers, 1999).

- Drivers—personal phone calls, incentives, and increasing avenues to recruit, for example, through other agencies
- Challenges—more posting does not necessarily mean more engagement, costs to effectively recruit may be prohibitive

## 7.4 | Individual rationality, perceptions, beliefs, and behavior

Several interesting and well-demonstrated themes emerge in the area of individual rationality, perceptions, beliefs, and behavior many of which public administrators may have some agency upon. First, prior participation is a strong indicator of future participation (Thomas & Melkers, 2001; Coleman, 2014; Stanley & Weare, 2004; Nesbit & Reingold, 2011; Berner et al., 2011). This is true even when future participation mechanisms vary from the way in which persons have participated in the past (Nesbit & Reingold, 2011; Simon & Wang, 2002; Stanley & Weare, 2004). For instance, Simon and Wang (2002) find individuals who enrolled in Americorps are significantly more likely to volunteer in their home communities following their commitment. Stanley and Weare (2004) find that use of the internet for engagement, induces the already willing to engage more and

through additional venues rather than bringing new people to engage, a similar finding to Kim et al. (2011). The findings suggest that the barriers to initial engagement are great; however, creating an opportunity for that first interaction is critical for sustaining engagement.

The public also appear to be rational in their allocations of time and resources to participation (Schachter, 2005; Balla, 2000; de Lancer Julnes & Johnson, 2011; Adres et al., 2016; Sorrentino et al., 2017). For instance, Thomas and Melkers's (2001) study of Georgia citizens contact with municipal officials finds that citizens are more likely to make contact when they have service issues, problems with department helpfulness, and difficulty finding a correct phone number. The findings suggest that participation is moderated by personal need and salience. Balla (2000) finds that stakeholders made more comments on rules for which they had a positive financial stake. Others also describe citizens as making a rational calculus between time and benefit before participating (de Lancer Julnes & Johnson, 2011; Bovaird, 2007; Stanley & Weare, 2004; Lens, 2007; Eversole, 2001; Hong, 2015). For example, Hong (2015) found higher rates of attendance at budget meetings in South Korea when they are held later in the fiscal year, because participants anticipated that the timing of the meeting indicated more important decisions would be made.

Another driving factor of engagement is territoriality or feeling possessive about a place (O'Brien et al., 2017). O'Brien et al. (2017) find that persons that express a greater desire to benefit their community and enforce social norms are more likely to make 311 reports where they live, as compared with making reports about where they work. Thomas and Melkers (2001) demonstrate that people who have a local government interest are more likely to take the step to actually contact officials on their own, and Sjoberg et al. (2017) find that persons who feel like they can make an actual difference continue to participate over time. Hong (2015) finds greater levels of engagement in budget meetings when they are at the "zone" level, as compared with district-wide, in South Korea. The author suggests this is a result of greater interest in local issues. Adler and Blake (1990) find that neighborhoods with strong identities and more neighborhood level organization are more likely to participate (See also Glaser et al., 2006). Several studies more broadly demonstrate that altruism, passion, and knowledge were also motivators to participate (Bovaird, 2007; Buckwalter, 2014; Coleman, 2014; de Lancer Julnes & Johnson, 2011; Handley & Howell-Moroney, 2010; Hong, 2015; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006).

Supporting these findings, Adres, Vashdi, and Zalmanovitch (2016) conduct a series of laboratory style experiments with persons in four countries (Australia, Germany, Israel, and Columbia) all of which examine some type of public participation (public goods, tax compliance, and giving to local NGOs) in order to test if having a more globalized worldview (as compared with local) impacts participation. In the first and second experiment, older persons and women were significantly more likely to contribute and comply, whereas more globalized persons were significantly less likely to contribute and comply. In the final experiment, giving to a local nongovernmental organizations, age significantly and positively increased giving and globalization significantly decreased giving. The findings suggest that as persons become more focused on global issues and adopt more globalized values (individualism and consumerism), they become less willing to engage locally.

- Drivers—prior participation, incentives, mattering, territoriality, passion, knowledge, and salience
- Challenges—global worldview and inconvenience

## 7.5 | Institutional rules and structure of public organizations

Institutional rules and structures of public organizations maybe more difficult for managers to change than some of the other influential factors reported here; however, findings about these factors may enable managers to think about how their setting may influence effective engagement.

The size of the institution was thought to influence engagement in several studies (Bifulco & Ladd, 2006; Scott, 2006; Yang & Callahan, 2007); however, the findings in regard to size are mixed. For instance, Bifulco and Ladd (2006) suggest smaller sized charter schools would have greater parent involvement but find weak support for the argument. Rather, they note that larger and more urban charter schools had greater parent involvement. In contrast, a few studies note that smaller was better for participation. LeRoux (2009) found a significant negative relationship between large nonprofits and the participation of clients in agency workgroups. Folz (1991) found that local governments with small populations had higher rates of participation in recycling programs. Glaser et al. (2006) and Adler and Blake (1990) find that smaller neighborhood associations compared with city wide efforts are more effective at organizing participation.

Helping to put the focus on size in perspective, Koontz (1999) finds that the federal level engaged the public more than the state level in variety of decision-making meetings in forest policy and suggests the findings is less about the institution itself and driven more by resources and legal factors. Similarly, in a cross-country case, Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg (2016) find that local governments with more resources, autonomy, and reasons to listen to constituents have more engaged publics. Bonsón et al. (2017) suggest that their findings about regional differences in governments' use of Facebook is driven by financial crisis and pressure to be more transparent.

Bovaird's (2007) comparative case approach also highlights capacity (see also Yang & Callahan, 2007) and adds the importance of "logistical drivers" which arise when an issue reaches a critical mass becoming either too complex or too great in need to drive the adoption of more externally engaged approach. Other drivers included making engagement a priority (Royo et al., 2014; Sorrentino et al., 2017; Yang & Callahan, 2007) and stakeholder support for engagement (Berner et al., 2011; Yang & Callahan, 2007)

- Drivers—logistical need, supportive legal and political environment, goal orientation and prioritization
- Challenges—resources and capacity

## 8 | PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The review reveals a range of influential factors that can drive inputs, the public, into a manager's comprehensive logic model of public engagement. Also, some challenges. Some of the findings lead to clear

and simple application to practice and others less so. Here, I provide a brief recitation of the findings with a focus on practical application.

First, some clear effort and planning on the part of governing agents to identify if and why to engage and what resources they are willing to steward towards the effort is needed (see also Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). A lack of commitment (Yang & Callahan, 2007; Royo et al., 2014) and effort (time and resources) will decrease engagement (Koontz, 1999; Yang & Callahan, 2005; Bovaird, 2007). Thus, to increase engagement, from the onset, the effort should be made explicit, planned, and budgeted for (Royo et al., 2014; Koontz, 1999; Yang & Callahan, 2005; Bovaird, 2007; Folz & Hazlett, 1991; Sorrentino et al., 2017).

As part of this process, consider the locus and leadership of the effort (Adler & Blake, 1990; Buckwalter, 2014; Glaser et al., 2006; Hong, 2015; Mosley & Grogan, 2013; Riccucci et al., 2016). When possible, choose departments and or agencies to lead efforts that have direct structural ties to the community you wish to engage (Adler & Blake, 1990; Glaser et al., 2006; Hong, 2015) and leadership representativeness of those you wish to engage (Riccucci et al., 2016).

Next, identify those topics that are truly worth engaging upon—from the perspective of the public not the agency (Berner et al., 2011; Eversole, 2011; Kim et al., 2011; Schachter, 2005; Adres et al., 2016). I caution agencies from focusing only on positive topics, to the detriment of engaging on more challenging, complex, timely, and contentious issues, as those might be most salient and likely to excite public interest (Hong, 2015; Thomas & Melkers, 2001; Yetano & Royo, 2017; Berner et al., 2011; Bovaird, 2007). Moreover, such topics may provide an opportunity to create that difficult to make first connection (Coleman, 2014; Stanley & Weare, 2004) and demonstrate commitment to authentic representation on the part of the agency (Eversole, 2011; Lens, 2007) thereby leading to more sustained interest in engaging over time.

Second, consider a range of recruitment strategies (random selection, purposive, and self-selection; Hock et al., 2013; Hong, 2015; Arceneaux & Butler, 2016; see also Ryfe & Stalburg, 2012) and match your strategy to your rationale for engagement. For instance, your strategy will vary based on if you are seeking broad and inclusive engagement or narrower stakeholder participation.

The evidence here clearly suggests a personalized strategy for recruitment is effective at increasing engagement (Hock et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2011). Moreover, develop and tailor recruitment methodologies and communications towards those you seek to engage (Arceneaux & Butler, 2016; Berner et al., 2011). Insure communications demonstrate the values of administration that drive engagement, including, representativeness, responsiveness, ethics, efficacy, trust, buy-in, and accountability, (Sjoberg et al., 2017; Mosley & Grogan, 2013; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006; Yang & Callahan, 2005; Buckwalter, 2014; Handley & Howell-Moroney, 2010). Appeal to individual values for engaging, as well, including, territoriality, interest, knowledge, and altruism (Bovaird, 2007; Buckwalter, 2014; Coleman, 2014; de Lancer Julnes & Johnson, 2011; Handley & Howell-Moroney, 2010; Hong, 2015; O'Brien et al., 2017; Sjoberg et al., 2017; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). Statements like "we are seeking to hear your point of view," "this is your neighborhood," and/or "as a result of your participation you can make a difference in your community by ..." are all simple ways to demonstrate

some of the critical themes that emerged in the review. Be sure to include correct and clear information about the logistics of the event as well as purpose, goals, and outcomes of any initiative (Schachter, 2005; Buckwalter, 2014; Thomas & Melkers, 1999).

In addition, maximize where notifications are posted, including, websites, social media (Bonsón et al., 2017; Hong, 2015; Stanley & Weare, 2004; Woods, 2009), and when appropriate applications (Clark et al., 2013); however, expect that just increasing mediums of notification or numbers of messages is not enough to increase actual participation (Bonsón et al., 2017; Yetano & Royo, 2017). Connect appeals to engage through intermediary organizations (schools, nonprofits, neighborhood association, religious groups, etc.) and individuals that can extend the reach of the message and have some built-in legitimacy with the public (Buckwalter, 2014; Kim et al., 2011; Mosley & Grogan, 2013). Possibly consider having already active participants reach out to new participants to help ease the tensions of that critical first effort (Berner et al., 2011; Coleman, 2014; Nesbit & Reingold, 2011; Stanley & Weare, 2004; Thomas & Melkers, 2001).

Make participation convenient (Schachter, 2005; Buckwalter, 2014; Balla, 2000; de Lancer Julnes & Johnson, 2011; Adres et al., 2016). While I was surprised that more studies did not examine this point more precisely, I suggest some local research efforts to identify schedules and venues that reduce the burden to engage (Schachter, 2005). Lastly, provide reminders, inducements, and incentives, to participate, whenever not cost prohibitive (Arceneaux & Butler, 2016; Hock et al., 2013).

## 9 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The narrow focus of this review, by design, leaves out many critical topics. I will note a few here that are purposeful to the goals of this review. First, the review does not cover two elements of the logic model, process design and outcomes of engagement. Providing the operationalizations of engagement provides a very cursory overview of the wide range of process designs that exist but provides no indication about the state of the art in processes, how to match process design to purpose, and maximize effectiveness. However, these topics are covered extensively elsewhere (see Bingham et al., 2005; Lukensmeyer, Goldman, & Stern, 2011; Lukensmeyer & Torres, 2006; Rowe & Frewer, 2005). Also, I do not cover why we engage or the outcomes of engagement; yet, as noted in the section on “public administrators’ perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors,” valuing engagement is critical to activating persons to engage. However, again, volumes are available on this topic (see Nabatchi, 2012, for a local government specific discussion).

Second, many of the articles demonstrate a relationship between demographics and public engagement (Thomas & Melkers, 2001; O'Brien et al., 2017; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006; Bifulco & Ladd, 2006; Nesbit & Reingold, 2011; Folz, 1991; Folz & Hazlett, 1991; Woods, 2009; Adres et al., 2016; Clark et al., 2013; Arceneaux & Butler, 2016; Stanley & Weare, 2004; Kim et al., 2011). I did not include a full synthesis on this topic for two reasons. First, the findings are generally aligned with what is already known about the demographics of those most likely to participate in governance, including, being male, older,

and of higher income and education (see also Ryfe & Stalburg, 2012). Second, the purpose of the review was to identify actionable management activities to increase engagement among a wide range of persons. I caution the reader to consider inclusion in as broad of terms as possible in order to insure outcomes are achieved (see Barnes, Newman, Knops, & Sullivan, 2003; Feldman & Khademian, 2007).

Third, the review does not attempt to understand or develop ideas about how to use the information and participation of the public to inform the policies and management of governance. However, the connection between process design and outcomes is another critical linkage in the logic model of public engagement and governance for which public administrators may have a great deal of agency upon. I argue this is true because a critical factor identified here was the efficacy of the agency to put the public's input into decision making (Berner et al., 2011; Clark et al., 2013; Sjöberg et al., 2017; Sorrentino et al., 2017; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). The public is more willing to participate if their efforts have a meaningful impact on governing (Berner et al., 2011; Clark et al., 2013; Sjöberg et al., 2017; Sorrentino et al., 2017; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). While I suggest using messaging to help demonstrate that there will be a connection, messaging is a short-term, incomplete, and unsustainable way for managing the input of the public. Engaging new and sustaining past participants will require the adoption of practices to collect, analyze, report, and advocate with the data that is collected. I refer to this process as analytical management (Hill & Lynn, 2015) of the public engagement process in Figure 1. Future research may want to consider this linkage in the logic model.

Finally, the purpose of the review was to identify and summarize an evidence base such that it can be transferred to practice. However, the extent to which this is needed, wanted, and how best to do this are largely unanswered questions in the field of evidence-based management and information dissemination. Further research is needed to identify how best to construct topics for systematic review in order to develop a useful evidence base for practice. Here, the approach was to develop and focus upon a critical causal linkage in a logic model (Anderson et al., 2011) between inputs and outputs. Testing and conversations with practitioners are needed to see if this approach is useful. Moreover, research has demonstrated that research is often not disseminated to practitioners (Dobbins, Cockerill, & Barnsley, 2001; Head et al., 2014; Lundin & Öberg, 2014) or well disseminated (Cvitanovic, McDonald, & Hobday, 2016; Lavis et al., 2003; Wilson, Petticrew, Calnan, & Nazareth, 2010). Thus, further research is needed to evaluate how best to disseminate systematic reviews with a focus on providing an actionable managerial evidence base.

## 10 | CONCLUSION

The primary goal of the systematic review reported here was to identify and summarize empirical articles that demonstrate an increase in public engagement and or participation with a government or non-profit agency. Over 900 articles, in nine peer-reviewed public administration journals were screened on the topic. The evidence from 40 articles is classified and summarized to provide best practices in activating and recruiting the participation of the public in the affairs



of local governance. The review also provides brief explanation on how systematic reviews may be incorporated into the evidence-based management movement and on future topics that may benefit from further inquiry and systematic review.

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