Lise van Oortmerssen

Working both ways
The interplay of trust and interaction in collaborations
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Lise A. van Oortmerssen
Thesis committee

Promotors
Prof. Dr C.M.J. van Woerkum
Emeritus Professor of Communication Strategies
Wageningen University

Prof. Dr M.N.C. Aarts
Professor of Strategic Communication
University of Amsterdam
Associate Professor of Strategic Communication
Wageningen University

Other members
Prof. Dr C.J.A.M. Termeer, Wageningen University
Prof. Dr S.W.F. Omta, Wageningen University
Prof. Dr S.G.L. Schruijer, Utrecht University
Prof. Dr M.D.T. de Jong, University of Twente

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Working both ways
The interplay of trust and interaction in collaborations

Lise A. van Oortmerssen
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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The visibility of trust: Exploring the connection between trust and interaction in a Dutch collaborative governance boardroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evolution of trust in interaction: Turn-taking patterns as indicator of trust in collaboration meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating for creative solutions: High-trust and interaction flow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitative chairmanship of a collaborative governance board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dankwoord (Acknowledgements)</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the author</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications and conference contributions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education certificate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Introduction
Once upon a time...

Once upon a time, I worked for a large governmental organization. It consisted of many distinct divisions, departments, units and so on, each with its own unique set of values and ways of working. Over the years, I was concerned with a range of projects in various corners of the organization, and I was introduced to several of these subcultures and their different practices. I also experienced how people working within these subcultures viewed other parts of the organization. I felt a lot of unproductive tension in this respect. Criticism, rivalry and misunderstanding were widespread across the organization. People had to collaborate across organizational divisions, but often new working relationships started amid a lot of suspicion and little eagerness to work together. What was missing was mutual trust.

The challenge of collaborating

Collaborating is more and more a common practice, both within and across organizations. Collaborating means working together in order to solve problems, to design plans or products, or to implement these. Collaboration may be mandated, voluntary or something in between, and it takes many small- to large-scale forms. This thesis addresses a specific form of collaboration: collaboration on public issues across the boundaries of different organizations and sectors. This is commonly called multi-stakeholder collaboration or collaborative governance. Dealing with present-day public issues - such as energy, climate change and sustainability - requires collaboration, because the issues are increasingly complex and intertwined and often affect many interdependent stakeholders. In a collaboration, partners from different organizations may achieve goals that they cannot achieve independently. This, ideally, involves a process of shared creation that goes beyond each partner’s ‘own limited vision of what is possible’ (Gray, 1989, p. 5). Fruitful multi-stakeholder collaboration is, therefore, the cornerstone of social innovation.

However, collaborating is not always easy. Partners may have different goals, different expectations, different languages and different ways of working. Not seldom, the collaboration process becomes deadlocked by problems that seem unresolvable. Scholars who study multi-stakeholder collaboration portray a rather pessimistic picture of the chances of success and the costs involved (Bryson, Crosby & Middleton Stone, 2006; Huxham, 2003; Teisman & Klijn, 2002). The advice given to practitioners generally is: ‘don’t do it unless you have to’ (Huxham, 2003, p. 421). So, what can be done to prevent collaboration failure and make collabora-
tions succeed? A meta-analytical study by Ansell and Gash (2008) reveals three general conditions that seem most decisive for the course of a collaboration project: interdependence, time and trust. First, there should be enough interdependence among partners to ensure commitment to the shared project. Second, collaboration projects need enough time. They involve a decision-making process based on consensus, and consensus seeking is usually time-consuming (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Yaffee & Wondolleck, 2003). Third, there is the condition of trust.

The great benefits of trust are consistently underlined in the literature on collaboration (e.g. Ansell & Gash, 2008; Connelly, 2007; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Trust facilitates and solidifies collaboration (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007) and has a positive impact on outcomes (Klijn, Edelenbos & Steijn, 2010; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007). Trust acts as an important coordination mechanism in collaborations, because hierarchical rules or market rules as coordination mechanisms do not, or only partly, apply (see e.g. Adler, 2001; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998). In addition, trust is necessary for the kind of open, critical but constructive interaction among partners that may lead towards integrative and innovative agreements (e.g. Barczak, Lassk & Mulki, 2010; Bidault & Castello, 2009; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007).

When partners who do not have a history of working together start a collaboration project, building trust is thus essential. When partners come together and interact, over time they get to know one another better. Perceptions about one another crystallize with regard to, for example, partners’ value to the shared project and partners’ integrity and reliability. In addition, partners’ behaviour may become more predictable. This can be the basis for growing mutual trust. However, a different scenario is also possible. Unsatisfying and disappointing interaction experiences can lead to the development of distrust. Hence, the course of the interaction among collaboration partners is very significant for the development of trust (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Hardy, Phillips & Lawrence, 1998; Koeszegi, 2004; Nugent & Abolafia, 2006; Van Thiel & Yesilkagit, 2011).

Interestingly, at the same time, how much partners trust one another has an impact on how they interact: studies have shown, for example, that trust boosts openness and information exchange (Butler, 1999; Frey & Lüthje, 2011; Greenhalgh & Chapman, 1998; Kimmel, Pruitt, Magenau, Konar-Goldband & Carnevale, 1980; Zand, 1972), whereas distrust breeds miscommunication. This means that there is a reciprocal relationship between trust dynamics and interaction dynamics in collaborations. Not very much is known yet about this link between trust and interaction in collaborations. Unravelling the connection is, nevertheless, particularly interesting. The link between trust and interaction may render the significant
but invisible phenomenon of trust more tangible. Trust developments may, possibly, in some way be observed through interaction developments. In addition, it seems likely that trust dynamics are potentially influenced by interaction interventions. This elicits the question of what kind of interaction interventions may boost trust. This thesis examines these issues.

**Research objectives**

This thesis aims to:

- produce insight into the link between trust, or the lack of it, and interaction among partners in collaborations
- provide recommendations for facilitators of, and participants in, collaborations regarding how the building and maintenance of trust can be fostered through interaction.

**Collaboration research and theory**

Parallel to the emergence of collaboration practices across organizations, recent decades have witnessed the rise of collaboration as a new research area. Studies on collaboration are grounded to a great extent in organization studies, public management, and planning theory traditions. The literature is multi-disciplinary and offers a wide variety of perspectives on collaboration. However, it also lacks coherence (Thomson, Perry & Miller, 2009), and studies are, in general, largely non-cumulative. The lack of coherence is also shown by the many different definitions of collaboration that are being applied (see e.g. O'Leary & Vij, 2012). However, there is a certain overlap among the majority of definitions. Central in most definitions are the notions of working together and of interdependent goals. Many, but not all, definitions explicitly include the aspect of an interorganizational setting. A ground-breaking and often-cited work on collaboration is Gray’s book *Collaboration: Finding common ground for multiparty problems*, published in 1989. In this book, Gray defines collaboration as ‘a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible’ (p. 5). This definition includes an emphasis on the synergistic and creative aspect of collaborating. Among many others (e.g. Hattori & Lapidus, 2004; Innes & Booher, 1999; Roberts & Bradley, 1991), Huxham (1993) has underlined this as an important aspect, and she refers to it as ‘collaborative advantage.’ This refers to a situation where something is achieved that no organization alone could have achieved, and
it may sometimes involve higher-level ‘objectives for society as a whole rather than just for the participating organizations’ (p. 603).

As mentioned before, this thesis places the spotlight on **collaborative governance** arrangements: on the kind of collaborations that involve a public theme or value. Similar to the wider term of collaboration, the term collaborative governance has been variously defined (see Emerson, Nabatchi & Balogh, 2012). In this thesis, it refers to a collaboration among partners from the public, non-profit and private sectors who are engaged in a collective decision-making process aimed at consensus (after Ansell & Gash, 2008). According to the definition used here (and as opposed to the original definition used by Ansell & Gash), public stakeholders do not necessarily take the lead in the arrangement (cf. Emerson et al., 2012). The concept of collaborative governance is closely related to the concept of collaborative public management. Kapucu, Yuldashev and Bakiev (2009) have outlined the similarities and differences in how the two concepts have been used in the literature. Although the two streams of literature accentuate different aspects, there is a large common ground. I prefer to use the term collaborative governance rather than collaborative public management, because the latter suggests a leading position for the public stakeholder involved – which is not the case in many situations, including the collaborations studied in this thesis.

Gray and Wood (1991) distilled three overarching themes in collaboration research: preconditions, process and outcomes. Of these three, they argued, the collaboration process is the least addressed and often considered a ‘black box.’ Today, the process still seems the least understood dimension of collaborations; this has stimulated my choice to focus on this theme. That collaboration processes are little understood is not completely surprising. They evolve within a complex environment and under continuously changing circumstances. Moreover, complexity is in various ways inherent in the structure of collaborations (Huxham, 2000) relating to, for example, relationships, roles and responsibilities. Because of the high level of complexity, collaboration processes are unlikely to be fruitfully predicted. I regard collaboration processes as non-linear, emergent processes that evolve as partners interact over time (cf. Thomson & Perry, 2006).

Current literature on collaboration includes endeavours towards the development of integrative models and overarching theory, but these are still largely at a preliminary stage (see e.g. Bryson et al., 2006; Emerson et al., 2012 Thomson et al., 2009). For an insightful overview of the current state of the literature on collaboration practices, I refer to O’Leary and Vij’s (2012) recent article on collaborative public management. One of the recommendations with which this article concludes is that, in order to better understand how collaborations unfold over time,
there is a need for studies that do not examine collaborations in retrospect but in real time. This thesis responds to that call.

This thesis builds further on the work of Ansell and Gash (2008) and of Vangen and Huxham (2003), who portray an effective collaboration process as a cycle based on small wins that build trust and shared understanding. This thesis highlights the, hitherto scarcely addressed, role of concrete interactional behaviour within that cycle (see also Nugent & Abolafia, 2006). In addition, by focusing on conversational interaction, this thesis fits within the - rather novel and still fragmented - stream of literature on collaboration that adopts a communication perspective by placing a primary focus on the communicative interaction and/or process among participants (Hardy, Lawrence & Grant, 2005; Heath & Sias, 1999; Keyton, Ford & Smith, 2008; Koschmann, Kuhn & Pfarrer, 2012; Lewis, 2006; Lewis, Isbell & Koschmann, 2010). However, since the collaboration literature presently offers little insight on the dynamics of interaction and trust in relation to one another and on a micro-level, this thesis widely draws on other bodies of literature, such as the literature on trust in organizations, on negotiation, on group creativity and on language and social interaction.

Key concepts and research questions

Trust dynamics

As explained in the previous section of this introduction, the focus of this thesis is on collaboration processes. In line with this, I am interested in trust in terms of trust dynamics, in how trust evolves and changes over time. The perspective on trust adopted in this thesis is a psychological, transformational approach (cf. Lewicki, Tomlinson & Gillespie, 2006). Trust is regarded as a multi-faceted perception regarding a person or a group of persons that transforms over time. Not only the amount of trust, but also the basis and essence of trust perceptions change over time because of interaction experiences. At different points in time, people may have, consciously or not, different reasons for trusting or not trusting a collaboration partner. In collaboration settings, important ingredients for trust perceptions are perceptions regarding partners’ integrity, benevolence, competences and - especially in highly voluntary collaborations - commitment. The concept of trust within collaborations is further elaborated upon and defined in chapter 2 of this thesis (see the section How we view trust). The concept of trust in a specifically voluntary collaboration is defined in chapter 4.
**Conversational interaction**

By interaction among collaboration partners, this thesis refers to the interaction that occurs during board meetings. The focus on the interaction during board meetings is based on the assumption that the board is the level at which relationships among the collaborating partners are revealed and acted upon (cf. Keyton et al., 2008). I suggest that the interaction among board members that takes places outside of these formal meetings is, in some way or another, reflected in the interaction during the board meetings. From that perspective, board meetings form an excellent site for studying the collaboration process.

This thesis focuses on *conversational* interaction specifically. Hence, the conversations that unfold during board meetings are considered central to the collaboration process (cf. Koschmann et al., 2012). In order to limit the scale of this study to practical proportions, this thesis addresses verbal aspects of the conversational interaction and omits non-verbal aspects – such as body language. Conversational interaction is presented as a concept with three dimensions: content, atmosphere and process. The concept is further delineated in chapter 2 (see Interaction within a collaborative governance board) and in chapter 5 (see A communication perspective on chairmanship).

**Research questions**

This thesis addresses the following research questions:

In the two collaborative governance boards studied, how can we understand the interplay between trust dynamics and conversational interaction?

(a.) What do the cases teach us about how trust dynamics are reflected in conversational interaction patterns?

(b.) What do the cases teach us about how trust dynamics are, or may be, influenced through conversational interaction behaviour?

(c.) What other aspects of the interplay between trust dynamics and conversational interaction emerge from the cases?

**Research design**

*Interpretive approach*

The study on which this thesis is based was designed in conformity with the interpretive approach. According to Yanow (2006), the interpretive approach is an umbrella term subsuming several schools of thought, such as phenomenology,
hermeneutics, symbolic interaction and ethnomethodology. Interpretive researchers have in common that they seek to understand human behaviour and human practices, taking as point of departure the philosophical assumption that we live in a world that is variously understood (Yanow, 2006). The interpretive approach assumes that people act on the basis of interpretations that arise from social interaction. People’s perceptions are filtered and organized in a process of sense-making. Interpretive researchers attempt to ‘understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them’ (Klein & Myers, 1999, 69). Therefore, in interpretive studies, research participants’ interpretations concerning their practices and experiences dominate.

It is not only research participants that interpret. Researchers also are subject to interpretation (Giddens, 1984). Therefore, it is important that interpretive researchers reflect on their own interpretive practices and are explicit and transparent about their reflections (Yanow, 2006; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Yanow’s (2009) ‘triple hermeneutic’ discerns at least three interpretive moments: one by the researched, one by the researcher and one by the reader, who brings his or her prior knowledge to the reading of the research report. Interpretive research, hence, is not about finding ‘the one and only truth’, but about finding insights that are interesting and useful for understanding - for example collaboration - practices. It is not about proving practices, but about understanding practices. It is not about testing theory, but about developing theory.

In interpretive research, data are used to both pose and resolve questions (Kaplan & Duchon, 1988). Research designs are flexible in order to respond to what is encountered in the field (Yanow, 2009). During the research process, researchers try to ‘retain an openness to the possibility of surprises’ and consecutively ‘create new concepts, relationships, explanations to give an account of these surprises’ (Yanow, 2009, p. 35). In line with this, I worked in a cyclical, iterative way, back and forth from design to theory to data and back. This manner of working allowed me to incorporate into the study seemingly interesting aspects that emerged from the data. In each of the two case studies, therefore, different research questions were applied. Furthermore, every next step during the research process included a reflection on, and adjustment and refinement of, former steps. For example, topic lists for interviews were amended on a continuous basis. In this way, empirics could optimally feed the research process.

Within the overall interpretive research design, various methods were applied (see Data collection and methods, this chapter). The quantitative interaction study reported on in chapter 3 did not focus on the meanings that people assign to phenomena as is common in interpretive research. It may be
regarded as a further study into one of the outcomes of the interpretive study by exploring that issue through an alternative method. The choice to take up this, non-interpretive, (sub)study was made because I expected it to add significantly to the understanding of collaboration practices and bring insights valuable to practitioners. Chapter 5 is a theoretical chapter in which empirical data are used for purely illustrative purposes.

This thesis is concerned with unravelling how processes unfold over time. Case studies form an appropriate research method for this purpose (Yin, 2003). The case studies conducted for this thesis are so-called instrumental case studies, as opposed to so-called intrinsic case studies. They are instrumental in understanding (trust and interaction) dynamics that are more general than the dynamics in just these particular cases (Stake, 1995).

Selected cases
This thesis is based on two empirical case studies of collaborative governance boards. The first case concerns the board of Campus Connect (a pseudonym): a Dutch, regional-level, collaborative governance board in the domain of vocational education with nine board members. For some of the participating organizations, collaborating did not seem an entirely free choice: collaboration was required for these organizations to receive certain subsidies and seemed important for the organizations’ survival. Therefore, the circumstances under which the partners collaborated were not very easy. I would define this collaboration as a, partly mandatory, interorganizational collaboration.

The second case concerns the board of Platform Inspire (a pseudonym): a Dutch, national-level, collaborative governance board at the intersection of the technology and creative industries with five board members. This board was typically voluntary-based and involved strong personal ties among the board members. Since the individuals that constituted the board took the lead, and not their home organizations, the term interorganizational collaboration does not optimally fit this case; this case could be better defined by the term supra-organizational collaboration.

The two cases were selected for a combination of theoretical and pragmatic reasons. Each case in its own unique way seemed interesting for the purposes of this study (see chapters 2 and 4). The cases have in common that they seemed to be entering crucial stages in the collaboration process. Furthermore and very importantly, I could ensure access to the monthly, closed meetings of these boards.
Both cases were found by asking people within my network if they had connections to people involved in collaborative governance projects. The first case was found through a colleague at Fontys University of Applied Sciences who was a member of the Campus Connect board. This was the only board member, in both cases, whom I knew prior to the case study and whom I sometimes met during the case study in another context as well. Occasionally, we spontaneously and briefly reflected on the latest developments within the board. However, I always took care not to provide this person with exclusive information or interpretations because this would render my relation to him importantly different from my relation to other board members. The second case was found through a relative, who was involved with Platform Inspire in a professional capacity. We had an agreement to refrain from discussing confidential Platform Inspire matters. During the Platform Inspire case study, our paths did not cross professionally except for one board meeting in which this person attended the discussion on a specific agenda item as a guest participant.

In my role as researcher, I chose a limited participation in the cases. I feared that, if I allowed myself more active involvement in the cases, this could potentially harm the naturalness of the setting and especially my exclusive devotion to understanding the processes at hand. In the years prior to the PhD project, I had worked as an advisor and, therefore, I was familiar with, and used to, wearing the advisor’s hat. In order to be able to focus fully on my new researcher’s hat, I decided to opt for a limited involvement (see also Reflection on research process in chapter 6).

Data collection and methods
The meetings of both boards were observed and audio-recorded for over a year. Semi-structured interviews with individual board members were conducted at different instances during the time of each case study. Both case studies included a moment of reflection with the board after the first interview round, during which preliminary insights from the case study were shared and discussed. The Platform Inspire case included also a second moment of reflection during the last meeting observed.

The interview and observation data from both case studies were analysed through extensive qualitative analyses. A qualitative study is particularly suitable for studying trust dynamics over time and allows ‘insight into the way that trust is socially and subjectively constructed’ (Lewicki et al., 2006, p. 1015). By integrating data from interviews with board members, my personal observation memos
and the short reflections together with the board, the data were triangulated, as is common in case study research in order to ensure validity (Yin, 2003; Tellis, 1997).

In both case studies, additional methods were employed to study conversational interaction dynamics. With regard to the Campus Connect case, the audio material from the board meetings was studied using a quantitative analysis of speaking turns. For the Platform Inspire case, the recordings of a selected episode of a board meeting were transcribed and studied using conversation analysis.

Thesis outline

Within this thesis, two chapters are dedicated to each of the two empirical cases. The final chapter weaves the cases and their respective chapters into a synthesis. The second and third chapter are based on the Campus Connect case. The second chapter explores the general question of how trust developments and interaction patterns in this case seem related. Building on one of the findings described in the second chapter, the third chapter presents a quantitative analysis of turn-taking patterns in the board meetings of Campus Connect and proposes that these patterns are linked to trust developments. The fourth and fifth chapter are, respectively, based on, and linked to, the Platform Inspire case. The fourth chapter explores a creative mode of interaction observed in the board meetings of this case in connection to trust and introduces the concept of interaction flow. The fifth chapter is a theoretical chapter that draws from the Platform Inspire case to provide empirical illustrations of chairmanship behaviour. It discusses the role of chairpersons in collaboration meetings from a conversational interaction perspective. In this chapter, a framework for chairing behaviour is developed in which trust is one of three key concerns, alongside creative tension and team-shared ambition. Finally, the sixth chapter presents an integration of the earlier chapters, drawing and discussing overall conclusions and describing their scientific and practical implications.

1 This thesis is based on a collection of papers written for various international journals. As a result of differing conventions among these journals, chapters 1, 2, 5 and 6 are written in British English and chapters 3 and 4 are written in American English.
The visibility of trust
Exploring the connection between trust and interaction in a Dutch collaborative governance boardroom

Lise van Oortmerssen, Cees van Woerkum and Noelle Aarts

Based on:

Abstract

In multi-stakeholder collaboration settings, trust plays a significant role. We explore the connection between trust and interaction over time in a collaborative governance board. To this end, we conducted a case study of the board of a collaborative governance arrangement in professional education. The results include an increase in trust within the board as well as three changes in the interaction pattern during board meetings: more openness, more responsiveness and more speed. It is argued that the increase in trust and the changes in interaction are related, implying that trust is visible in interaction content, interaction atmosphere and interaction process.
Introduction

In contemporary society, collaborative governance initiatives proliferate. Increasingly complex societal issues cut across the boundaries of single organizations. A collaborative governance arrangement engages public and private actors in a collective decision-making process aimed at consensus (Ansell & Gash, 2008; see also Robertson & Choi, 2012). The dynamics that apply to the practices of these collaborations are, to a substantial extent, different from the dynamics that apply to the practices within organizations. Huxham (2000) has provided an insightful overview of the various dimensions of structural complexity that impact the practices of inter-organizational collaborations. These encompass, among others, divergent forms of working relationships, different degrees of organizational membership, and complex, layered governance and task structures. Moreover, collaborations have to deal continuously with a changing environment, for example because of government policies.

In the literature on collaborations and governance networks, the significance of trust is repeatedly underlined (e.g. Ansell & Gash, 2008; Connelly, 2007; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Trust is needed to deal with the numerous uncertainties involved. It is considered to have various important benefits for the practices of complex collaboration: it is supposed to facilitate cooperation, to render collaboration more robust, to boost performance and to make innovation possible (e.g. Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Klijn et al., 2010). Unfortunately, often it is not trust but suspicion that is the starting point in collaborations, especially when partners do not have the luxury to choose with whom they will work (Huxham, 2003). Hence, participants in collaborations face the challenge of building trust.

For trust building within collaborations, frequent and profound interaction is generally essential, scholars suggest (e.g. Ansell & Gash, 2008; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Koeszegi, 2004; Van Thiel & Yesilkagit, 2011). According to Hardy et al. (1998, p. 70), ‘in an inter-organizational relationship, trust grows out of a communication process in which shared meanings develop to provide the necessary foundation for non-opportunistic behaviour.’ How, in practice and on a micro level, trust is built or damaged by interaction processes is still hardly empirically studied and needs further exploration (see also Nugent & Abolafia, 2006). In addition, from the point of view that interaction processes reflect the nature of interpersonal or group relations, trust developments also have implications for interaction patterns. For example, trust promotes the exchange of knowledge and information (Butler, 1999; Hardy et al., 1998; Jones & George, 1998). This means that trust and interac-
tion processes have a complex, dual relationship, impacting one another. This article is concerned with exploring precisely that relationship: it examines the interplay between trust developments and conversational interaction patterns over time on a collaborative governance board. More insight on this will lead to a better understanding of collaboration processes and may have important practical value for chairpersons and partners involved on collaborative governance boards.

The theoretical section of this article starts with a brief review of the trust theme in collaborative governance settings. Subsequently, we describe the relations of trust and conversational interaction that follow from empirical studies by scholars from various disciplines, and we outline our approach of conversational interaction within a collaborative governance setting. The empirical part of this article draws on an exploratory case study of the board of a regional collaboration within the domain of professional education in The Netherlands. This collaboration had challenging issues to resolve under time pressure, and significant stakes were involved. After a portrayal of the case and a description of the research methods applied, the results of the case study are presented. We outline the developments in trust and in conversational interaction during the time span of the case study and provide support for the claim that these developments are related. The implications of the results are discussed in the final section.

**How we view trust**

Conceptualizations and typologies of trust abound. Trust has been conceptualized as a cognition, an attitude, a behaviour, a process and much more. A common aspect of the majority of trust conceptualizations is the aspect of risk. Trust implies a choice: the choice to accept vulnerability (Luhmann, 2000). In a collaboration setting, vulnerability for example refers to the risk of opportunistic behaviour by a collaboration partner, the risk that sensitive information provided to the partners will not be handled confidentially, or the risk that a partner will prove unable to deliver on his or her promises. People working together on a collaborative governance board develop expectations about the extent to which they can trust other board members in a specific respect and in a specific context. These expectations are developed, refined and adjusted on the basis of accumulating interaction experiences - collected for an important part during board meetings.

We conceptualize trust as a perception about individual board members, and about the board members as a group, with regard to expectations about the
collaboration and how these expectations will be met (Gulati, 1995; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Trust in this sense is an interpersonal phenomenon, and the focus is on interpersonal expectations and experiences. Nevertheless, the social context of the relationships and interaction between the board members should not be forgotten here. The ability of board members or boards to meet expectations may be affected by changes in their social environment, either enhancing or restricting it. Such changes may result from developments within the home organization of a board member, developments in the political environment of the collaboration and so on. For the purpose of our case study, we needed a starting point to examine the board members’ expectations and experiences that constitute and change trust. To that end, we have drawn from the more general literature on trust in organizational settings. Within this stream of literature, a widely cited publication by Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) distinguishes three trust components: ability, benevolence and integrity. Instead of ability, we choose to speak of competences, referring, however, to the same ‘group of skills, competencies and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain’ (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 717). Benevolence refers to positive intentions towards the trusting party. Integrity pertains to moral principles. In the literature on trust in organizational and inter-organizational settings, it is quite common to bring integrity and benevolence together under the label of ‘goodwill’ (e.g. Das & Teng, 2001; Davenport, Davies & Grimes, 1999). We adhere to this usage\(^2\). In our case study, we studied interpersonal trust by examining: expectations held by board member A (and B, C and so on) in the form of perceptions regarding other board members’ competences and goodwill as relevant according to A’s intentions toward the collaboration; board member A’s experiences with the other board members over time; how these experiences change board member A’s perceptions; and other developments with a perceived impact on trust.

Since we are studying trust in a group setting, besides interpersonal trust dynamics we are interested in trust dynamics at board level: to what extent do (individual) board members trust the board as a group to be able to meet their expectations? For trust in the board, it is not just the goodwill and competences of the individual members that are important, but also the perception of the interplay between them: how do group dynamics work out? For example, it is possible for a board member to consider all other board members capable partners while still having doubts about the effective functioning of the board. Trust in the board is related to a shared group identity (Kramer, Brewer & Hanna, 1996; Lewicki &

\(^2\) We adhere to this usage in this chapter specifically. In chapter 4, which describes a case study of a different board with different characteristics, we do not bring integrity and benevolence together under one label.
Bunker, 1996; Lindenberg, 2000; Zhang & Huxham, 2009). The clearer a group identity with which all partners can identify, the more uncertainty is reduced. We conclude this section by noting that both the role and the level of trust are likely to change during different stages of a collaboration life cycle (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998) because of, for example, increasing institutionalization of a collaboration and accumulating interaction experiences among board members. Accumulating interaction experiences, in general, make board members more predictable and understandable to one another. However, at the same time, new stages may give rise to new differences among board members that complicate the process. Hence, trust is never guaranteed and may go up and down.

**Trust and conversational interaction**

Literature and empirical studies on the relationship between trust and conversational interaction are sparse. Most insights on this subject have been generated from experimental studies in the negotiation domain and from survey studies in the organization and management domains. Results from an early experimental study of trust, communication and cooperative behaviour by Loomis (1959), indicated that subjects who communicated were more likely to perceive trust than non-communicating subjects, and the probability increased as the level of communication increased.

Probably the most influential and cited contribution about trust and communication comes from Zand (1972). The results of his experimental study of trust and managerial problem solving show that problem-solving groups with a high trust level exchange relevant ideas and feelings more openly, and develop greater clarification of goals and problems, than low-trust groups. In short, trust boosts openness of expression. A correlation between trust and openness, or information-sharing, has also been established in other studies (Butler, 1999; Frey & Lüthje, 2011; Greenhalgh & Chapman, 1998; Kimmel et al., 1980). Zand (1972) highlights the importance of trust and openness for problem-solving effectiveness and integrative outcomes. As he argues, trust implies that one does not need, or needs to a lesser extent, the means to control the behaviour of others. One is not afraid of abuse and will reveal information that is relevant for the decision-making process. Low trust levels, in contrast, cause a loss of energy and creativity, since these will be employed to manage the relationship in a way that limits uncertainty and vulnerability as much as possible. This hinders problem solving. The link between
trust and problem solving has been confirmed by various other studies (e.g. Boss, 1978; Kimmel et al., 1980; Klimoski & Karol, 1976).

Various scholars have argued that openness boosts trust. This implies a relationship between the two concepts in the opposite direction, whereby openness is not the consequence but the cause (e.g. Carnevale, 1995; Das & Teng, 1998; Ruppel & Harrington, 2000). Through open and honest conversations, people can gain understanding of one another’s perspectives and build trust. Ruppel and Harrington (2000) found strong support for their hypothesis that the greater the open communication among managers and employees, the greater the level of trust in the organizational subunit. The results of a study by Tjosvold (1999), which addresses open-minded discussion (constructive controversy) and trust in a cross-cultural, inter-organizational setting, indicate that open-minded discussion leads to productive collaborative work, which in turn results in trust.

If trust stimulates openness and openness stimulates trust, this means that there is a reciprocal relation between the two. This is not completely surprising if one considers that trust processes in general are specifically reciprocal processes: trust is likely to produce more trust, whereas distrust is likely to produce more distrust (Butler, 1999; Carnevale, 1995; Druckman, 2004; Gibb, 1964; Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Koeszegi, 2004; Serva, Fuller & Mayer, 2005; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Zand, 1972;).

In addition to openness, some other aspects of communication have been studied in relation to trust. Since studies on this subject are very much dispersed among different disciplines and bodies of literature, we are not trying to present a complete overview here but rather wish to provide an impression of the kind of studies available. Becerra and Gupta (2003), for example, conducted a survey study into the effect of communication frequency on the production of trustworthiness within a multinational corporation. The results of their study confirm a positive correlation between communication frequency and perceived trustworthiness. Butler and Cantrell (1994) examined various sorts of communication by managers in a workplace environment and their effect on trust. They found, among other results, that what they call responsiveness has a strong relationship with trust. In a similar vein, providing substantial and timely responses was found to be a trust-facilitating communication behaviour in a study of global virtual teams by Jarvenpaa and Leidner (1999). Their study is particularly interesting for two reasons. First, it is based, partly, on e-mail archives, hence on naturally occurring conversations. Second, it studies trust within the context of a team. The results of the case studies on which Jarvenpaa and Leidner report indicate four sorts of trust-facilitating or trust-maintaining communication behaviour. Early in a virtual group’s
Visibility of trust

life, social communication (as opposed to task-related communication) and communication of enthusiasm were found to be important for trust building. Later in a virtual group’s life, responsiveness and predictable communication appeared to be significant for maintaining trust. The setting of virtual teams evidently differs from the setting of our case study, which involves face-to-face encounters. However, the trust dynamics involved in both settings may not be so different.

In sum, in empirical studies on the connection between trust and conversational interaction, most attention has been paid to openness, or information sharing. In addition, some, mostly non-cumulative, studies have been performed on other communication aspects. The majority of the studies conducted have a bilateral setting, concentrating on dyads of partners or parties involved. A group focus, concentrating on the interplay between trust processes within groups and group interaction, is still rather unexplored. In the following section, we address the issue of how to conceptually approach group interaction within a collaborative governance board.

Interaction within a collaborative governance board

The conversational interaction during collaborative governance board meetings is likely to combine characteristics of group decision making with features of negotiation. The board members are team members working on a joint project as well as stakeholders representing different interests. The precise balance between these two inherently conflicting roles depends on contextual aspects such as the specific collaboration, the group configuration of the board, and the stage at which the collaboration is. A group decision-making perspective on conversational interaction focuses on dynamics at the group level. A negotiation perspective on conversational interaction is directed at dynamics at the level of the actors, highlighting their respective positions and strategies. The literature on negotiation includes some studies on interaction and trust, which we discussed in the previous section. The literature on group decision making formed the main source of inspiration for our conceptualization of conversational interaction.

Conversational interaction within a group has several dimensions. For the purposes of our study, we conceptualize the interaction of a collaborative governance board as having three overlapping dimensions: content, atmosphere and process. The content and process dimensions are often distinguished and studied in the decision-making literature. The atmosphere dimension refers to
what in the decision-making literature is known as the relational or affective dimension.

The atmosphere dimension, within the context of a collaborative governance board, refers to the affective dimension of the board’s interaction in terms of the climate within which the conversations take place, as created by the board members in interaction. This is the intangible dimension among the three: more easily felt than heard or seen. The process dimension refers to patterns in the course of the board’s conversations in terms of turn-taking, asking questions, replying and so on. The content dimension refers to patterns in what is being said. As illustrated in Figure 1, the three dimensions are interconnected and partly overlap. For example, we address the aspect of openness as belonging to both the content and the atmosphere dimension.

![Figure 1](image)

*Figure 1* Conversational interaction within a collaborative governance board.

**Research setting and methods**

*The case: Campus Connect*

In order to study interaction and trust dynamics in a collaborative governance setting, we conducted an exploratory, instrumental case study (Stake, 1995). For this case study, we selected a running, innovation-oriented collaboration project with a diverse set of partners from public or semi-public and private organizations. The specific project was chosen because, from its past history and the fact that it was facing a decisive stage, it seemed to promise interesting developments in trust and interaction. Campus Connect had a history of about a decade of negotiations and preparatory work with often difficult progress and including several small to
large conflicts. The project was entering a final and crucial stage under time pressure. This was expected to seriously challenge cooperation and (trust) relationships. The title of the project as used in this article is fictitious for reasons of confidentiality.

Campus Connect was a regional, cross-sector project in the Netherlands that involved setting up a centre where both professional education and entrepreneurs were housed and would meet on a daily basis. This setting was supposed to stimulate exchange between the school and cooperating companies in four booming and interconnected professional areas and to boost innovation. A second specific feature of the centre was that educational programmes at different levels, and directed at students from different age groups, would be closely related and integrated within one building. After finishing one level, students would have the opportunity to continue their education at the same school. The first discussions leading to this project, between two schools providing professional education at introductory and intermediate levels, were initiated in 1998. In the following years, more discussion partners entered the scene. In 2005, the board of the project reached its final composition, with representatives from schools, local government and commercial companies: in total, nine board members plus an external project manager. The first lectures at the Campus site were scheduled for September 2008. The case study started in September 2007. At that time, the building of the Campus was under construction, but the organization of work processes and management structures on the future Campus were still unclear, and the participation of businesses in Campus Connect even more so.

Partners and stakes
Four schools were involved in Campus Connect. Except for the high level school of professional education, they all resided in the same town, the town where Campus Connect was to be located. Connect School A was the lead organization within the collaboration. This school was the owner of the building, which was being built during the year of observation. Other partners would pay rent for sharing the building. The lead organization provided the board chairman as well as the future director of Campus Connect, who was also a member of the board. School A was an intermediate level school of professional education. Schools B and C were introductory level schools of professional education. As a consequence, besides being partners in the Campus Connect project, they were competitors. School D was a large organization of high level professional education providing courses in a wide range of cities. Like the other three schools, it had signed up to rent part of the building long term. Nevertheless, in September 2007, this school’s exact mode
of participation in the Campus was still undefined. School D had two representatives on the board. One of them was a manager of a - more or less autonomous - unit within the school that brokered cooperation projects between students and organizations or companies in the region. The other representative of school D was a director.

So far, we have named six of the Campus Connect board members. The three others were: a civil servant from the local government; a manager working for a large company in one of the four core business areas of Campus Connect; and a former member of the board of aldermen, who, in September 2007, was involved as an unpaid consultant dealing with the business viewpoints and interests. As an alderman, he had been responsible for subsidies allocated to Campus Connect.

The meaning of Campus Connect for the different partners varied. The schools, basically the core members of the board, had clear financial stakes: participating in the project brought them public subsidies. For the local government, economic wellbeing or growth and the introduction of high level professional education within the town borders were important goals to which Campus Connect was supposed to add. The two business representatives had stakes of a more abstract and personal kind, such as idealistic motives. From this brief description of stakes, it is clear that shared interests and interdependencies among the board members were unevenly distributed. Moreover, how well board members knew one another from past experiences, in this or other contexts, differed a lot. These characteristics of the board might have consequences for its trust dynamics, entailing an uneven distribution and development of trust.

Data collection and analysis
The case study was designed to answer the following empirical question: How can the interplay between trust dynamics and conversational interaction be understood? The research question is restricted to the setting of the board meetings that took place within the timespan of the case study. The exploratory case study was conducted in conformity with an interpretive approach, taking as its point of departure the viewpoint that we live in a world that is variously understood (Yanow, 2006). Interpretive research follows an abductive manner of reasoning (Yanow, 2009). We worked in a cyclical, iterative way, back and forth from theory to data and back. Research data were triangulated, as is common in case study research in order to ensure validity (Tellis, 1997; Yin, 1984): we integrated observation data, data from individual interviews and data from a reflection with the board (see below). In addition, with regard to the interaction dynamics, we drew upon audio files of board meetings.
Figure 2 provides an overview of the data collection. We observed and audio recorded the monthly meetings of the board for over a year, from September 2007 until November 2008. For every meeting, an observation memo was composed. The observation memos included a description of the atmosphere during the meeting, the main discussions and any remarkable interaction incidences or developments. In addition, all matters noticed by the researcher-observer that might have a relation with trust or distrust dynamics were included, as well as notable project developments.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews with all nine board members individually were carried out at two points in time: around November 2007 and around October 2008. The three main topics discussed in these interviews were: the evolution of the collaboration; the board members; and the interaction during board meetings. During the first interview, the conversation included perceptions about the other partners, and intentions and expectations regarding the collaboration and the board. In January 2008, the researcher-observer (first author) discussed the main insights from the first interview sessions with the board members during a board meeting. In this way, and in line with the interpretive approach, we could assess whether the board members generally shared our interpretations, and we could reflect together with them on the relations and processes within the board. During the second interview, the partners were requested to reflect upon collaboration developments over the past period, and to explain whether, and how, these developments had impacted their perceptions of, and trust in, the other board members. Moreover, the interaction pattern within the board and potential changes in it during the observed period were discussed.

For the study of the key concept of trust dynamics, the interview material formed the primary data source. Observation memos of the formal meetings were used as a secondary data source. Coding, using the software programme ATLAS.ti, was done up and down simultaneously: following the ‘sensitizing concepts’ from the theoretical framework while keeping an open mind towards other seemingly relevant aspects emerging from the data at the same time. Using the query tool in ATLAS.ti, we composed lists of quotations and observations on specific themes, such as supposed causes of trust developments.

The key concept of interaction was studied as follows. A first list of assumptions concerning changes in the general interaction pattern was drawn from impressions in observation memos of meetings preceding the second interview round. This list was refined on the basis of repeatedly listening back to audio files and comparing board discussions, especially those at the start of the observation period with those at the end of the observation period. We listened to the material
keeping in the back of our mind the three interaction dimensions of content, atmosphere and process (see Figure 1). In addition, we transcribed several discussions to be able to compare the written versions. This was specifically helpful for studying the interaction process dimension. The main assumptions about changes in the board’s interaction pattern resulting from this exercise were discussed with the board members during the second interview with each of them. We asked them whether, and to what extent, they recognized the assumed changes. The list was changed and refined continuously by new insights drawn from the interviews. Subsequently, the interview material on interaction was coded in a mode similar to the interview material on trust, and several query reports were composed in ATLAS.ti relating to interaction developments and the link between interaction and trust.
Results

Project and trust evolution
During the initial round of interview sessions, the perceptions about one another’s goodwill with regard to the collaboration were described, generally speaking, in positive terms. Nevertheless, it seemed that the partners did not always have a very precise picture of what exactly the intentions and goals of the other partners were. At a later point, it would become clear that there were actually quite a few discrepancies between their views. Generally speaking, more distrust was exhibited with regard to perceptions about one another’s competences with regard to the collaboration. Partners had worries about the extent to which other partners were capable of, for example, influencing the organization they represented or of taking the necessary measures to bring the project a significant step forward.

During the second round of interview sessions in October 2008, all nine partners (independently of one another) indicated that during the past year trust within the board had increased. When asked to describe in what sense trust had increased, board members did not mention changes in perceptions about competences but described changes in perceptions about goodwill and changes in perceptions about the interplay within the board. In other words, both interpersonal trust and board trust had increased. The first of a range of interview quotes by board members is presented below. The quotes have been selected because they best illustrate the line of thought demonstrated or because they add colour. They are translated from the original language into English.

About goodwill:

The perception that there are double agendas, that is a feeling that I have less and less. (Board member A)

The people, in the way they behave, are genuine, I think (referring to the situation at the time of the second interview). (Board member B)

About the interplay within the board:

What you also see is that people get more adjusted to working together, to the roles and positions. (Board member A)
The team is now better acquainted and the people know what the painful points are. (Board member D)

The group has become closer. (Board member E)

Two instances during the observed time period were considered by the board members to be especially relevant for the further development of trust within the group. In November 2007, the board came together for a two-day meeting at a remote location chaired by a facilitator. This meeting was supposed to be the starting point for a range of activities, for project members at all levels and at a later stage also for students, with the aim of stimulating a common Campus Connect culture. The culture-building course was later discontinued for various reasons. Nevertheless, the two-day session had a confrontational effect.

During the discussions moderated by the facilitator it became awkwardly clear that there were large disparities in how the various board members pictured the future Campus Connect. In addition, the facilitator demonstrated to the board members that they were not fully aware of the severe time pressure that applied to the situation, given that Campus Connect was to start in September 2008. For instance, in order to be able to communicate with (potential) students and their parents and with potentially affiliated companies, a shared story on the concept of the Campus was urgently needed. Even deciding on the way, or method, to come to a joint story was something the board members could not agree on. Unlike regular board meetings, on the second day of this meeting, the atmosphere dropped to very negative, resulting in a lot of sighing. The meeting ended with the scheduling of a new meeting with the facilitator in a week’s time.

Following the two-day session, one board member, in an e-mail to the chair, expressed his severe concerns with the collaboration process. He felt that, regardless of the time and energy the board members clearly invested, no progress had been made. He actually feared a negative tipping point. He wondered whether, in the current situation, it might help to decide on certain issues in a core group consisting of only a selection of board members, namely, those representing the schools. His message came up during the next meeting with the facilitator and caused a discussion during which the anger of at least one board member was apparent from the emotion in his voice. This board member had interpreted the suggestion as reflecting an assumption of different statuses among the board members. However, during the discussion, mutual respect and equality among the board members were confirmed, and the evening ended in a relatively good atmosphere.
What happened after the November meetings? A schedule was drawn up, and the most urgent topics were handled with priority by having a selection of board members prepare a proposal, within a limited time frame, to be discussed by the board. In this sense, the collaboration process among some of the board members intensified. Otherwise, the board seemed to go back to normal, having board meetings in a way similar to the situation before the November meetings. Nevertheless, there were some, perhaps small, but very significant changes that altered the board’s interaction. We outline these in the next section on the evolution of the interaction and its connection to trust. One board member described the reason why, in his eyes, the meetings with the facilitator had triggered a growth in trust as follows:

I think that at that point a lot of goodwill towards one another was raised. Yes, we then all just showed ourselves as we are, I think, by specific exercises maybe, but that was for a change a different stance towards one another, a different perspective than we had had beforehand. A little less managerial, more personal. (Board member F)

Another board member said:

If you look at the time after [the board meetings in November 2007] ... I feel that definitely the mutual relations ... have ameliorated. (Board member C)

The second important instance, and a clear project milestone, was the finalization of the Campus Connect building in August 2008. Seeing this tangible, attractive project result, delivered on schedule, walking across it, and having students and teachers start working in the building gave the partners a feeling of joy.

Then there is this fantastic building, beautifully furnished, challenging, new - and then it is actually right. Then the pieces sort of fit together and that does you good I must say. It gives a good feeling. I still see a lot of imperfections, things that should be improved, things that could be different, but that is also part of the game. The fact is still that there is a splendid building with a dynamic content that holds much promise for the future, definitely. I am very happy with that. (Board member G)
When asked to explain why trust in the board, overall, had grown, the board members came up with a range of different answers that can be divided into two categories. The first category of mentioned causes includes: the progress of the project, the new building, a significant increase in the expected number of students and the appointment of a business manager (in May 2008) who is responsible for attracting entrepreneurs to rent an office at Campus Connect. All these aspects relate to collaboration results. The other category refers to behavioural processes and includes: smoother interaction, showing commitment and striving hard for results, the sharing of successes and being proud together, and the way people behave when discussing problems.

Interaction evolution and its connection to trust

The board meetings were attended very consistently by all board members; they seldom missed a meeting. The atmosphere during the meetings was usually steady, calm and polite, and emotions generally were kept at very modest levels. The chairman presided over the meetings in a loose way, giving every participant ample opportunity to speak, without strong steering and without taking agendas strictly. When discussions revealed significant points of difference, these were often not addressed in detail. At the end of the year of observation, the interaction had, however, changed in at least three interrelated respects.

A first change in the interaction that was observed by the researcher-observer as well as most partners was more openness. Some board members used the words ‘more clarity,’ or ‘more vulnerability.’ One partner noted that it was not like difficult subjects were addressed more than was the case in the past, but, at the same time, it was his impression that during discussions (of the issues that were addressed), partners offered more transparency on their positions than at an earlier stage. Most of the other partners’ statements correspond with this picture: the decrease in hidden agendas, deeper discussions, nevertheless - still the evasion of certain difficult topics. Some urgent issues that board members addressed during the interviews remained taboo during the board meetings, to their puzzlement. Possibly, this had to do with the fact that these issues were not general topics but each related to a certain specific partner, rendering the issues more personal. It seems like board members felt that the taboo issues should be, or should have been, addressed, but they were not the ones responsible for putting these on the board’s agenda. Another explanation is that board members, either consciously or unconsciously, focused on matters with a prospect of success and, at least for the moment, disregarded the more complex matters that ran a serious risk of causing a stagnation of the collaboration process.
A second change in the interaction relates to the way the board members responded to each other: they responded now, generally speaking, in a more direct manner, confronting each other in an apparently less wary mode than they had done in the past. A third change in the interaction concerns the turn-taking dynamic during board discussions. The conversations were speedier than a year before, and the course of board meeting conversations had become more spontaneous. The quotations presented below address these two, interrelated, interaction changes.

I can also see that people say much more easily if they don’t like something or if they think it should be different. And that was something that some years ago, or even one and a half years ago, would be taken a bit distrustfully by another. But that is absolutely not the case anymore. Now it is just part of the decision-making process. (Board member G)

It is noticeable during the meetings: people speak somewhat more easily, less long-winded. People communicate pretty much straightforwardly, in my opinion, without it causing tensions. Compared to one, two years ago, things get addressed and dealt with much better. (Board member A)

I think that we have indeed become clearer towards one another and somewhat shorter also. (Board member D)

I feel that the atmosphere is more relaxed now. (Board member D)

When you trust someone, then that person is allowed to make a mistake, so he may sometime say something about which he didn’t think or he may sometimes spontaneously say something that isn’t received well at all or isn’t correct. Because you know that in the end he has the best intentions towards the cause or towards you. So if there is that kind of trust, then it doesn’t matter at all. Then there is also faster interaction, then questions asking for clarifications are posed more quickly and answers are quicker and shorter - a more dynamic conversation. And that indeed shows in the current meetings, those are somewhat more dynamic [italics added]. (Board member G)

The conversation has become more dynamic and that has to do with receiving space and taking space. And that is something you can only do if you respect one another and trust one another. (Board member F)
The trust evolution apparently brought with it relatively more freedom in communicating, being more able and daring to say what one wants to say. The changing atmosphere in which people could more easily express their views resulted in a different mode of interacting, in discussions developing more organically:

It brings forth other things, the organic way leads to other things. That has to do with people feeling more relaxed, they can more easily express their free thoughts and more open ... uhh, without having the feeling I’ll get jeered at or I am making stupid remarks. And yes, actually that is the art of ... it should be a sort of think-tank-like gathering, during which people can express their free thoughts, their feelings about it. (Board member E)

The interaction seemed to have transformed from predominantly inter-actor or partner-centred negotiation towards more group-centred decision making. As one partner observed:

[at present,] there is more a team that discusses things, discusses topics, and that is concerned with obtaining results. (Board member G)

Subsequently, the board discussions started to generate a different kind of outcome: providing more solutions and giving rise to collaboration results. This tendency induced a collective feeling of enthusiasm:

The flywheel is gaining more speed. It is about the characters of the people that work together ... and it is about the people believing in it and being committed, and that consequently creates results and that makes them happy or cheerful, it gives them energy and the process is mutually reinforced. (Board member E)

Besides enthusiasm, the collaboration results induced... trust. This brings us back to the starting point of trust and suggests that a self-reinforcing cycle is involved here.

Conclusion

Drawing on board members’ perceptions and interpretations, we have shown how, in the Campus Connect case, trust boosted interaction in a positive way. At the
same time, the interaction during board meetings was sometimes an inducement for the board members to have more trust. These findings support the idea that, with regard to the connection between trust and interaction, a self-reinforcing cycle is involved. As discussed in the theoretical frame of this article, various scholars have pointed at the self-reinforcing tendency of trust dynamics (Butler, 1999; Carnevale, 1995; Druckman, 2004; Gibb, 1964; Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Koeszegi, 2004; Serva et al., 2005; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Zand, 1972).

Our study shows through what kind of dynamics and events such a tendency may actually unfold within the practices of a collaborative governance board. After a moment of crisis and increased insight into one another's positions, the interaction within the board transformed towards more team-like decision making and less inter-actor negotiating, giving rise to solutions and results and thereby to enthusiasm that reinforced the positive trend. Hence, the conversational interaction within the board formed part of a process - involving also project successes - that induced trust and was induced by trust at the same time, comparable to what Vangen and Huxham (2003) call a cyclical trust-building loop. If trust and interaction generally reinforce each other in either a positive or a negative direction, this means that, in practice, a changing interaction pattern within a collaborative governance board or other group decision-making setting may be regarded as a sign of changing trust. It also implies that, for example, a slightly negative trend may be expected to deepen and grow worse, unless a specific event or intervention turns it.

Within the Campus Connect board, the increase in trust was accompanied by changes relating to all three interaction dimensions: interaction content, interaction atmosphere and interaction process. First, we found an increase in openness. This finding confirms the link between trust and openness already widely established in the organization and negotiation literature (Butler, 1999; Frey & Lüthje, 2011; Greenhalgh & Chapman, 1998; Kimmel et al., 1980; Ruppel & Harrington, 2000; Tjosvold, 1999; Zand, 1972). However, in other studies this link was mostly examined in bilateral settings and through experiments or surveys. This study adds to the literature by presenting a completely different kind of empirical data: about a group setting in a naturally occurring case with face-to-face meetings. Second, we found an increase in responsiveness. This finding confirms the, still scarcely researched, link between trust and responsiveness (Butler & Cantrell, 1994; Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999). Third, we found an increase in speed in the board's conversations. This finding extends the theoretical insights on the connection between trust and interaction, beyond the conversational interaction content and atmosphere dimensions, to the conversational interaction process.
dimension: to turn-taking dynamics. This is a relatively tangible aspect of interaction that is not very difficult to observe, and therefore this contribution has significant value for further empirical investigation.

Now that we have answered the question of how the interplay of trust and conversational interaction within a collaboration characterized by growing trust may unfold, further questions arise. First, would other collaboration cases with growing trust – always – show similar dynamics in the interplay between trust and conversational interaction? Second, how can diminishing trust be recognized in the conversational interaction within a collaborative governance board? Would such a situation show a similar dynamic in the opposite direction, involving decreasing openness, decreasing responsiveness and decreasing speed, or would it show a different dynamic involving other kinds of patterns? Third, given that the self-reinforcing cycle of trust and interaction in practice may be reversed at any time, what about the dynamics in collaboration groups that experience such turns? Further studies are needed to answer these questions. Moreover, further studies may build on this exploratory study by using different methods, for example conversation analysis or interaction analysis, to study expected interaction changes.

We may conclude that analysing a live case with naturally occurring interaction processes has proved a worthwhile exercise. Our exploratory study shows that three changes in interaction within the board of Campus Connect relate to a growth of trust within the board. Thus, this study provides a way of approaching trust through interaction patterns, making invisible trust developments visible. The value of this is twofold. First, it makes the concept of trust more researchable. Second, it makes trust dynamics in practice more recognizable. With the appropriate knowledge and skills, chairpersons and other partners involved on a collaborative governance board may be able to observe developments in the board conversations that provide information about the evolution and status of group relations, reaching beyond gut feeling. Such insights may help these professionals to act in time where and when this is required for sound group relations and a successful progression of the collaboration process.
Evolution of trust in interaction

Turn-taking patterns as indicator of trust in collaboration meetings

Lise van Oortmerssen, Cees van Woerkum and Noelle Aarts

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Abstract

It is widely agreed that interorganizational collaborations are heavily shaped by trust dynamics. Research on trust dynamics in organizational settings relies predominantly on self-reports. We present an alternative method for measuring trust changes over time that is based on the analysis of conversational interaction patterns. Our study’s findings about the board meetings of a collaboration in the field of education show that an increase in trust was accompanied by a substantial increase in the density of interaction as shown by turn-taking numbers. We suggest that turn-taking patterns can form a prime element of a novel trust measure based on small-group interaction patterns. Such a measure would have the benefits of not suffering from self-report biases and of not depending on rapport between researcher and research participants. The suggested link between trust and turn-taking implies that chairpersons can foster a fruitful collaboration process through interventions directed at turn-taking.
Introduction

Fruitful multi-sector, interorganizational collaborations are important drivers of change and innovation (e.g. Gray, 1989). The course and outcome of these collaborations are significantly influenced by the trust dynamics among collaborating partners (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Investigating and uncovering the at first sight invisible trust dynamics in collaboration cases is therefore highly worthwhile. Over the last decade, studies on interorganizational trust and, more generally, on trust in organizations have increased. The majority of this research on trust relies on quantitative, psychometric measures. McEvily and Tortoriello’s (2011) recent review on trust in organizational research, which exclusively takes into account these psychometric measures of trust, underlines this. However, other approaches do exist. The recently published Handbook of Research Methods on Trust edited by Lyon, Möllering, and Saunders (2012) provides a fresh outlook on trust research by covering both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The contributions included in this work represent a wide variety of approaches, from in-depth interviews to critical incident techniques, hermeneutic methods, diary methods, and many more.

Regardless of the specific method used, the majority of research methods on trust in organizational settings rely on responses provided by research participants: their cooperation, their awareness, and their openness and honesty are essential for establishing reliable research results. This implicates challenges of various kinds depending on the specific method involved. For example, with regard to survey studies on trust, there is the difficulty of having to rely on respondents to provide honest and complete answers to sometimes delicate questions about relationships with other people. With regard to in-depth interview studies on trust, in order to be able to acquire rich data, researchers need to succeed in building a trusting relationship with the research participants. An important issue for all trust research relying on participants’ responses is self-report bias. People have the tendency to respond in socially desirable ways, and this happens in organizational behavior research in particular (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). Moreover, remembering perceptions and feelings accurately is very difficult because these memories tend to be updated in the light of later experiences and goals (Levine & Safer, 2002).

In addition to the notion that self-reporting methods suffer from biases, it is, in general, desirable to study a phenomenon from various perspectives that can add to one another. Therefore, in this paper, we present a novel approach for measuring trust in organizational group settings that is not based on research
participants’ responses to researchers’ questions in any way. Instead, this approach rests on naturally occurring interaction during meetings. The approach is based on the premise that the conversational interaction among participants during their meetings is a reflection, or enactment, of their trust relationships (see chapter 2; see also Hardy et al., 1998).

In a similar vein, a recent study by Waber, Williams, Carroll, and Pentland (2012) examines the potential correlation between vocal, non-verbal features of conversation and trust. This concerns a pilot study of professional conversations in a hospital setting. Waber et al. (2012, p. 250) argue that non-verbal elements of conversation “reflect aspects of people’s engagement in the conversation and their relational responsiveness to one another” and that these elements “affect participants’ experience of trust.” Based on this line of reasoning, their study focuses on what they call vocal social signaling, which includes aspects such as loudness, pitch, how long a person speaks, and how much a person influences the pace of the conversation. The pilot data from the Waber et al. study suggest a link between trust and non-verbal aspects of conversation. In this paper, we explore a different vocal, non-verbal aspect of conversation in relation to trust: the aspect of taking turns at talk. In the following section, it is explained why turn-taking patterns may hold promise for trust research.

**Linking trust to turn-taking patterns**

The organization of speaking turns is generally considered fundamental to conversational dynamics and the understanding of it (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Vinciarelli, Salamin & Pantic, 2009). Moreover, turn-taking forms a social cue and is generally associated with important social behaviors (Coates, 1994; Vinciarelli, Pantic & Bourlard, 2009). Turn-taking is “not just a mechanical procedure for speakers, but carries social meaning and is expressive of social relationships” (Coates, 1994, p. 177). Turn-taking and turn-taking aspects, such as overlap and interruptions, have been associated with various and sometimes opposing kinds of social behavior. For instance, simultaneous speech has been related to annoyance and a desire to correct what is being said (Cook, 1989), but also to enthusiasm (Tannen, 1981) and to solidarity (Coates, 1994).

An alternative way of looking at turn-taking, which is helpful for understanding the mechanisms of turn-taking in the setting of collaboration meetings, involves framing turn-taking as floor exchange (Edelsky, 1981). Whereas many scholars use the terms turn and floor interchangeably, Edelsky distinguishes
floor from turn and defines it as “the acknowledged what's-going-on within a psychological time/space” among the participants in multi-party interactions (Edelsky, 1981, p. 405), thereby referring to specifically interactional space. The term floor exchange inherently draws attention to the social aspects of turn-taking in the sense that it involves not only “taking” but both give and take. Hence, floor exchange and turn-taking involve cooperation and constitute a co-creation among the participants in a meeting (Chen et al., 2006; Hayashi, 1991; Ikegami & Iizuka, 2007; Murata, 1994; Vinciarelli, Salamin et al., 2009). A floor approach has been used to describe multiple interactional spaces (floors) occurring at the same time and, in addition, to describe patterns of speaker sequences, whereby a floor may be developed by a single speaker or by multiple speakers (e.g. Edelsky, 1981; Parker, 1988). In this paper, the focus is neither on speaker sequences nor on co-existing floors. Therefore, for the remainder of this paper, we have chosen to continue to speak of turn-taking.

In interorganizational collaborations, the social aspect of trust relationships is generally considered to play a significant role (e.g. Ansell & Gash, 2008; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Zhang & Huxham, 2009). Moreover, research has shown that trust dynamics and interaction dynamics within work group and negotiation settings are linked (e.g. Butler, 1999; Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999; Zand, 1972). Given this and the foregoing argument about turn-taking, it seems conceivable, and perhaps even likely, that trust dynamics and turn-taking in collaboration meetings are in some way connected.

The results of a qualitative study by Van Oortmerssen, Van Woerkum and Aarts (2013) on the connection between trust and conversational interaction in a collaborative governance boardroom (see chapter 2) support this suggestion. An increase in trust was found to go together with an increase in the “speed of interaction”, referring to turn-taking dynamics. The board members felt that board conversations, overall, showed more speed and were more dynamic than before: turns-at-talk were alternated more frequently, questions asking for clarifications were posed more quickly, and answers were quicker and shorter.

The frequency of turn transitions in relation to trust is examined further in this paper through a detailed, quantitative analysis of board interaction. This turn-taking aspect is referred to as density of interaction. As we are studying turn-taking within a group setting, we consider it indispensable to include a second dimension of turn-taking dynamics in the analysis: the distribution of turns over the different board members. For example, if the average number of turn transitions per meeting increases over time, it is relevant to know how the turns are distributed among the board members: does the density of interaction increase
only among a limited group of board members, or is this development spread across the entire board? This second turn-taking aspect is referred to as diversity of interaction.

Case and corpus

The data available for this study consist of audio files of the board meetings of a Dutch collaborative governance board held during the time span of a year - from September 2007 through September 2008. Campus Connect (a fictitious name) was a regional, cross-sector project that involved setting up an innovative center where both vocational education and entrepreneurs would be housed and would interact on a daily basis. The members of the board represented schools, the municipality, and companies, and the stakes they had in the project were various in kind and scope. At the time that the data collection started, the board had been working with its current constellation of board members for roughly two years. In total, there were nine board members and an external consultant who performed the role of secretary and advisor. One of the board members was the director of the project. The board was chaired by the board member who represented the school that was the lead organization within the project.

The board met generally once a month for about two hours. In April 2008, an extra meeting was scheduled in for time-pressure reasons. In November 2007, two special board meetings in which a common vision was addressed were led by a facilitator. To enable comparison of the data from the different meetings, only regular board meetings were included in the analysis. All observed regular board meetings that took place before the Campus Connect building was completed and occupied were included in the analysis.

A case study of the board members’ interaction and trust relationships revealed that trust increased during the year of observation (see chapter 2). In interviews held in September and October 2008, the board members were asked to indicate whether trust within the board had decreased, had remained at a similar level or had increased. All the board members independently of one another indicated that, compared to a year before, trust within the board had increased overall. With regard to the risk of a social desirability bias, we assume, for several reasons, that in this case the risk is not very high. First, the board members had to indicate their trust towards the group, not towards a specific individual. Second, the responses were mostly expressed with much confidence. Third, the nine individual and confidential responses were completely coherent. When asked to
depict in what sense trust had grown, the board members described changes in perceptions about goodwill and about the interplay within the board. With regard to the question of what had caused the growth in trust, or what events had triggered it, responses varied, and board members often gave their answers in ways that indicated they were not sure. This shows that accurately remembering perceptions from the past, and when and why these changed, is very difficult. Our analysis of the board’s interaction over time may shed more light on what course the perceived trust development took. Changing interaction patterns may indicate crucial junctures or episodes in the evolution of the board’s internal relationships. For more extensive information on the case we refer to chapter 2.

Methods

The sample for the study was composed by selecting part of the audio recordings of all regular board meetings over the timespan of the case study. Only substantive items on the agenda that demanded information exchange and deliberations by the board were included in the selection. The following agenda items were omitted: opening, correspondence, minutes of last meeting, reports, and queries. This means that, generally, with the exception of these agenda items at the beginning and end of the meeting, all board deliberations were included in the sample. This selection criterion prompted us to exclude a meeting from the analysis. One of the two board meetings held in April 2008 was largely dedicated to jointly formulating, in detail, written answers to questions asked by employees. This unusual agenda item did not fit our selection criterion of involving a deliberation over a specific substantive theme, and therefore this meeting was disregarded. The final selection for the analysis included in total 10 meetings and over 11 hours of recorded meeting time. The appendix to this chapter presents an overview of the meetings and deliberations singled out for analysis.

The selected audio recordings were coded by the same researcher as had performed the Campus Connect case study; she was familiar with the board members’ voices and could easily recognize and distinguish the voices on the audio recordings. The coding was conducted in the following way. The recordings were listened to very carefully, and for each minute the sequence of speakers was indicated on a coding form. Turns lasting a minute or longer were marked. Side comments - off-record utterances that are said to one or a few other people rather than to the whole group and usually in a considerate tone of voice (Edelsky, 1981) - were ignored, because these are not part of the central floor where deliberation
Turn-taking patterns

takes place. In addition, back-channel responses were disregarded in the coding process. Back-channel responses are defined in this study as: minimal responses such as “yeah” showing attentive listening and inserted throughout a speaker’s turn, anticipatory or coinciding “agreeing” sentence completions, and supportive reformulations uttered in overlap with the current speaker’s turn (Makri-Tsilipakou, 1994). Interrupting questions or remarks that solicited a substantial response from the original speaker were counted as a turn.

From the coded data, we computed four measures for each board meeting’s deliberations: two for the density of interaction and two for the diversity of interaction:

1. mean number of speaking turns per minute (density of interaction)
2. frequency of speaking turns lasting a minute or longer (density of interaction)
3. mean number of different speakers per minute (diversity of interaction)
4. variance among board members (chair excepted) with regard to number of turns (diversity of interaction)

Measures 1, 2, and 3 were computed on the basis of ten speakers (nine board members plus the participating consultant/secretary). Measure 4 was computed on the basis of eight board members; the chairperson was left out because chairpersons due to their role generally speak more often than other participants in a meeting. The software program SPSS was used to compute the variance.

Results

The results of the study are listed in Table 1. For the board members’ presence in the meetings and their respective numbers of speaking turns we refer to Table 2. With regard to the mean number of turn transitions per minute, the results show a clear increase over the studied year. Comparing the five meetings during the first half of the year with the meetings during the second half of the year reveals that the mean number of turn transitions rises by almost a complete turn from 3.3 to 4.2. Specifically halfway through the year, during the March meeting, there is a sudden increase of turn transitions per minute. In the board meetings following the March meeting, the relatively high number of turn transitions persists.

With regard to the number of turns lasting longer than one minute, the results show a clear overall decrease over the studied year. Comparison of the first
Table 1

*Turn-taking patterns for each Campus Connect board meeting.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Turn transitions per minute</th>
<th>Turns longer than 1 minute (1/x minutes)</th>
<th>Different speakers per minute</th>
<th>Variance among members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 07</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 07</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 07</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 08</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1/7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 08</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1/7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 08</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 08</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 08</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 08</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 08</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five meetings during the year with the last five reveals that the mean frequency decreases from one long turn occurring every 6 minutes to one long turn occurring every 11 minutes. This is almost half as often.

With regard to the mean number of different speakers per minute, the results show, again, a clear trend. Comparison of the first five meetings during the year with the last five reveals that the mean number of different speakers per minute increases from 2.9 to 3.4.

With regard to the variance among board members regarding their part in the total number of turns in a meeting’s deliberations, in contrast to the other three interaction measures, the results reveal an irregular pattern. The highest variance result is shown by the March meeting. The overview of speaking turn numbers per board member, as presented in Table 2, shows that this high variance result is predominantly due to especially high speaking turn numbers for board member 2 (the director in spe of Campus Connect) and board member 7. These two board members also more generally, all meetings taken together and apart from the chairperson, account for the highest speaking turn numbers. Overall, speaking turns are not very evenly distributed among the different board members. Nevertheless, the turn transition numbers for the last five meetings remain high,
Table 2

*Speaking turns during deliberations per board member per meeting.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Br2</th>
<th>Br3</th>
<th>Br4</th>
<th>Br5</th>
<th>Br6</th>
<th>Br7</th>
<th>Br8</th>
<th>Br9</th>
<th>Cons.</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 07</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>16*</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17*</td>
<td>7*</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 07</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 07</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 08</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 08</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 08</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 08</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 08</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11*</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 08</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 08</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19*</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>2562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Br = board member; Cons. = consultant; * = indicates partial absence; - indicates absence regardless of whether the variance goes up or down. In other words, the denser interaction occurs regardless of whether a meeting’s interaction is relatively dominated by specific board members or is more spread out over all board members.

**Conclusions and discussion**

Summarizing, the results show that, comparing the last meetings of the Campus Connect board with its first meetings during the studied period, speaking turns were alternated more frequently, there were fewer long turns, and more different speakers took turns during one minute. Hence, the results indicate an increased interaction intensity, and this occurred in a setting with increased trust.

Regarding the two interaction density measures, the results show parallel developments. Both the mean number of turn transitions and the frequency of turns longer than one minute show a convincing trend towards more density of interaction: the mean number of turn transitions increases and the mean number
of turns longer than one minute decreases. Hence, during the studied period - in which trust within the board increased - an interaction development among the board members took place towards denser interaction.

Regarding the two interaction diversity measures, the results do not show parallel developments. The mean number of different speakers per minute increases during the studied year, but the variance of speaking turns among the board members does not show a comparable tendency to decrease. Hence, the results do not show an overall clear increase in the diversity of interaction.

The irregular pattern shown by the variance results, and the generally rather uneven distribution of speaking turns among the board members, may be explained by an insight that emerged from looking closely at our data about how the turn-taking patterns unfold per meeting and per agenda item. It appeared that a dichotomy existed among a large proportion of the board: some board members participated predominantly in deliberations on agenda items concerning the education part of Campus Connect, whereas others participated predominantly in deliberations on agenda items concerning the business aspect. Hence, the distribution of speaking turns among the board members depended heavily on a meeting’s agenda. It may be concluded from this that the board did not manage to fully integrate these two themes of education and business - which were in fact very important for the collaboration.

In a comparison of the results for all four interaction measures over the different meetings, the March meeting stands out. During this meeting, the mean number of turn transitions rises quite strongly and suddenly by 0.9 compared to the meeting a month before. In addition, the variance among the board members is exceptionally high - which means that speaking turns are very unevenly taken among the board members. The high number of turn transitions is, as our data show, due to the conversational interaction regarding the first of the two agenda items discussed during this board meeting: the positioning of Campus Connect (see the appendix to this chapter). During the discussion about this subject, there was a relatively long episode withcontinuingly frequent turn transition, boosting the mean number for the meeting as a whole. Although this paper is not about the content and atmosphere of the deliberations of the Campus Connect board, it is relevant to mention here that this particular agenda item evoked an intense discussion and involved an obvious and explicit disagreement among board members.

In the literature on language and discourse, research has shown that short turns form one of the linguistic features of disagreement, more typically explicit disagreement. According to Scott (2002, p. 310), short turns within the context of
explicit disagreement are part of a “conversational turbulence” characterized furthermore by multiple speakers and raised voices. In the Campus Connect case, the conversational turbulence during the March meeting and the disagreement underlying it apparently formed, considered over a longer time span, part of a development into an, overall, positive direction and involving an increase in trust. The conversational turbulence may be understood from the point of view that there was enough trust to openly discuss the disagreement, and it did not escalate into enduring conflict (see also an elaborate description of the case in chapter 2).

Hypothetically, the disagreement that underlies a conversational turbulence may evolve in either positive or negative directions. The disagreement that caused conversational turbulence during the March meeting of the Campus Connect board could, hypothetically, have escalated into conflict, with trust decreasing. We do not know in what interaction pattern that scenario would have resulted. We suspect that in a situation of enduring and deepening conflict the state of conversational turbulence - with its increased turn-taking - does not last continuously: conversational turbulence requires commitment to the conversation and seems to demand relatively much effort. Nevertheless, further research is needed to shed light on this.

In cases where turn-taking patterns are available over a time span that includes multiple meetings, interpreting increased turn-taking as a manifestation of increased trust seems permissible. We suggest that an enduring situation of increased or increasing turn-taking over the time span of different meetings is likely to indicate trust growth. To further develop a trust-research method based on interaction patterns, potentially, turn-taking patterns could be supplemented by simple global ratings of a meeting’s content and atmosphere. Incidental negative scores on these global ratings would be possible in combination with an overall development of growing trust, whereas enduring negative scores on these ratings would contradict a development of growing trust.

**Contributions to the literature**
The findings of this study indicate a general coherence between trust developments and conversational interaction patterns within the board of Campus Connect. They support Waber et al.’s (2012) proposition that there is a link between trust and non-verbal aspects of conversation, and they extend the findings of their pilot study. First, this study adds to the literature on trust-research methods in organizational group settings by showing empirical support for a novel indicator of trust based on turn-taking patterns. Although the scale of this study - involving a single case - warrants modesty, the results seem to hold much promise.
for a novel method, based on conversational interaction patterns, for investigating trust developments in collaboration groups and other small groups. Such a measure would have the significant benefits of not suffering from self-report biases and of not depending on rapport between researcher and research participants, making it a valuable addition and alternative to commonly applied trust measures. A special added value of this measure is that it could make the specific course of trust developments visible by indicating crucial episodes or moments therein.

Second, this study adds to the literature on collaboration that starts from a communication perspective (Hardy et al., 2005; Heath & Sias, 1999; Keyton et al., 2008; Koschmann et al., 2012; Lewis, 2006; Lewis et al., 2010). This stream of literature reflects the awareness that, in order to understand the dynamics in interorganizational and multi-stakeholder collaboration, researchers should direct their attention to communication and conversation processes and practices. The majority of studies within this novel stream of literature are devoted to the development of conceptual models and frameworks. Although these are valuable for the emerging domain, the current situation seems a bit out of balance, with an urgent need for empirical studies to feed further theorizing. Our study on turn-taking and trust provides the literature with some of that necessary empirical grounding. Third, this study builds further on, and supplements, the literature on language and social interaction by identifying linguistic features that seem connected to trust.

Future studies are needed, first, to significantly extend the empirical basis for the suggested connection between turn-taking patterns and trust, for example by comparing cases in which trust increases with cases in which trust decreases or remains at a similar level. Second, presuming the connection holds, the application of this notion towards a novel measure of trust requires further refinement and standardization of the measures for density of interaction applied in this study and, potentially, the integration of additional measures regarding content and atmosphere of the interaction. The to-be-developed measure of “trust in group interaction” should ideally allow for comparison across small groups of diverse sizes. Hence, still a lot of work remains to be done.

Implications for practice

The value of the link between trust and turn-taking patterns over time as shown in the Campus Connect case is not only relevant to scholars, but also has implications for professionals who chair, or participate in, interorganizational collaboration meetings or other small-group meetings in which trust is not self-evident (and it never is!). The development of attentiveness towards turn-taking patterns may add
to professionals’ sensitivity to the course of interaction processes during meetings as well as to their insights into relational developments within the group. This can help professionals to conduct appropriate and timely interventions that foster a fruitful interaction process leading to solutions and innovative outcomes. Examples of such interventions are asking questions, cutting short long monologues, or inviting contributions in ways that cultivate turn-taking and dynamic interaction. Such interventions can foster the process of building an atmosphere of openness and spontaneous interaction. Often, before being able to engender solutions to complex issues or produce innovative concepts acceptable to all stakeholders, collaborative groups that strive for change and innovation - like the Campus Connect board - have first to go through a process of change themselves.
Appendix to chapter 3  
*Subjects and time of deliberations per Campus Connect board meeting.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Total time coded</th>
<th>Agenda items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 07</td>
<td>85 minutes</td>
<td>Common culture program (10 min.); Organization structure (20 min.); Relations with business (21 min.); Education (8 min.); Building (8 min.); Preparation roundtable October 2007 (with staff of the schools and potential business partners) (10 min.); Communication (8 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 07</td>
<td>68 minutes</td>
<td>Reflection and follow-up roundtable October 2007 (28 min.); Reflection on special board meetings with facilitator (16 min.); Organization structure (24 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 07</td>
<td>100 minutes</td>
<td>Education (14 min.); Planning board meetings (7 min.); Common culture program (25 min.); Relations with business (54 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 08</td>
<td>63 minutes</td>
<td>Common culture program (20 min.); Relations with business (10 min.); Organization structure (33 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 08</td>
<td>85 minutes</td>
<td>Common culture program (23 min.); Reflection on board processes (15 min.); Organization structure (37 min.); Positioning and communication (10 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 08</td>
<td>72 minutes</td>
<td>Positioning and communication (41 min.); Business officer (31 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 08</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>Business officer (36 min.); Organization structure and education vacancies (4 min.) [note: the second April meeting is not included in the analysis]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 08</td>
<td>57 minutes</td>
<td>Audit of related project (14 min.); New subsidies opportunity (4 min.); Next roundtable (20 min.); Organization structure and future board (19 min.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun 08</td>
<td>64 minutes</td>
<td>Reflection on workshop education June 2008 (24 min.); Preparation kick-off meeting (31 min.); Relations with business (9 min.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul 08</td>
<td>53 minutes</td>
<td>Constitutions of Campus Connect (43 min.); Developments of related project (10 min.)</td>
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Chapter 4

Collaborating for creative solutions
High trust and interaction flow

Lise van Oortmerssen, Cees van Woerkum and Noelle Aarts

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Abstract

For innovation and creativity, interaction and trust are generally considered highly important. However, empirical studies on the micro processes that link creativity to interaction and trust are scarce. This paper aims to provide an insight into these processes within multi-stakeholder collaboration. We conducted a case study of the board of a voluntary and innovation-oriented collaborative governance arrangement. The results show that the board’s interaction was characterized by episodes of what we have labeled interaction flow: a synergistic interaction mode characterized by temporary changes in interaction process, content, and atmosphere. We argue that interaction flow episodes require a setting with high trust and that they are likely to foster creative outcomes. This new concept draws into perspective the conversational dimension of group creativity.
Introduction

Within the context of our rapidly changing society, creativity has become a key success factor for organizations across all sectors. Organizations need to continually adapt to new circumstances, to be creative, and to innovate their products or services. This applies to individual organizations, but also to interorganizational collaborations. This paper is concerned with multi-stakeholder collaboration: collaboration among partners from different sectors who are engaged in a collective decision-making process aimed at consensus (Ansell & Gash, 2008). It presents a case study of an innovation-oriented and voluntary collaborative governance board at the intersection of technology and the creative industries in a country in Western Europe. The studied board consisted of five board members who jointly strove for novel collaboration structures in order to develop and upscale new types of services, generating economic success.

For multi-stakeholder collaboration, creativity is significant in various ways. First, multi-stakeholder collaborations are often to a large extent oriented towards innovation; it may even form the main reason for their existence. The innovation orientation of a collaboration refers to its ambition to collectively generate new ideas, in the broad sense, intended to be implemented and expected to benefit a larger community (West & Farr, 1990). Hence, being innovation oriented involves the ambition to be creative. Second, the consensus orientation of a multi-stakeholder collaboration requires a decision-making process that may profit greatly from creative impulses (Innes & Booher, 1999). Being creative as a group is necessary in order to deal with controversies, to rise above weak trade-offs, and to arrive at integrative solutions. Third, multi-stakeholder collaboration is characterized by numerous uncertainties and ambiguities. These relate to the nature of the issues at hand, to the different actors and institutions involved, and to a complex and ever-changing environment (see also Aarts & Van Woerkum, 2002; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). In such a complex setting with continuously changing circumstances, creativity is needed in terms of adaptability.

As we see it, creativity is important in all stages of a collaboration project. It is important in the design stage as well as in later stages: for example when implementation can only succeed if a collaboration deals in a creative way with an environment that is constantly changing. Moreover, in many collaborative governance initiatives, various subprojects in different project stages are being run in parallel, each requiring the kind of creativity suited to the stage they are in. In this sense, creativity within a collaboration is sometimes closely related to problem finding and problem solving.
For innovativeness and group creativity, trust is widely considered very important (e.g. Bidault & Castello, 2009; Brattström, Löfsten & Richtnér, 2012; Ruppel & Harrington, 2000). Also interaction processes are widely considered significant for innovativeness and group creativity (e.g. Drach-Zahavy & Somech, 2001; Leenders, Van Engelen & Kratzer, 2003; Ruppel & Harrington, 2000). However, little is known about how in practice trust dynamics and interaction processes influence creativity. Empirical studies that address creativity, trust, and interaction in relation to one another are still scarce. Ruppel and Harrington (2000) studied the relationship of communication, ethical work climate, and trust to commitment and innovation through a survey among IT managers. They suggest that managers set the tone for the kind of open communication that influences trust, that trust leads to commitment, and that commitment leads to creativity and innovation. In this paper, we explore the dynamics of group creativity, trust and conversational interaction over time, in relation to one another, and in a collaboration setting. Based on the results of our case study, we introduce and describe the concept of interaction flow.

Theoretical frame

Creativity in groups
Since our focus is on the dynamics at the collective level of a group, we choose to adopt the perspective that group creativity involves the production of ideas, perceived as new and valuable by the individuals involved, that emerge in interaction and cannot be traced back to one single group member (Amabile, 1983; Hargadon & Bechky, 2006; Van de Ven, 1986). For deepening our insight into the creativity aspect of collaboration processes, we draw from literature on group and team creativity, and innovation. In his review of group and team creativity and innovation literature, Paulus (2000) suggests that interaction in groups and teams can be an important source of creative ideas. At the same time, he states, there are many social and cognitive factors that may inhibit creativity at group level, for example social anxiety, free riding, task-irrelevant behavior, and cognitive overload. However, he explains, interaction process procedures, such as the use of facilitators, can prevent the “production loss” caused by these phenomena. Moreover, other social and cognitive factors can increase the idea-generating productivity of groups, for example accountability, mutual stimulation of associations, and cognitive diversity. Therefore, if group processes are managed carefully, a group can attain high levels of creative achievement. Paulus also points to the
critical dimension, for group creativity, of open communication between the members of the group, allowing for sharing knowledge and giving feedback on ideas (see also Paulus & Brown, 2007).

**Group creativity and interaction**

Besides Paulus, other authors have emphasized the link between group creativity and innovation, and communicative interaction. Kratzer, Leenders and Van Engelen (2004, p. 64) state that communication is the “cement of innovation activities” because new knowledge requires interaction between specialists with diverse backgrounds (see also Leenders et al., 2003). Drach-Zahavy and Somech (2001, p. 121) underline the “importance of dialogue as a carrier of the creative process.” The results of their study of teams in elementary and secondary schools indicate that the interaction processes in a team outweigh heterogeneity in predicting innovation. Of the four interaction processes studied (based on Van Offenbeek & Koopman, 1996), team learning was found to be the most important carrier of innovation. Team learning refers to the reflection on a “team’s objectives, strategies, and processes for the purpose of creating a team-level intellectual product that initiates change” (Drach-Zahavy & Somech, 2001, p. 112). The other interaction processes studied in this research project are exchanging information, motivating, and negotiating (see also Van Offenbeek & Koopman, 1996). The authors note that from the results it appears that these processes are only partially distinctive and that more studies are needed to explore their interrelationships (Drach-Zahavy & Somech, 2001).

Several authors have stated that high-quality innovation or creativity demands a process whereby differences of opinion are frankly and fully explored (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Frey & Lüthje, 2011; Stacey, 2001; Taggar, 2002; Tjosvold, Wedley & Field, 1986; Van Woerkum, Aarts & De Grip, 2007; West & Anderson, 1996). This “constructive controversy” occurs in a cooperative group context rather than in a competitive context. It occurs if group members enter a discussion without having a predefined idea about the outcome and try to influence and are open to being influenced at the same time (Tjosvold et al., 1986; Tjosvold & Yu, 2007). It involves an interaction dynamic characterized by freely asking questions, exploring, providing feedback, and building on one another’s contributions (see also Taggar, 2002). Such a dynamic, resulting in joint deliberation, is only possible in a group environment with abundant openness and trust (see also Ashleigh & Prichard, 2012; Huang, 2009; Kostopoulos & Bozionelos, 2011; Kratzer, Leenders & Van Engelen, 2006).
Group creativity and trust

In the former section we discussed the link between group creativity and interaction. The present section addresses the link between group creativity - or innovativeness - and trust. Nugent and Abolafia (2006) infer that exchange necessary for innovation requires ‘the existence of supportive personal relationships high in trust’ (p. 629). Several empirical studies have confirmed the relation between creativity and trust in organizational settings (e.g. Barczak et al., 2010; Bidault & Castello, 2009; Brattström et al., 2012; Ellonen, Blomqvist & Puimalainen, 2008; Ruppel & Harrington, 2000). The results of a survey among practitioners in public-private partnerships conducted by Edelenbos and Klijn (2007) show that 58% of practitioners are of the opinion that trust in the other partner(s) is the most important condition for realizing innovative solutions. In their study, trust was defined as the belief that other actors refrain from opportunistic behavior.

Central in our view on trust within a collaborative governance setting is the expectation that other partners will prove trustworthy, not only in the sense of good intentions but also in the sense of being able to deliver on promises. Trust perceptions are shaped in interaction. They are continuously changing, refined, or adjusted on the basis of new experiences (Hardin, 2002). For the purposes of this study, trust is regarded as a multi-faceted perception of other board members, or the board in general, and encompasses perceived integrity, competences, and commitment. Integrity refers to moral principles, such as treating possibly sensitive information confidentially. The term competences is used in a broad sense, referring to the “group of skills, competencies and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain,” indicated by Mayer et al. (1995, p. 717) in their frequently cited article as “abilities”. Commitment implies involvement actualized in actions and includes a promise for the future. We consider the concept of commitment as related to the concept of benevolence - a concept that is often, and in line with Mayer et al. brought forward as a third important dimension of trust, alongside integrity and abilities. In this paper, however, we choose to use the concept of commitment because it more precisely denotes what may be a trust issue in the setting of voluntary collaborations. In collaborations that are based on highly voluntary grounds and that are constructed in ways that allow partners to relatively easily opt-out if and whenever they want to, perceptions of commitment are crucial and form a significant trust dimension that may be at stake (Hattori & Lapidus, 2004; see also Solomon & Flores, 2001). Several authors have pointed to the importance of commitment for outcomes of collaborations, and for innovation processes and outcomes in particular (e.g. Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bidault & Castello, 2009; Ruppel & Harrington, 2000).
Bidault and Castello (2009) claim that, in a creativity-oriented partnership between two players, there is an optimum amount of mutual trust. From their empirical data they infer that too much mutual trust may decrease joint creativity. Their experiment does not provide answers to the question of how trust could relate to a decrease in creativity. Perhaps too much trust in the other partner can in certain situations imply that the attitude necessary for constructive controversy is absent. Nijstad and Paulus (2003) claim that a very harmonious group climate characterized by high levels of cohesion does not lead to high levels of group creativity because such groups may be primarily directed at maintaining group harmony. They infer that “a somewhat critical but open climate, in which new ideas are valued but in which there is no excessive consensus seeking, appears to be most beneficial for creative performance” (Nijstad & Paulus, 2003, p. 330). In the practices of groups and teams, the level of cohesion and the amount of trust are likely to vary over time (see also Tekleab, Quigley & Tesluk, 2009).

Research question
On the basis of these lines of thought, we assume that, in an innovation-oriented collaborative governance board, group creativity, interaction and trust are part of a dynamic interplay. In the following section we outline the case study that we conducted. The central research question directing the analysis of the case for this paper is as follows: How do group creativity, conversational interaction, and trust unfold, and how can the interplay between these unfolding processes be understood? The research question is restricted to the setting of board meetings taking place within the time span of the case study.

Research setting and methods

The case: Platform Inspire
We were fortunate to have access to the closed meetings of an innovation-oriented collaborative governance board for one and half years during 2009 and 2010. It concerned a collaborative governance initiative at a national level in a Western European country, started in 2007. Two board members formed the starting point of the initiative and had invited the other people who, together with them, formed the board. The board members and other collaboration partners came from large ICT industries, knowledge organizations, and small to medium sized enterprises in the creativity domains. We have named the foundation Platform Inspire, a fictitious name for reasons of anonymity. Platform Inspire aimed at stimulating innova-
tion at the intersection of creativity and technology. Platform Inspire was a think-tank and, at the same time, carried out activities that included lobbying and community building.

The members of the Platform Inspire board shared the view that the potential for innovation and economic success of the creative industry in their country was far from being fully exploited. They strove for novel collaboration structures among creative entrepreneurs, knowledge organizations, and large ICT companies in order to develop and upscale new types of services, generating economic success. The board members aimed at influencing the policy agenda of the national government and stimulating the realization of research and innovation programs. At the same time, they searched for ways to assist participants in the platform to acquire subsidies through these programs. Since, to a certain extent, the home organizations of the board members had similar, hence competing, stakes with regard to subsidy programs, there were, from that point of view, risks involved in their participation in Platform Inspire. At the outset of the case study, Platform Inspire had generated successes during its first stage in the form of the production of a widely accepted Strategic Research Agenda and the acquisition of a subsidy for its activities. The next challenge was to make sure that the achieved position in the field, a player of substantial importance, would continue and proceed to a more mature, consolidated level. This required externally as well as internally oriented actions, such as the setting up of a small organization consisting of a director with supporting staff.

Participants in the board meetings
The board consisted of five members. Two board members held positions as directors at large ICT companies. Two board members were professors at universities, in an ICT-related field. One board member was a director at a knowledge institute that developed creative technology for social-cultural innovations. The board was chaired by one of the ICT-company managers. The other ICT-company director resigned his board membership during the observation period in order to be able to take the newly introduced position of director of Platform Inspire. Around the same time, one of the professors left the board. He remained formally linked to Platform Inspire through membership of the Council of Advice, a rather fluid group of about thirty professionals meeting a few times a year. The vacant positions on the board were filled by a director at a large knowledge institute (ICT department) and a manager at a medium sized internet services office. Board members were expected to represent a certain professional area, however, they were not formally repre-
senting their home organization within Platform Inspire. This situation allowed them much freedom in their behavior during board meetings.

In addition to the board members, the board meetings were attended by the following people. After his role switch, the director and former board member was present in all meetings. Furthermore, two permanent representatives of governmental organizations responsible for subsidy allocation attended the board meetings from the start of Platform Inspire. In addition, the meetings were attended by supporting staff, first consisting of one person and later of two persons. The non-members present in the board meetings were generally expected to contribute to a discussion only if invited by the chairperson to share their knowledge or opinion, and to listen otherwise. This implicit code did not hold for the director. Occasionally, an invited guest from outside attended (part of) a board meeting, or a member of one of the Platform Inspire work groups came to a board meeting to report on work-group activities.

An interpretive research approach
The case study was designed in conformity with an interpretive approach, taking as its point of departure the viewpoint that we live in a world that is variously understood (Yanow, 2006). Interpretive research follows an abductive manner of reasoning (Yanow, 2009). We worked in a cyclical, iterative way, back and forth from theory to data and back. Research data were triangulated, as is common in case study research in order to ensure validity (Yin, 2003; Tellis, 1997): we integrated observation data, data from individual interviews, and data from two short reflections with the board. In addition, with regard to the interaction dynamics, we drew upon audio-files of board meetings.

Semi-structured interviews with all five board members and the director were carried out in March/April 2009 and in March/April 2010. The chairperson was interviewed once more, in July 2010. The three interview topics were: evolution of the collaboration in general; trust in other board members; and interaction during board meetings. These themes were discussed with the board members, striving not for technical objectivity but for reflected subjectivity and trying to connect as much as possible to the experiences and word choice of the board members.

All meetings of the board in the period from January 2009 through July 2010, twelve in total, were observed. Two of the board meetings were teleconferences, the other ten were regular meetings. Twice during the observation period, in June 2009 and June 2010, the researcher-observer (first author) discussed the main insights with the board members during a board meeting. In this way, and in line with the interpretive approach, we could assess whether the board members
generally shared our interpretations, and we could reflect together with them on the relations and processes within the board. Besides these two incidences, the researcher-observer did not participate in board conversations other than in so-called social talk.

**Results**

In the following section, we speak of every board member in the third person masculine, although not all board members were actually male. Adding the sexes would diminish the anonymity of the board members. We have chosen the masculine form, and not the feminine form, because the majority of the board members were male. The quotes presented are taken from interviews with board members and the director and have been selected because they best illustrate the line of thought presented or because they add color. The translation from the original language into English, as provided by the first author, was scrutinized by a co-author and subsequently translated back into the original language by a third person in order to verify that the original meaning had not changed during translation.

*General evolution of the board and its activities*

The members of the Platform Inspire board shared a mission with a societal dimension. They had the ambition to build new collaboration structures for the creative industries, facilitating these to fully exploit their potential (see The case: Platform Inspire in Research setting and methods, this chapter). Actually, it was more than an ambition; it was a passion.

*I think everyone has a passion for the intersection of ICT and the creative industry and we all (...) really see chances that go beyond our own stake.*

Often their motivation was not purely business related. It included a component of exploring new frontiers, learning new things, or meeting new communities.

*There is a personal advantage, no, a personal motivation (...). Especially in the first stage of Platform Inspire: people were members because it, for them personally, resolved a certain contradiction in their lives, it added meaning to their lives [italics added].*
In the light of this shared intrinsic motivation, it is not difficult to grasp why board members and other participants in the board meetings speak about Platform Inspire as having a very remarkable, positive dynamic, with extraordinary enthusiasm and inspiration.

During 2009, nevertheless, there was a generally felt decrease in speed, impact, and success, in other words of “flow,” within the Platform Inspire board. At the same time, in March, May, and September 2009, consequent to prior notification of the absence of more than one board member, board meetings were canceled at short notice; and in October 2009 the board meeting was changed into a meeting by phone. This contrasted with the board meeting history in 2007 and 2008, when the board met every month, the only exception being the mid-summer month of July. In the last months of 2008, an extra meeting by phone had been set up in addition to the regular monthly meeting even three times.

Several developments could possibly explain this slowdown. First, 2009 followed on a very successful year (see The case: Platform Inspire in Research settings and methods, this chapter). Board members suggested that it was impossible to maintain such a success over a longer time period. Second, at this time, the changes in the board took place (see Participants in the board meetings in Research setting and methods, this chapter), and the director and his bureau started their work in May 2009. A lot of work that was formerly carried out by board members was now carried out by the director and his staff. Moreover, the new board constellation, with two new members and different roles for the director and the chairperson, meant that a new modus had to be found for the board meetings. Third, and perhaps most importantly, there was increasing haziness about the future direction and positioning of Platform Inspire, due to related developments in the field, as well as the fact that Platform Inspire had accumulating responsibilities. The board was no longer solely occupied with ideation, but was now also involved, together with two other partners, in setting up an innovation program. It was evident that among the board members there were different visions on the future model for Platform Inspire, but these were not yet thoroughly addressed and discussed.

I have the feeling that all participating parties, certainly when you hear the Council of Advice, are trying to project their own agenda onto it, more than there being a common sense of the profile, that if you ask everyone “What is Platform Inspire?”, you get the same answer from everyone. You will not get that [same answer].
The “fire” was generally felt to be increasing again by the beginning of 2010. In the board meeting of February 2010, there was an exceptionally fierce debate that resulted in the first decision taken by the board without consensus since its inception. The debate illustrated the current ambiguity surrounding the position and responsibilities of Platform Inspire. The quotes below are remarks about the February meeting made by different board members. The quotes have in common that they refer to Platform Inspire’s current relation to its environment.

What happened is that we have turned to implementation, and that is a different role than Platform Inspire had before, so it is not just agenda setting [anymore] and that is in my opinion what the confusion now is (...). That means that we are losing some independence (...). New relationships come into being with others who start to expect things from us (...).

We have been masters of our own destiny. That was of course exactly the fun. We were pioneering, we were travelling to Mars, and we all figured it out ourselves (...). And now we were confronted by a situation that actually forced us to consent to something (...), it was at least not a free choice.

(...) this is an important signal that we don’t have our own story sorted out, because of which we are actually not making ourselves clear to our environment.

In April 2010 (this was after completion of the second round of interview sessions), a special board meeting was organized dedicated entirely to a discussion on the future strategy of Platform Inspire. During this three-hour meeting, every board member elucidated his current positioning in, and vision for, Platform Inspire. Subsequently, possible future scenarios, listed and explained by the director, were discussed. Before the end of the meeting, the board and its chair had managed to mold what had at first sight appeared contradictory visions into a commonly supported new strategy.

Creative output of the board
For a first indication of the evolution of group creativity within the Platform Inspire board, we may take a look at the output of the board in terms of decisions taken. A decision inventory for Platform Inspire was started in February 2008. During the observation period, spanning a period of 17 months (from end January 2009 through June 2010), 22 decisions were registered in the decision inventory. In the 12 months preceding the observation period, 23 decisions had been registered.
Hence, the total number of registered decisions, regardless of their creative extent, in the observation period (17 months) was less than the total number of registered decisions in the year (12 months) preceding the observation period.

However, looking only at the registered decisions for a sense of the evolution of group creativity would mean a drastic simplification of the practices we are studying. The decisions registered in the inventory involved all kinds of decisions, varying from procedural decisions to strategic decisions, from implying small actions to implying complex actions, and from unsurprising outcomes to unexpected, novel outcomes. Moreover, sometimes, Platform Inspire board discussions did not directly result in a registered decision but still formed a useful preparation for a decision at a later board meeting. As one board member put it when referring to the period from March/April 2009 to March/April 2010:

Again, it is going much more slowly than I previously expected. But at the same time many things are happening that are already a lot... So it is really both. From the outside, it looks like it is all a bit more quiet and slow, but on the inside, a lot of turns have been taken, a lot of choices have been made along the way that will eventually lead to something.

Therefore, we will not take this line of thought any further. Instead, we will take a close look at one specific creative decision of the Platform Inspire board, and, more in particular, the discussion resulting in that decision, to learn more about the dynamics involved at the interaction level. We consider the selected decision creative because it was perceived as a new and valuable idea that emerged in interaction and could not be traced back to one single board member. From the content of the discussion it is clear that, at the start of the discussion, the outcome was not foreseen. This is confirmed by a remark made by the board chair stating that the decision formed a surprising outcome. The decision provided solutions to two separate issues at the same time—and was important: it was referred to by board members during interviews as having a high impact.

*Interaction dynamics in a creative board conversation*

The selected creative conversation took place during the board meeting of February 2009. Not surprisingly, following from interviews with board members conducted in March/April 2009, this was at a point in time that trust perceptions were highly positive, and more positive than a year thereafter (see Trust dynamics within the board, this chapter). The board’s conversation involved at least two issues discussed at the same time. One issue concerned the need to appoint a
director, which had already been on the agenda for some time. The other issue concerned the problem, felt by the board members individually to various extents, of accounting to their home organization for the (large amount of) time spent on Platform Inspire activities. The discussion started when board member A addressed this second issue, making clear that it was necessary for him to discuss this point. Four of the five board members (one had left early) participated in the discussion, as well as an external, potential candidate for the director’s position. The discussion took 36 minutes in total and resulted in a decision by consensus to, in principle, appoint board member A as director of Platform Inspire from May 2009. This would imply his simultaneous resignation from the board.

We will now take a closer look at the conversational interaction during this particular discussion. We conducted a conversation analysis that may be positioned in the tradition founded by Sacks (1972). For this analysis, we selected a few specific interaction characteristics. The analysis focused on two interaction characteristics that came to the fore in our theoretical frame: one, openness, and, two, a tendency that we indicate by “building on one another’s contributions” (see Group creativity and interaction in Theoretical frame, this chapter). In addition, we searched for remarkable, quantitatively observable, patterns in the interaction process of this discussion.

Openness and building together
Both openness and the tendency to build on one another’s contributions are qualitatively observable characteristics that we recognized in the conversational interaction of the discussion. We believe that there is enough redundancy in the material to justify this interpretation and will illustrate this with some phrases. The presented phrases come from various participants in the discussion and from various stages during the discussion. Phrases illustrating an openness tendency:

(a) “(...) I don’t want to turn around it any longer.”
(b) “I am wearing two hats now that’s why I find it difficult to talk about that, but I am still going to say it (...)”
(c) “Is it appropriate to discuss that very openly with one another [as I am doing now]?”

After these introductory phrases (a), (b), and (c), board members spoke about issues that had a close connection to specific persons and could have implications for these persons. In other words, they were going to make possibly sensitive remarks.
The phrases we include below illustrate the tendency to build on one another’s contributions. All these phrases are phrases that form the beginning of a speaking turn:

(d) “That combined with (...)”
(e) “A small variation on this could perhaps be (...)”
(f) “Yes, that’s a good point. I think I recognize that: so either (...), or (...)

What happens in phrases (d), (e), and (f) is that participants proceed with a line of thought that is started by another participant in the preceding turn. The line of thought does not, so to speak, “belong” to a specific participant, but to all participants as a group (which is the board plus director and, by exception, other participants). This seems to correspond with Scharmer’s fourth field of conversation, or “generative dialogue” (Isaacs, 1999; Scharmer, 2001); in this field, people are “personally included but also are fully aware of the impersonal elements of their participation” (Isaacs, 1999, p. 279-280). Isaacs relates this fourth field of conversation to creativity: “genuinely new possibilities come into being” in this space (p. 280). He remarks that, in the fourth field of conversation, “people have an experience of flow - often a collective flow” (p. 280).

Quantitative pattern in the interaction process

With regard to the interaction process of the discussion, our analysis uncovered a pattern that occurred at least three times during the discussion. The pattern consisted of three, quantitatively observable, tendencies. These tendencies are:

1. **Turn-taking**: an increase in speaking pace and speaking turn switches (stated in a different mode: a decrease in the length of the turns)
2. **Distribution**: an increase in the alternation of speakers, in the sense that more board members contribute to the discussion
3. **Overlap**: an increase in the occurrence of overlap, in the sense that two or more board members speak at the same time

The pattern occurred for the first time about seven minutes after the discussion started. At this juncture, one of the participants raised the point that, if board members started to get paid for their Platform Inspire activities from Platform Inspire resources, they should give up their board membership. This was followed by about four minutes of increased turn-taking, increased distribution, and increased overlap. During these minutes, the board members discussed the implications of this point, with which they agreed, and explored different ways of organizing payment - ways that would not entail giving up board membership. The end of this interaction episode was marked by a short silence after which the chairperson
addressed a specific participant and asked him a personal question, thereby starting a new episode in the discussion.

We suggest that the discerned pattern, in combination with the tendency to build on one another’s contributions, forms an indication of flow in the interaction. Flow is a state of optimal experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). It is originally a cognitive concept, referring to a state of the mind (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Flow during board meetings, alternatively, we propose, is an interactional concept, referring to an optimal, intensified, and synergetic state of the conversational interaction within a team or small group. From here onwards we will speak of interaction flow. Before elaborating further on this concept, let us first consider the trust dynamics in the Platform Inspire board.

Trust dynamics within the board
From the interviews conducted in 2009 it was evident that board members had a lot of trust in one another as partners in the collaboration. When portraying the relations within the board, board members referred to aspects of other board members’ integrity and competences and spoke very positively of one another in that sense. In addition, overall, they indicated that other board members invested much time and effort in Platform Inspire. The perceptions about integrity and competences appeared stable: a year later, in March/April 2010, these had not changed. Nonetheless, trust relations now appeared less solid than a year before. At this point, board members expressed certain doubts about other board members’ continuing commitment to Platform Inspire. In the time between the two interviews, more initiatives in the field had been started and several board members were involved in one or more of these other initiatives in addition to their participation in Platform Inspire. This had triggered uncertainty among board members: did Platform Inspire still form for everyone the main route to achieving their overlapping goals? And, if so, was the route board members had in mind for Platform Inspire still the same for everyone?

It is not the track record or competences that I have doubts about. (...) It is possibly mostly about the intentions, because these are just fuzzy.

What I see now is that parallel activities are emerging. What I see is that people are working at these. (...) And that does not come up in the Inspire meetings. I find that strange.
[Repositioning], that is very much needed, because we... now it appears that we do not all strive for the same goals anymore. Or, that we still do, but that more forms have emerged in which this is possible (…)

One board member in an interview used the term “engagement” to indicate that board members should not just participate but also be actively and completely involved and that in his perception this kind of commitment was an issue for some of the board members. Remarkably, another board member in an interview expressed similar doubts with regard to the commitment of this board member.

It seemed that, regardless of the remarkably smooth introduction of the two new board members, the board as a group was now less close than before, and that trust in the board had - at least somewhat - decreased. Perhaps not all board members would experience and describe the situation in the same way, but the quote below does depict quite sharply the feelings of this board member.

(…) I now have the feeling that we are not a unity. The points of departure that are important for the whole picture are not shared in such a way that we base reasoning on them that is clear to other team members. (…) I thought that as a team we were further ahead.

The strategy meeting in April 2010 was crucial for the board in the sense that it seemed to decrease the reciprocal concerns about commitment, thereby opening up the opportunity to reverse the trend of declining trust. During an interview in July 2010, three months after the strategy meeting, the chairperson stated that the behavior of the board members during the special meeting, and the result of the meeting, had very much boosted his trust in the board and its members. Insofar as it had been at stake, his trust in every single board member was completely restored.

Interplay of creativity, interaction, and trust in practice
From the interviews conducted in 2009 it followed that the Platform Inspire board meetings were considered unique for their consistently high inspiration level over the previous two years (see General evolution of the board and its activities, this chapter). From summer 2009, however, the project entered a transition phase, and, during the time that followed, the sense that “things are working out well,” a sense of speed and success, was tempered somewhat. Parallel to this development, the researcher-observer and board members perceived a relative loss of flow in the meetings until the beginning of 2010. The interaction during board meetings was
not conceived as different from before in terms of openness and spontaneity, or in the way board members responded to other members’ contributions. Actually, this is remarkable considering the fact that two out of five board members were new within the board and not everyone knew one another well yet. Nonetheless, the board apparently, as indicated by the members themselves, for some time did not manage to achieve the level of inspiration and speed that was common in the previous phase of Platform Inspire. The tempering of interaction flow coincided with the development that trust in terms of confidence in other board members’ commitment became a concern. As shown in Trust dynamics within the board in this section, perceptions about integrity and competences appeared very stable, but perceptions about commitment became less positive during the second half of 2009.

At the beginning of 2010 - still before the special meeting in April 2010 when commitment concerns were, at least to a large extent, resolved - a slight rise in interaction flow was observed by the researcher and confirmed by board members. What caused this increase? Was it due to the novel input of the new board members? Was it related to acclimatization to the new structure with a director? Was it triggered by pressing challenging issues on the agenda? We assume, in line with complexity theory (e.g. Burnes, 2005; Stacey & Griffin, 2005), that it was specifically the fact that several developments came together that started to make a change. Interaction flow in the board’s meetings seemed to be rising again. In this setting, the difficult issue of deciding on the future model, or identity, of Platform Inspire, which had hovered on the agenda for quite a while, and which could possibly cause friction in the board, was now properly addressed. Apparently, there was enough confidence, hence trust, that, if finally addressed, the board members could work it out together. Addressing it and solving it enabled the board to let trust grow again. This is illustrated by a remark by the chairperson in the final interview with him in July 2010, when he refers to the special meeting and its conclusion:

The connectedness with the team grows at such times. What you see is that the more teams are able to take difficult decisions, the more the mutual space increases.

**Interaction flow**

*Further defining interaction flow*

We have suggested that the simultaneous presence of three interaction process tendencies forms an indication for the phenomenon that we have labeled interac-
tion flow: an intensified and synergetic state of the conversational interaction. In the analyzed board discussion (see Quantitative pattern in the interaction process in Results, this chapter), the turn-taking tendency in the recurring pattern in the interaction process comes down to a speeding up of the conversation. The distribution tendency in the pattern may be interpreted as a development among the participants towards more widespread involvement in the ongoing conversation. The overlap tendency in the pattern seems to indicate more spontaneous behavior during the conversation.

Interaction flow can occur when a team or small group is discussing a problem or question. When interaction flow takes place, group members interact in a spontaneous way, concentrating on the discussion, forgetting time and place. They become fully immersed in the interaction. The discussion itself receives their complete focus, whereas awareness of the individual group members or the relationships between them diminishes. The group seems to act as one entity: group members build on other members' contributions to the conversation, associating freely without holding back.

Interaction flow has process-related, content-related, and atmosphere-related characteristics. The interaction process during interaction flow is typically somewhat chaotic, in correspondence with the creative content of the interaction. This kind of interaction process can lead to unexpected interaction outcomes: to new combinations of information, generating new ideas, new arguments, or new preferences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Nijstad & Paulus, 2003). In this way, the rather disordered process brings more order to the themes that are being discussed by the group. The atmosphere during an interaction flow episode is one of involvement and energy. Participants pay full attention and are eager to participate and contribute to the conversation. In general, participating in an interaction flow episode provides a feeling of enjoyment, just for the sake of the challenging conversation, comparable to the enjoyment generated by experiencing flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Moreover, since interaction flow often results in acquiring new combinations and finding potential solutions, interaction flow is generally accompanied by a feeling of inspiration. Hence, during an interaction flow episode, the interaction atmosphere receives a positive boost. In sum, we suggest interaction flow involves three general interaction tendencies: an increase in interaction intensity (interaction process); an increase in creative shifts (interaction content); and an increase in positively inspired atmosphere (interaction atmosphere).
Interaction flow and creativity
We have suggested that interaction flow is a creative state of interaction: during interaction flow, a group arrives at unexpected, creative shifts, and, potentially, innovative solutions. In the case of Platform Inspire, perceived interaction flow and perceived creative output of the board indeed seemed to show a similar trend. We believe that the extent to which a group that meets regularly provokes interaction flow is an indication of the group creativity that the group yields. At the same time, we suggest, interaction flow forms the means by which group creativity can be generated and realized. In other words, interaction flow and group creativity go together.

Interaction flow and trust
Just as trust among group members is essential for innovation and group creativity (see Group creativity and trust in Theoretical frame, this chapter), trust seems essential for interaction flow. Distrust does not allow group members to interact spontaneously and speak freely, without self-censorship of their remarks. First and foremost, trust with respect to the integrity of other group members seems important. Without the conviction that possibly sensitive information will be treated confidentially, openness is hard to imagine (see e.g. Zand, 1972). Second, group trust seems relevant. If board members had sincere doubts about the capacity of the group to produce valuable solutions for the problem under discussion, they would lack the motivation to fully participate (see also Nijstad & Paulus, 2003). Supposed incapacity of the group may be ascribed to various factors, such as non-competent members, a bad group constellation, a malign group climate, or restricting circumstances.

In the case of Platform Inspire, perceptions about the integrity of other board members were highly positive and stable. However, group trust, or trust in the board, did decrease to a certain extent at some point. This was ascribed to external developments and doubts about members’ commitment. We consider it very possible that the space for interaction flow and group creativity was negatively impacted by this decrease in board trust. In spite of this, it was at most a relative decrease, with still a stock of board trust remaining, as exemplified by the genuine participation in the strategy meeting.

We would argue not only that trust forms a precondition for interaction flow, but also that interaction flow stimulates trust, specifically group trust. Csikszentmihalyi points out that flow strengthens the self, it involves growth. After a flow episode, one feels more “together” than before (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). We suggest that, in a similar way, interaction flow episodes strengthen a group.
Having solved a wicked problem together raises confidence in the effectiveness of the group. In addition, recognizing, respecting, and integrating different viewpoints fuels the sense of harmony within the group. Hence, interaction flow and trust seem deeply interwoven.

Discussion and conclusion

Theoretical contributions
Our interdisciplinary study makes contributions to at least three different streams of literature. First, the study contributes to the literature on multi-stakeholder collaboration processes. Group interaction in collaboration projects has been investigated hitherto mainly through empirical studies on consensus-building processes (e.g. Innes & Booher 1999; Leach & Sabatier, 2003; Robertson & Choi, 2012). From these studies, it is clear that high quality consensus decisions - not weak compromises but rather innovative solutions to the issues at hand - require a decision-making process characterized by adaptability and creativity (Innes & Booher, 1999). This paper contributes to the literature by exploring the conversation pattern that accompanies creative group interaction episodes. If, as this paper suggests, the concept of interaction flow introduced here indicates a creative group process, it helps us better understand how creative group interaction episodes develop and evolve. Moreover, it opens up new ways of empirically approaching group creativity. The potential impact of this runs wider than the literature on collaboration processes and is relevant to the literature on group creativity processes in general.

Second, our study has relevance, of perhaps an unconventional kind, to the literature on trust in organizational settings. Throughout the last decades, innumerable studies have empirically examined the concept of trust, usually through surveys or in-depth interviews. If, however, as we suggest from our study, trust and interaction flow are intertwined in such a way that interaction flow indicates a climate of trust, then the intangible concept of trust may be studied indirectly through the observable concept of conversational interaction. The state of interaction is, after all, at the heart of group relations in organizational settings. This holds the promise of a potential new research method of trust.

Third, the concept of interaction flow brings a novel insight to the literature on dialogue and communication, specifically from a creativity angle. Interaction flow has similarities with Scharmer’s concept of “generative dialogue” (Isaacs, 1999; Scharmer, 2001). Both concepts refer to a state of conversation full of
energy, in which new possibilities come into being and which brings connection. Nevertheless, the two concepts draw different issues into focus and are defined in different ways. The following aspect exemplifies an important distinction. Generative dialogue is a state of conversation, or, in Isaacs’ words, the fourth field of conversation, that is entered “only through crises, significant changes evoked by the people who are participating in the dialogue” (p. 257). In contrast, for a group to experience interaction flow, it does not necessarily need to pass through crises.

**Managerial implications**

The clear-cut observability of interaction flow, or of its absence, is specifically what makes it an interesting concept for practitioners on innovation-oriented boards and teams. It may render them more sensitive to the complex dynamics in innovation-oriented groups and help them to recognize trust dynamics better, or in a timelier manner. Furthermore, the concept directs attention to certain aspects of chairmanship of innovation-oriented groups. When an interaction flow episode starts to unfold, a chairperson should give it space to further unfold by not undermining the spontaneous turn-taking process that it needs. An issue that would be quite interesting to examine in a future study is the question of what a chairperson can do in order to stimulate conditions that are favorable for interaction flow.

**Generalizability**

A case study is specifically tailored to capture the complexity of real-life situations, such as collaboration practices and addressing how questions. The case of Platform Inspire was selected, apart from practical reasons, for the expected high information content on trust and interaction processes. During the case study, group creativity - a process at which we had originally not been looking - turned up as an intriguing theme intertwined with trust and interaction processes. The interpretive research design allowed us to incorporate this apparently important theme into the case study.

A single case study of creativity, interaction, and trust does not allow for statistical generalization; nevertheless, it may allow for analytical generalization (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2003). We claim that our study contributes to a deeper understanding, and to the building of a theory, of the processes being studied. We have unraveled mechanisms behind processes in a way that makes it plausible that such mechanisms also apply in similar contexts. Our concern in that sense is not with predicting but with explaining and understanding (Myers, 2000).

Our study carefully builds on existing scholarly knowledge relating to the processes studied. In the research design, we have integrated different types of
data and of analysis. Moreover, we have provided contextual detail on the case and its analysis so that the reader can evaluate the choices and reasoning made (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). Future studies may examine interaction flow, qualitatively and quantitatively, in various and multiple cases in order to enlarge its empirical basis and further refine the concept.

**Conclusion**

In this paper, we have explored the dynamics of conversational interaction and trust in relation to group creativity in a collaborative governance board. To that aim, we conducted an interpretive case study of an innovation-oriented board at the intersection of technology and the creative professions. By discussing the processes that unfold within the practices of a collaborative governance board in connection with one another, this paper provides a deeper understanding of how group creativity, interaction, and trust are intertwined. In the case of Platform Inspire, a renewed intensification of the interaction proved positive: it brought convergence and synergy. Nevertheless, committed interaction does imply risks: it may also result in divergence and conflict.

The empirical results of the Platform Inspire case study inspired us to introduce the concept of interaction flow: an intensified and synergetic state of the conversational interaction within a team or small group. This concept links interaction dynamics with group creativity processes and captures the complexity of their interplay. We have argued that interaction flow has process-, content-, and atmosphere-related characteristics. It involves sudden and temporal increases in interaction intensity, in creative shifts, and in a positively inspired atmosphere.

The concept of interaction flow provides a deeper understanding of why trust is so significant for group creativity and innovation. We have argued that specifically confidence in other board members’ integrity and group trust are important for a board in order to be able to realize interaction flow. We claim that interaction flow, like group creativity and innovation, typically occurs in settings that have a climate of trust - at least when the topics of conversation touch upon significant and possibly sensitive issues. We suggest that some, or, more likely, many collaborative governance boards, due to a structural lack of trust among their participants, may never achieve genuine interaction flow. It would be quite interesting to see if other, future studies of collaborative governance boards or similar decision-making settings confirm these claims and reveal a mechanism similar to the interplay of processes we have described.
Facilitative chairmanship of a collaborative governance board

Lise van Oortmerssen, Cees van Woerkum and Noelle Aarts

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Abstract

Effective facilitation is generally considered an important success factor for multi-stakeholder collaboration. Nevertheless, in the collaboration literature, chairing processes receive little attention. This paper addresses that gap by developing a framework for chairing behaviour from a communication perspective. We argue that effective collaboration demands stimulating and balancing trust, tension and team-shared ambition. The resulting ‘Triple-T’ framework offers a lens and structure for studying or evaluating chairing behaviour on collaborative governance boards. Moreover, this paper helps us understand how chairpersons and chairing behaviour matter to collaboration processes and their failure or success.
Introduction

A novel direction in the scholarly literature addresses multi-stakeholder collaboration from a communication perspective (Hardy et al., 2005; Keyton et al., 2008; Lewis, 2006). In these works, communication is considered the very essence of collaboration processes. In addition, there is a developing literature on leadership in collaborations, in which relational processes such as communicating, facilitating and inspiring are emphasized (e.g. Connelly, 2007; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Sullivan, Williams & Jeffares, 2012). However, in neither stream of literature has much attention been directed at chairmanship and the facilitation of interaction among collaborating partners during their meetings. In this paper, we address this subject within the context of collaborative governance boards: boards that engage public and private partners in a collective decision-making process aimed at consensus (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

It is likely that the way chairmanship is carried out has a profound impact on communication processes within collaborative governance boards and on boards’ effectiveness. This assumption is supported by insights from related literature streams that address chairmanship, leadership or facilitation of decision-making processes in settings that are to a certain extent comparable. For example, in the literature on environmental conflict resolution, studies indicate that effective facilitation and coordination is the second most important success factor for consensus-based decision-making processes, after financial resources (Leach & Sabatier, 2003). A study on chairmanship of management meetings of a multinational corporation by Wodak, Kwon and Clarke (2011) shows that chairpersons influence the outcome of meetings in both positive and negative ways through the choice of discursive strategies. The results of a study by Gabrielsson, Huse and Minichelli (2007) indicate that there is a significant relationship between board chairperson leadership and a fruitful team culture in a boardroom.

In this paper, we assume that the behaviour of chairpersons of collaborative governance boards affects both communication processes and the effectiveness of these boards. We focus on the various opportunities that chairpersons have, during board conversations, to foster high quality interaction. We develop a framework that approaches chairpersons’ behaviour from a communication perspective, addressing it in relation to board interaction atmosphere, content and process. These concepts are explained in the next section. The framework distinguishes nine types of chairperson behaviour.

The types of chairing behaviour discerned in this paper are illustrated by empirical examples drawn from a Western European, innovation-oriented collabo-
Facilitative chairmanship

A communication perspective on chairmanship

Chairpersons coordinate and facilitate the communication among board members during board meetings in order to reach some kind of collective understanding. During board meetings, board members engage in a board conversation: they interact and take turns in communicating messages. Each message has a content dimension and a relational or affective dimension (Watzlawick, Beavin Bavelas & Jackson, 1967). In conversations, there is also a third communication dimension involved, which concerns the course of the conversation as it develops from successive messages contributed by different board members: the dimension of the interaction process.

In this paper, the relational dimension of a board conversation is referred to by the term interaction atmosphere, meaning the (inter)personal and emotional dimension of interaction. For instance, the interaction atmosphere may be more or less direct, more or less enthusiastic, more or less heavy and so on. Chairpersons may influence boards’ interaction atmosphere by modelling behaviour: they may set the style and tone of a discussion. The board’s interaction content pertains to patterns in what is being said during board meetings. Chairpersons may influence boards’ interaction content by addressing behaviour: they may engage in agenda setting. The board’s interaction process refers to patterns in the course of the board’s conversation, for example, in terms of turn-taking, asking questions, interrupting, and so on. Chairpersons may influence boards’ interaction processes.

In the next section, we explicate our way of approaching board interaction and chairmanship. This is followed by a description of the challenges of decision making on collaborative governance boards. After that, three key concerns for chairpersons are discussed and illustrated. Thereafter, the chairmanship behaviour framework is presented and explained. The last section addresses the framework’s implications for whom to choose as a chairperson, the framework’s contributions to the collaboration literature and the professional collaboration field, and draws conclusions.
by moderating behaviour: the ways in which they coordinate meetings and discussions necessarily have an impact on the course of these.

Chairing behaviour is related to leadership behaviour. As described in the scholarly literature, chairperson behaviour and team leadership behaviour to a large extent reflect similar roles: for example, the role of moderator, coach, inspirer and boundary manager (see e.g. Gabrielsson et al., 2007; Morgeson, DeRue & Karam, 2010). Leadership with regard to chairing behaviour has been referred to as chairperson leadership (in a corporate governance context) (Gabrielsson et al., 2007), convening leadership (in a dialogue context) (Isaacs, 1999) and facilitative leadership (in a collaborative governance context) (Stephens, 2007).

The terms facilitative leadership and facilitator are commonly used in the literature on collaboration and consensus building (e.g. Leach & Sabatier, 2003; Ryan, 2001; Stephens, 2007). Gray (1989, p. 163) formulates the primary role of a facilitator as ‘to assist parties to have a constructive dialogue’. Leach and Sabatier (2003, p. 150) define a facilitator as ‘a person chiefly responsible for running the meetings and fostering productive discussions and decision-making’. They refer to the person presiding over meetings, hence, the chairperson. The primary focus of facilitator-chairpersons is to facilitate interaction: to stimulate the group process through empowering and enabling behaviour. In that sense, facilitating implicates much more than just coordinating the meetings. Moreover, facilitator-chairpersons are supporting the group process more than directing it by steering towards specific outcomes. Their main concern is to help the members of the collaboration work together constructively (Sullivan et al., 2012). A second important concern is that this results in an outcome - in an integrative solution - within a reasonable amount of time. From this point of view, facilitator-chairpersons cannot focus solely on the interaction process: the interaction content and atmosphere are also quite relevant for reaching these objectives.

Now that we have explained our way of viewing chairing behaviour, we address the question of the challenges that collaborative governance boards face and the specific concerns for chairpersons that these challenges imply.

**Dynamics of interaction within collaborative governance boards**

Collaborative governance can be regarded as a response to an increasingly complex, diverse and dynamic governance environment (Sullivan et al., 2012). A collaborative governance arrangement engages public and private partners in a collective decision-making process aimed at consensus (Ansell & Gash, 2008).
Collaborative governance decision making is characterized by numerous uncertainties, ambiguities and unpredictabilities. These relate to the nature of the issues at hand, to the different actors and institutions involved, and to a complex and ever changing environment (see also Aarts & Van Woerkum, 2002; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Over some factors, board members have some control through strategic choices; over other factors, they have little to no control (Bryson et al., 2006). Since ‘so much must be in place and work well’ (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 52), collaborative success is hard to achieve.

The stakeholders united on a collaborative governance board pursue goals that cannot be realized by the stakeholders in isolation. Therefore, they are mutually dependent on one another. In order to be able to deal with complex, multi-faceted problems or situations (Robertson & Choi, 2011), these stakeholders need a collective approach and one another’s resources. However, the stakeholders’ respective interests are - although overlapping - not similar. They bring to the table a variety of interests, as well as different points of view, different professional codes, different languages and so on. With an eye to resolving such controversies, Robertson and Choi (2011, p. 18) suggest that ‘collaborative governance leaders may want to focus on increasing the flexibility of stakeholders’ attitudes and perspectives, by facilitating mutual trust building’ and ‘providing stakeholders with an opportunity to build a shared mental model of the pertinent issue and one another’s interests’.

The stakeholders on a collaborative governance board have a shared responsibility. Ownership of the process and outcomes of the collaboration reside in all the partners (Keyton et al., 2008). Decisions are generally made by consensus. In the literature on consensus building, consensus is variously defined (Innes, 2004). In this paper, we define consensus orientation as the ambition to reach a decision that is carried by all the board members. According to Robertson and Choi (2011, p. 5), consensus orientation is important for at least two reasons. First, given the egalitarian fundament of the process, consensus may be ‘the only viable way of making a decision’. Second, consensus may be very important for the effective implementation of decisions taken. This holds especially when implementation necessitates action and commitment by all involved stakeholders. High quality consensus decisions - not weak compromises but rather innovative solutions to the issues at hand - require a decision-making process characterized by adaptability and creativity (Innes & Booher, 1999). Partners have to deal with uncertainties, reconcile controversies and manage to reach an inclusive agreement.

Effective collaborative interaction, hence, implies nurturing cooperative relationships, integrating divergent stakeholder concerns and producing innovative
solutions (Hardy et al., 2005). In order to shape space for such interaction - in other words, for effective collaboration - we suggest that chairpersons should pay attention to three key concerns: trust, creative tension and team-shared ambition. The choice of these three key concerns is primarily based on insights derived from the literature on collaboration processes, as explained below. Moreover, the precise choice of these three - and not any other or any more - key concerns is based on the notion that these three elements, in our view, are crucial conditions for effective collaboration. In short, trust is needed for the required connection among board members to work together, and creative tension is needed to arrive at integrative and innovative solutions. We consider trust and creative tension complementary conditions, which, at the same time, imply opposing forces: trust implicating connection and creative tension implicating contradiction. The two opposing forces can be thought of as causing energy in the relationships among board members. The third element, a team-shared ambition, provides the focus needed for this energy to be used effectively. Numerous studies have indicated trust as one of the success factors in collaboration (e.g. Ansell & Gash, 2008; Provan & Kenis, 2008; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Also, a common motivation or goal is often indicated as one of the success factors in collaboration (e.g. Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012; Provan & Kenis, 2008). The significance of creativity in collaboration is described by several collaboration scholars (e.g. Huxham, 1993; Innes & Booher, 1999; O’Leary & Vij, 2012). Huxham (2000) discusses the collaborative governance themes of trust, diversity and a common purpose in relation to one another; these three themes closely resemble the aforementioned three key concerns. The key concerns and their implications for effective chairmanship are discussed in the following sections.

Key concern one: trust

In the previous section, we indicated the value of trust in increasing the flexibility of partners’ attitudes towards one another, thereby fostering cooperative relationships. Besides this aspect, trust has other benefits, and in the literature on collaborations and governance networks, these benefits are repeatedly underlined (e.g. Ansell & Gash, 2008; Connelly, 2007; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). On collaborative governance boards, trust is an important mechanism of coordination. In this setting, market or hierarchical principles, based on price or authority as coordination mechanisms, do not, or only partly, apply (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998). In addition, trust is
necessary for the open, critical and constructive interaction that may lead to creative and innovative agreements (see previous section). Moreover, trust is important in being able to deal with the numerous uncertainties involved in collaborative governance. This involves, besides trust among board members, also trust in the board as a group and in its capacity to produce valuable outcome. We explain this below.

In dealing with complex problems, two types of uncertainty management may be distinguished: reducing or avoiding uncertainty on the one hand, and managing uncertainty on the other (Aarts & Van Woerkum, 2002; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Koppenjan and Klijn (2004, p. 242) speak in this respect of ‘disentanglers’ as opposed to ‘entanglers’. Disentanglers are aimed at reducing uncertainty by simplifying and accelerating decision making. An example of a disentangler strategy is ‘formulating objectives and conditions as early as possible and testing subsequent steps against these’. Entanglers, however, are aimed at handling uncertainty by fostering interaction between the parties involved: they ‘entangle’ the partners. An example of an entangler strategy is ‘using a substantive starting point without premature fixation’.

Entanglers provide clarity and direction without fixating. So to speak, they form a ‘trustful’ way of dealing with uncertainty. They are concerned with interaction and dialogue and with continuous reflection and adaptation: hence, they foster synergy and creativity. It seems improbable that entangler strategies are chosen within a climate of distrust. When board members lack trust, they are likely to be inclined to strive for proof and security. For example, in a climate of distrust, board members may adhere to decisions made by the board in consensus as definite outcomes and not primarily regard them as solutions for the time being that may need adjustment in the future. Hence, with regard to fostering space for effective board interaction, trust is not only required to allow for open communication and critical debate, but is also highly desirable to allow for trustful ways of dealing with uncertainty in general.

What specific kind of trust are we speaking of here? For open, spontaneous interaction, board members must perceive one another as having integrity and refraining from opportunistic behaviour, such as misuse of confidential information. Moreover, there must be a perception that the board as a group has the capacity to produce valuable outcomes. If this perception is absent, board members will lack the motivation to fully participate in a discussion (see also Nijstad & Paulus, 2003). This same perception regarding the capacity of the group is needed for the board to behave in trustful ways in dealing with uncertainty in general. In sum, both trust
among board members on an individual level and trust in the board as a group are required.

What does the above imply for facilitative board chairing behaviour? How can a chairperson, by influencing board interaction behaviour, foster trust? On the level of the interaction *atmosphere*, open and spontaneous communication by board members may be fostered by chairpersons’ modelling this kind of interaction behaviour. By setting an example, chairpersons solicit others to act in a similar way. Research has shown that team members often mimic the behaviour of team leaders (Edmondson, 2004). Likewise, we suggest that board members often mimic the behaviour of chairpersons. Being open implies an act of trusting: chairpersons show that they trust the board members to deal in an integer way with the information provided. Generally, with regard to trusting behaviour, the principle of reciprocity applies (Koeszegi, 2004; Murnighan, Malhotra & Weber, 2004; Solomon & Flores, 2001). Trusting behaviour by the chairperson helps trigger trusting behaviour by board members, and openness helps trigger openness. The following empirical illustration is the first of a series of examples taken from the Platform Inspire case to illustrate the chairing behaviours outlined in this paper.

*From the Platform Inspire case (illustration 1)*

On one occasion, a board member raised the point that, for some of the board members’ home organizations, it constituted a problem that the collaboration project absorbed high investments in terms of time and did not return profit (directly) in financial terms. After deliberation by the board on this point in relation to the board member who had raised the issue, chairperson William addressed it in relation to a specific other board member and asked her to indicate her situation in this respect. After she had answered his question, he started to respond to what she had shared, but then he stopped for a moment, checking: ‘Is it appropriate to discuss that very openly with one another [as I am doing now]?’ Everyone, including the board member who was the subject of the deliberation, agreed that it was fine.

On the level of the interaction *content*, chairpersons may engage in addressing uncertainties, ambiguities and unpredictabilities that apply to the collaboration. Depending on the kind of uncertainty addressed, this may lead board members or the board to take a position or take action and create more clarity. Often, addressing an uncertainty does not remove or resolve it, but it does, in general, foster insight and reduce anxiety. We suggest that, consequently, it adds to a climate of trust.
Facilitative chairmanship

On the level of the interaction process, trust among board members regarding the capacity of the board to produce valuable outcomes may be fostered by chairpersons by, repeatedly, offering ingredients for this trust. To build this kind of trust, it seems significant, especially at more difficult stages, to emphasize what the board has already achieved. A continuous updating of the picture of ‘where we came from, where we are now, and where we are heading’ seems highly relevant to prevent a sense of becoming lost in complexity and adds to a collective trust in the competences of the board, its potential to generate solutions. The updating of this picture involves, for example, clearly formulating the content of decisions taken.

Key concern two: tension

In the section on collaborative governance decision-making dynamics, we have included innovative solutions as an important element of effective collaboration. The literature suggests that producing creative, innovative outcomes requires a certain amount of tension. Tension provokes the confrontation between seemingly incompatible ideas that produces creative insights (Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey, 2007). It implies dissent, which is a ‘liberator of thought and ... a stimulus to diver-

From the Platform Inspire case (illustration 2)

Chairperson William once addressed a situation of ambiguity by asking a participant in the board meeting, whom we will call Peter, a straightforward question: ‘Peter, we are receiving contradictory messages about you .... Where do we stand at this moment?’ Peter’s response to the chairperson’s question, and the newly acquired clarity on Peter’s position that his response brought, triggered a joint exploration within the board of new directions on the matter of discussion.

From the Platform Inspire case (illustration 3)

Chairperson William always paid close attention to formulating very precisely the conclusions of deliberations. After having formulated a conclusion, he took a moment to check whether all board members agreed on the text of the conclusion as suggested by him. Both decisions taken and actions planned were registered in lists attached to the minutes of every board meeting. As time passed, there could never be confusion about decisions taken in the past. These deliveries of the board showed that the board was a capable one and that the efficacy of the board as a group could be trusted.
gent and creative thought’ (Nemeth & Nemeth-Brown, 2003, p. 72). On a collaborative governance board, tensions naturally stem from the diversity of the members involved. However, it is only through the explicit discussion of members’ diverging views in an open-minded way that these tensions become productive (see also Hardy et al., 2005). Such critical debate or ‘constructive controversy’ occurs if group members enter a discussion without having a predefined idea about the outcome and try to influence and are open to being influenced at the same time (Tjosvold et al., 1986; Tjosvold & Yu, 2007).

In their study of creativity climates, Isaksen and Ekvall (2010, p. 85) make a distinction between two forms of tension: they distinguish debate from conflict. As they point out: the challenge is ‘to create a climate that encourages the right level of debate … without incurring the negative costs of conflict’. A similar distinction is made in the literature on conflict in teams, in terms of task or cognitive conflict versus relational or affective conflict. Examples of relational conflict are conflicts about values, interpersonal style or political preferences. Examples of task conflict are conflicts about procedures, policies, or the interpretation of facts (De Dreu, 2006). Task conflict can be considered to imply constructive tension: research shows that, whereas relational conflicts are detrimental to innovation in teams, task conflict is beneficial to innovation, if the task conflict is not too high (De Dreu, 2006). High task conflict can cause negative emotions that reduce interpersonal attraction among team members and spill over into relational conflict (Petrovic, 2008).

Tension within a board may be induced by using specific decision-making approaches, such as dialectical inquiry and devil’s advocacy. In the dialectical inquiry approach, two different recommendations, based on contrary assumptions, are developed from the same data and subjected to a critical evaluation through a debate between two advocacy subgroups. In the devil’s advocacy approach, a solid argument for a recommendation is developed, after which that recommendation is subjected to an in-depth critique. Studies indicate that these techniques stimulate the quality of decisions by more re-evaluation of assumptions (Schweiger, Sandberg & Ragan, 1986; Schweiger, Sandberg & Rechner, 1989). The tension built up with the help of these techniques also potentially triggers interaction episodes characterized by novel connections, building on one another’s contributions and creative shifts.

An experiment conducted by Priem, Harrison and Kanoff Muir (1995) indicates that, in groups that use the tension-enhancing dialectical inquiry approach, group consensus on the decision is higher than in groups using an approach involving an open discussion of recommendations and underlying assump-
tions developed individually by group members. In both kinds of group, cognitive conflict during decision making was encouraged. However, in the second kind of group, this was done in an unstructured way by simply asking participants to fully express their ideas and opinions, whereas, in the dialectical inquiry groups, this was done in a structured way with two subgroups challenging one another’s assumptions and developing a debate.

What does the above imply for facilitative board chairing behaviour? How can a chairperson, by influencing board interaction behaviour, foster tension? On the level of the interaction atmosphere, chairpersons may foster tension by modelling a critical attitude (see also Gabrielsson et al., 2007). By posing respectful but critical questions and providing honest feedback to board members, chairpersons foster tension directly as well as indirectly, by soliciting the same kind of behaviour among other board members.

**From the Platform Inspire case (illustration 4)**

Chairperson William, during one board meeting, expressed a fundamental critique on a strategy deployed, and reported on, by the director of the collaboration project. What followed on this was an exceptionally heated debate, among all board members present, on the action that was to be taken at this point. This debate formed the trigger for chairperson William to initiate organizing a special board meeting on a common vision and strategy; this would subsequently form a significant boost for the collaboration process.

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On the level of the interaction content, chairpersons may foster tension by addressing topics important for the decision-making process that involve controversies among board members. These topics often tend to be ignored because discussing them in a productive way is quite difficult, whereas the risk of their turning into conflict is relatively high. Nevertheless, for any substantial progress, these topics have to be addressed.

**From the Platform Inspire case (illustration 5)**

Chairperson William put on the board agenda a ‘controversial’ topic when he initiated a special meeting on the common vision and strategy. However central this topic was to the collaboration, and however openly board members admitted that their visions conflicted, never before during board meetings had board members sought an intense confrontation among the diverging views.
On the level of the interaction process, chairpersons may foster tension by moderating board discussions in ways that elude diverse and contrasting points of view. They can do this, for example, by using techniques such as dialectical inquiry or devil’s advocacy. Or, chairpersons may foster tension by assigning speaking turns in a way that unveils diverging viewpoints among board members, for example by explicitly inviting them to express objections.

From the Platform Inspire case (illustration 6)

Chairperson William, besides applying (many of) the aforementioned techniques, in order to preserve a sharp focus within a board discussion, never hesitated to cut short a board member’s contribution that he considered not to be linked directly to the matter under discussion. He also regularly, at the outset of or during a deliberation, formulated the topic under discussion in terms of a dilemma. In this way, he invited board members to choose and to differ when needed, adding tension to the discussion.

Key concern three: team-shared ambition

Together, trust and creative tension foster space for genuine, intense and energetic interaction. However, these two conditions do not bring a collaborative governance board anywhere if there is no clear sense of direction. Team-shared ambitions are necessary to provide that direction. The development of team-shared ambitions connects board members and moulds them into a group of people who believe that they can together reach agreement and find solutions. Team-shared ambitions are produced in and through conversations and give groups a meaningful identity (see also Hardy et al., 2005). Team-shared ambitions offer board members a direction and a focus in complex, continuously changing circumstances. In addition, the cohesion provided by team-shared ambitions allows them to work constructively with their mutual differences. Finally, shared ambitions are important as a motivation for cooperation, particularly because collaboration is not, or only partly, based on market or hierarchical mechanisms of control (see also Hardy et al., 2005).

Team-shared ambitions are not fixed; rather, they are formed and adjusted over time. Interaction about team-shared ambitions provides cohesion, but may imply tension and paradox at the same time (see also Hardy et al., 2005). On the one hand, board conversations on ambition can fuel so-called identity-based trust: trust based on identification with a group (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). On the other hand, board conversations on ambition involve exploring differences and
dichotomies among board members. In this sense, discussing team-shared ambitions implies tension. Such tension, if used productively, may trigger creative processes that result in (further) integrating differing ambitions into overarching team-shared ambitions.

Besides a common focus, team-shared ambition implies a motivation, a drive that provides the energy to work on something (see also Hardy et al., 2005). In other words, enthusiasm and commitment are particularly important. The notion of commitment runs consistently through the collaboration literature (e.g. Ansell & Gash, 2008; Eden & Huxham, 2001; Hattori & Lapidus, 2004). Another theme closely connected to a shared ambition that is very frequently mentioned in the collaboration literature is a shared vision or mission (e.g. Connelly, 2007; Heath & Sias, 1999). We regard this as an element of team-shared ambition.

What does the above imply for facilitative board chairing behaviour? How can a chairperson, by influencing board interaction behaviour, foster team-shared ambitions? On the level of the interaction atmosphere, a chairperson may foster ambition among board members by modelling commitment and inspiring, enthusiastic behaviour (see also Gabrielson et al., 2007).

**From the Platform Inspire case (illustration 7)**

Chairperson William modelled an enthusiastic attitude by, for example, simply stating that he always enjoyed going to the meetings of this board (in contrast to many other boards), or expressing his appreciation for the efforts put in by all board members or stating that the outcome of a discussion pleased him very much. In addition, when he spoke about the goals of the collaboration, he showed strong, intrinsic motivation and a genuine fascination for the professional domains that the collaboration was supposed to impact.

On the level of the interaction content, chairpersons may foster team-shared ambitions by facilitating the process of building a common vision. This starts with putting it on the agenda (and again and again).

**From the Platform Inspire case (illustration 8)**

Chairperson William scheduled a special board meeting to discuss matters concerning a common vision and strategy at a point when he felt that the time was ripe for facing the divergent views on this amongst the board members. The existing views seemed rather incompatible: it was clear in advance that the goal of the special meeting would be quite a challenge. During the special meeting, the board succeeded in reconciling and adjusting the divergent views into an integrative, new and commonly shared vision.
On the level of the interaction process, chairpersons may foster team-shared ambitions by ensuring every board member’s participation in the interaction. They can do this by inviting board members who have not yet spoken on an issue to give their opinion.

*From the Platform Inspire case (illustration 9)*

Not only did chairperson William invite board members to express their views in the rare cases that they did not contribute to a discussion spontaneously, he also monitored their wellbeing within the collaboration. He did this, for example, when in a board meeting a board member proved to be struggling with a certain matter, by asking how other board members could help. Also, he held bilateral conversations with all board members on a regular basis in order to remain updated on their personal experiences regarding, or potentially impacting, the joint project.

**Framework for collaborative governance chairmanship**

In the Triple-T framework presented here, we summarize the nine different chairing behaviours distinguished in the previous sections. The chairing behaviours are categorized horizontally according to the three discussed key concerns for board interaction: trust, tension and team-shared ambition. Vertically, they are categorized according to the three distinguished interaction dimensions: atmosphere, content and process. This results in three categories of chairing behaviour: modelling, addressing and moderating behaviour - each category containing three important types of chairing behaviour (see Figure 3).

The nine types of chairing behaviour are each located within the framework in the categories with which they connect most obviously. However, they often have implications beyond the categories within which they are placed. In the complex practices of collaboration, board climate processes are intertwined. Moreover, the three interaction dimensions that the framework distinguishes partly overlap. To illustrate this with an example, we take the behaviour to ‘model commitment and enthusiasm’. Given that other board members are inspired by this behaviour and that it fosters their commitment and enthusiasm, this type of chairing behaviour fosters the key concern of team-shared ambition. At the same time, showing commitment is linked to the key concern of trust; the literature suggests that, in collaboration settings, perceptions of commitment form a significant trust dimension (e.g. Hattori & Lapidus, 2004).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction dimensions</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Tension</th>
<th>Team-shared ambition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board interaction atmosphere</strong></td>
<td><strong>Model openness</strong></td>
<td><strong>Model a critical attitude</strong></td>
<td><strong>Model enthusiasm and commitment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board interaction content</strong></td>
<td><strong>Address uncertainties</strong></td>
<td><strong>Address controversial topics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Address vision, goals, strategy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board interaction process</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moderate with focus on decision-making progress</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moderate with focus on diverging points of view</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moderate with focus on contributions by all</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3**  
*The Triple-T framework of chairmanship behaviour fostering space for effective collaboration.*
Ideally, chairpersons conduct all nine types of chairing behaviour regularly. In general, these interventions foster space for effective collaboration. Nonetheless, too much trust, too much team-shared ambition or too much tension may backfire. For example, too much trust may imply a deficit in alertness and concentration; too much team-shared ambition may implicate a high level of cohesiveness and involve a risk of groupthink (Janis, 1972); and too much tension may spill over into conflict. Furthermore, too much tension can result in a decrease in trust or team-shared ambition, and too much trust or team-shared ambition potentially implies the diminution of the creative tension in the interaction. Hence, the key concerns need not only to be fostered but also to be balanced by chairpersons. In a wider sense also, chairing behaviour within the complex practices of collaborations involves balancing: among different actors, interests, issues and other kinds of demands. In cases where the chairperson role is performed by a board member and stakeholder, chairing behaviour involves in addition balancing in the sense of alternating multiple hats and keeping these separate.

We regard the three interaction key concerns - trust, tension and team-shared ambition - and the behaviours included in the Triple-T framework as primarily the responsibility of chairpersons. Nevertheless, other board members or collaboration members may also conduct modelling, addressing and even moderating behaviour as described in the framework in order to foster space for effective collaboration. This implies a risk of conflicting with the chairperson’s strategies, but it can also complement the chairperson’s behaviour.

Some collaboration scholars suggest rotating the role of chairperson as a favoured chairing mechanism, among other reasons because it adds to shared power among board members (e.g. Heath & Sias, 1999). From the perspective of the Triple-T framework, on the one hand, rotating the chair could potentially increase the likelihood of many of the desired chairing behaviours being conducted, because all board members are different and likely to have differing skills and focus. On the other hand, as we have already emphasized, to foster effective, high quality collaboration, it is essential that chairpersons continuously balance among the different key concerns and the different chairing behaviours. This act of balancing cannot be performed without a time dimension; it concerns precisely the collaboration process over time. Therefore, from the perspective of the Triple-T framework and for collaboration cases in general, we suggest that rotating the chair for every meeting is not ideal for fostering space for effective, high quality collaboration.
Discussion and conclusion

Contributions to the literature and to practice

The presented Triple-T framework draws attention to the kinds of chairing behaviour that foster space for effective collaboration, which we have defined as nurturing cooperative relationships, integrating divergent stakeholder concerns and producing innovative solutions. The framework has been developed for collaborative governance boards; it can, however, be applied in a much wider range of collaboration settings, in which interdependent stakeholders collectively search for innovative solutions through consensus building. The Triple-T framework provides a structure for thinking about, examining and evaluating chairing behaviour within collaboration settings. It reaches beyond the common lists with points of attention because it presents those points within categories and logically ordered in relation to one another and formulates them in terms of concrete behaviour. Moreover, it emphasizes the interdependence among the different points of attention, which requires balancing.

The Triple-T framework can be applied by both researchers and practitioners. Researchers may use the framework as a point of departure for studying interaction processes and chairing behaviour in collaboration meetings. Chairpersons of collaborative governance boards or other collaboration groups may use the Triple-T framework as an instrument to evaluate and monitor their chairing behaviour. This involves considering, for each of the nine behaviours included in the framework, the extent to which they are, or have been, conducting that behaviour and with what effect. If chairpersons feel that any of the key concerns is specifically at stake within the board they are chairing, the behaviours fostering that condition merit special attention. In addition, other board members or collaboration members may refer to the framework to evaluate the interaction during meetings and the performance of the chairperson. Thus, the framework may assist chairpersons and boards to reflect on, and improve, their performance. Further study is needed to reveal the extent to which practitioners find the Triple-T framework a useful instrument.

This paper enriches two novel streams of literature, on collaboration from a communication perspective and on leadership in collaborations, with the theme of chairmanship behaviour. Furthermore, the argument made here indicates that facilitating effective collaboration means much more than moderating the interaction process during board meetings. In the literature on collaborative leadership and complexity leadership, it is often emphasized that facilitators ideally have a process focus, in contrast to a focus on certain substantive directions or outcomes.
We agree with the assertion that facilitator-chairpersons ideally focus most of all on assisting, supporting and inspiring the collaboration process. However, we feel that the current tendency in the literature to emphasize facilitation of the process obscures the notion that it is very important that facilitator-chairpersons pay attention to other interaction dimensions as well. Since different interaction dimensions – process, content and atmosphere – overlap and are intertwined, we believe that they cannot fruitfully be considered in isolation from one another.

**Conclusion**

In this paper, we have shown what a communication perspective on chairing behaviour in collaboration settings may entail. This perspective forms the basis for the development of a framework that includes three interaction key concerns for chairpersons – trust, tension and team-shared ambition – as well as interaction behaviours that foster these key concerns. The proposed Triple-T framework provides a basis for reasoning about chairing and facilitating behaviour in collaboration settings. Therefore, we expect it to be of practical value to collaboration researchers and practitioners. We have made clear why chairing behaviour needs careful and continuous balancing. In addition, by interrelating the process, atmosphere and content dimensions of board interaction with respect to chairmanship, we have shed a different light on the commonly held notion that the process is facilitator-chairpersons’ main concern.
Chapter 6

Synthesis
Conclusions

The overall question directing the chapters in this thesis was how we can understand the interplay of trust dynamics and conversational interaction in collaborations. The two cases that provided the empirical material for gaining more insight into this question have led us into exploring varying and complementary directions.

**Campus Connect case**
From the first case studied, the Campus Connect case, arose the image of a self-reinforcing cycle in which trust and interaction tend to be entangled, influencing each another reciprocally (chapter 2). The board members felt that perceived changes in interactions were related to changed trust dynamics within the board. At the same time, the changed interaction patterns were mentioned as a reason for having more trust in other board members and the board, and, also, were considered to have yielded more results - which, indirectly, had fostered trust as well.

In addition, from the qualitative study of the Campus Connect case emerged insights into the question of the ways in which interaction patterns reflect trust dynamics. Three interaction characteristics delineated in this respect were openness, responsiveness and speed. The third characteristic, speed, was further studied through a quantitative analysis of turn-taking patterns within the board (chapter 3). The results of this quantitative study proved that the density of turn-taking over time had increased, indicating a link between trust and turn-taking patterns over time.

**Platform Inspire case**
The second case studied, the Platform Inspire case, featured a high and rather stable trust level. This case showed what the interaction within a high-trust collaboration might look like. It provided insights into the productive, creative - and hence effective - interaction episodes that are typically possible in high-trust collaboration settings (chapter 4). These were characterized by openness, building on one another's contributions and an intensification of the interaction process. These 'interaction flow' episodes - as I named them - appeared to boost trust as well, by connecting board members and by raising (creative) solutions. Hence, we see again a dynamic of a self-reinforcing cycle.

In addition, the Platform Inspire case provided the main source of inspiration and the empirical illustrations for a framework on chairmanship behaviour fostering space for effective collaboration (chapter 5). This illuminates the significance of facilitative chairmanship behaviour in relation to trust and two other, closely
related, key concerns for effective collaboration, team-shared ambition and creative tension. Thereby, the Triple-T framework underlines that, for a proper understanding of the interplay of trust and interaction, we must keep in mind that its dynamics are intertwined with other factors influencing collaborations.

In sum, from the two cases we gained:
(a.) insights into how trust dynamics are reflected in conversational interaction:
   openness (chapters 2 and 4), responsiveness, speed (chapter 2), turn-taking (chapters 3 and 4); building on one another’s contributions, interaction flow (chapter 4),
(b.) insights into how conversational interaction behaviour may add to trust:
   facilitative chairmanship (chapter 5), and
(c.) other insights into the interplay of trust and conversational interaction:
   self-reinforcing cycle (chapters 2 and 4); link of trust and interaction to group creativity (chapter 4); trust as one of three key concerns in interaction (chapter 5).

Contributions to generalized knowledge
The cases brought us rich empirical material yielding several novel insights, especially on the reflection of trust in interaction patterns. This thesis shows that trust dynamics over time are reflected not only in the content and atmosphere of conversations, such as by openness, but also in the process of conversations on a micro level. It provides support for the proposition that an increase in trust results in observable (and measurable) changes in the interaction process. It also describes the kind of interaction dynamics that can take place in a high-trust situation as episodes of interaction flow and that are desirable for their often creative and innovative outcomes as well as for their positive effect on trust. Through these contributions, this thesis reduces the intangibility of trust in collaborations and makes trust dynamics more visible.

Comparing the two cases
There are several important similarities between the cases: at the start of both case studies, membership of the board had been unchanged for about two years; both boards had a meeting frequency of once a month; and both boards were at the time the case study started, as the board members themselves said, entering a crucial stage. However, at the same time, the cases differ in several important
structural and relational respects, such as: the grounds for the collaboration (to a certain extent mandatory versus completely voluntary and based on interpersonal ties); the scale of the ambitions (regional versus national); the number of board members (nine versus five); and the relational history between the board members (predominantly complex and involving conflicts versus predominantly positive). Therefore, the Campus Connect case and the Platform Inspire case are considered as two single case studies and not as a multiple case study. Still, comparing the two cases does prompt some interesting observations that deepen the insights into each individual case (Blok, 1976). In order to provide the reader with the background information needed to place these observations in context, this section starts with a short description of three significant differences between the cases.

**Structural and relational differences between the cases**

Defining the two boards according to Provan and Kenis’ (2008) typology on network governance captures the difference in structure between the boards. Campus Connect could be defined as a lead organization-governed board. The lead organization was going to be the owner of the new building and provided the chairperson of the board and the to-be director of Campus Connect. Platform Inspire could be defined as a participant-governed board, which, at some point, set up an administrative entity (director and staff). The Platform Inspire board was chaired by a board member with no special rights.

In addition, the character of the mutual relations in terms of dependencies and power within the two boards was quite different. As described in chapter 2, within the Campus Connect board, the kind and scale of the respective partners’ stakes varied a lot. This fuelled a disintegrated state within the board along subgroups. Within the board of Platform Inspire, by contrast, the members’ stakes were more similar. Moreover, the board members had chosen one another as collaboration partners voluntarily and deliberately, paying specific attention to the composition of the group.

Finally, I should mention here the extent to which the members of the two different boards had freedom to act within the board, as allowed by their home organizations. Overall, the Campus Connect board members - especially those linked to the participating schools - predominantly positioned themselves as representatives of their home organization. The Platform Inspire board members, by contrast, positioned themselves much more as individuals, who were at most linked to a certain organization. These individuals, by the way, had chosen one another on a professional and personal basis as collaboration partners.
Commonalities and distinctions between the cases’ dynamics

From the above, we can understand that the Platform Inspire board operated in circumstances that were better suited to dialogue than the circumstances in which the Campus Connect board operated. I define dialogue here, in conformity with Isaacs’ (1999) definition, as a conversation with a centre and without poles. On the Campus Connect board, certain poles were already embedded in the structure of the group, such as a prime focus on the school side of the campus versus a prime focus on the business and innovation side. This made it much more difficult to realize an effective collaboration process. Despite the different circumstances, there is a remarkable similarity to be noticed in the trust-interaction interplays that unfolded within the two boards. In both cases, at some point during the case study, a special session was organized. The Campus Connect board had two consecutive meetings regarding a common culture, chaired by a facilitator. The Platform Inspire board held a strategy meeting. In both cases, these sessions formed key events within the collaboration process and appeared to have significant implications for the boards’ trust dynamics (see chapters 2 and 4).

The trust dynamics within the two cases were very different in essence and course. In the first case, the Campus Connect board, at the beginning of the case study, board members were more positive about one another’s goodwill - defined in chapter 2 as integrity plus benevolence - than about one another’s competences. Other board members’ competences were often perceived with some distrust. Still, the grounds for the trust growth that occurred during the year of observation were, in retrospect, not ascribed by the board members to changes in the way the competences were perceived. This point of distrust seemed, somehow, not very relevant (anymore). The grounds for the trust growth were ascribed to changed perceptions of goodwill and to changed group dynamics on the board. In the second case, the Platform Inspire board, integrity as well as competences were, overall, perceived highly positively. This situation turned out to be very stable - it did not change. At some point, however, the issue of commitment entered as a point of (some) concern within this high-trust setting. The trust dynamics that unfolded in the two cases demonstrate that trust is a complex phenomenon that has multiple facets and that changes over time - conform the transformational approach to trust development (Lewicki et al., 2006). Moreover, they seem to suggest that, in these cases, perceptions of goodwill and integrity are the most important facets of trust. These facets seem to have a bigger influence than perceptions of competences and commitment in determining the extent to which board members feel they trust one another.
With regard to the interaction dynamics during the board meetings, both cases show episodes of intensification, of acceleration. With regard to the Campus Connect case, I distinguished an episode of intensified interaction and defined it as an episode of conversational turbulence (see chapter 3). With regard to the Platform Inspire case, I spoke of episodes of interaction flow and described one such episode (see chapter 4). Both kinds of dynamics - conversational turbulence and interaction flow - involve increased turn-taking. However, by their nature, these dynamics form complete opposites: conversational turbulence typically implies controversy and polarization, whereas interaction flow typically implies building on one another’s contributions and synergy. Nevertheless, the confrontation that is reflected in conversational turbulence apparently can also bring people closer together. In the Campus Connect case, the conversational turbulence forms part of an overall positive development in interaction and trust, with increasing openness and mutual understanding.

I want to share two final observations relating to the comparison of the two cases as a modest-trust versus a high-trust case. During the interviews that I conducted with the individual Campus Connect board members, I collected a lot of new information - information that was not discussed during the board meetings. The interviews with Platform Inspire board members, by contrast, provided not so much new information as background information. This experience confirms that trust is reflected in the level of openness during meetings. Finally, most members of the Campus Connect board showed or said that they disliked missing board meetings. By contrast, when members of the Platform Inspire board could not make it to a board meeting, they expressed confidence towards the other board members, in that they said that these would make good decisions in their absence.

Contributions to the literature

*Collaborating as interacting*

The book Interacting and organizing (Cooren, 2007) brings together a range of analyses of a series of management meetings as shown in a documentary film about a corporate board of directors. In the preface to this book, editor Cooren suggests that the contributions in the book participate in the development of an ‘interactional turn, that is, an analytical turn that consists of highlighting the details of interactions to better understand the functioning of the organizational world’ (p. xii). This thesis shares with that book an analytical focus on naturally occurring interactions unfolding in the meetings of a board (which, in this thesis, is combined
with other analytical foci). Moreover, this thesis is based on board interactions that were complete and not edited - which can be considered very rare material (Sanders, 2007).

The subject of this thesis - trust and interaction in collaborations - fits within, among other streams of literature, the literature on collaboration that adopts a communication perspective (Hardy et al., 2005; Heath & Sias, 1999; Keyton et al., 2008; Koschmann et al., 2012; Lewis, 2006; Lewis et al., 2010). These works, for example, focus on ‘conversations’ (Hardy et al., 2005), ‘team-level communication’ (Keyton et al., 2008), ‘communication practices’ (Heath & Sias, 1999); or on how ‘communication constitutes’ a collaboration (Koschmann et al., 2012). However, the majority of studies within this novel stream of literature are devoted to the development of conceptual models and frameworks. Although these are valuable for the emerging domain, the current situation seems a bit out of balance, with an urgent need for empirical studies to feed further theorizing.

One of the few empirical studies in this area is a case study of a collaborative alliance in a small community by Heath and Sias (1999). This study investigates interaction practices associated with collaborative spirit, more specifically with shared mission and shared power. Heath and Sias’ analysis suggests that ‘collaborative spirit is maintained through member interaction, by both what members say to one another and how they say it’ (p. 372). Hence, their analysis includes the content level and the relationship level of communication (cf. Watzlawick et al., 1967). The case studies included in this thesis resemble Heath and Sias’ case study in more than one way: they also study interaction practices in relation to a relational phenomenon typically relevant for collaboration, and they also distinguish between different levels of communication or ‘dimensions of interaction.’ In other respects, the case studies included in this thesis differ from and complement Heath and Sias’ study. In addition to a meso-level analysis based on observation and interview data, this thesis includes interaction analyses on a micro level. Furthermore, the case studies in this thesis employ an extra, third dimension to interaction: the process dimension. This results in bringing into focus, on the micro level, the process aspect of conversational interaction in terms of turn-taking dynamics. Below, I specify three more bodies of literature to which this thesis contributes.

Collaboration processes literature

In addition to the literature on collaboration from a communication perspective, this thesis adds to the wider literature on multi-stakeholder collaboration processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Gray, 1989; Huxham, 2000; Huxham, 2003; Huxham &
Vangen, 2005; O’Leary & Vij, 2012; Vangen & Huxham 2003; Wood & Gray, 1991). It enhances this stream of literature more specifically with regard to three themes: trust, group interaction and consensus building, and chairmanship.

Vangen and Huxham (2003) argue that the management of trust in multi-stakeholder collaboration requires trust to be built in a cyclical process in which expectations and outcomes gradually grow more ambitious (see also Ansell & Gash, 2008). This thesis enriches the notion of the trust-building loop in three ways. First, it sheds light on the role of conversational interaction patterns within that loop. Second, this thesis shows how trust changes can be ‘read’ from changing interaction patterns. Third, this thesis offers suggestions on how trust dynamics may be influenced through interaction behaviour.

Group interaction in multi-stakeholder collaboration has been investigated hitherto mainly through empirical studies on consensus-building processes (e.g. Innes & Booher, 1999; Leach & Sabatier, 2003; Robertson & Choi, 2012). From these studies, it is clear that high quality consensus decisions - not weak compromises but rather innovative solutions to the issues at hand - require a decision-making process characterized by adaptability and creativity (Innes & Booher, 1999). This thesis contributes to the literature by exploring the conversational patterns that accompany creative group interaction episodes. If, as this thesis suggests, the concept of interaction flow introduced here indicates a creative group process, it helps us better understand how creative group interaction episodes develop and evolve. Moreover, it opens up new ways of empirically approaching group creativity.

Leadership in collaborations is addressed in a developing stream of literature (e.g. Connelly, 2007; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Ryan, 2001; Sullivan et al., 2012). In this literature, facilitating and inspiring processes are emphasized. However, empirical studies on leadership practices at the micro level of conversational interaction - in other words, on facilitation and on chairmanship - are lacking. This thesis contributes to the literature on collaboration processes by entering a new direction in that respect. It offers insights into the theme of chairing collaboration meetings by describing key concerns involved and suggesting ways of dealing with these concerns through conversational interventions. Also, with the Triple-T framework, it provides a framework that can be used to further develop theory on facilitative chairmanship of collaborations from a conversational interaction perspective.
Other bodies of literature
This thesis also contributes to two other bodies of literature. It enriches the literature on trust-research methods by showing empirical support for a novel indicator of trust based on turn-taking patterns. Finally, it builds on and supplements the literature on language and social interaction by identifying linguistic features that seem connected to trust.

Implications for practitioners
As shown in this thesis, the cycle of trust and interaction is self-reinforcing. However, it is not autonomous but, rather, forms part of a complex and ever-changing reality. Processes within collaborative governance boards are characterized by uncertainty, ambiguity and unpredictability. Therefore, step-by-step prescriptions for collaboration behaviour are useless. Practitioners need insight into processes in order to be able to make the right interventions at the right moment. This thesis contributes to the wider development of practice-oriented insights on collaboration processes on the micro level of interaction during meetings. First, it makes trust dynamics more recognizable. This thesis delineates interaction patterns in, among other aspects, turn-taking that, as argued, are linked to trust. Thus, the insights offered in this thesis may better enable chairpersons and members of collaborative governance boards to observe developments in board conversations that provide information about the evolution and status of trust relations, reaching beyond gut feeling. This may help these practitioners to act in time, where and when this is required for sound group relations and a successful progression of the collaboration process. Second, this thesis provides points of departure for monitoring and evaluating the interaction on collaborative governance boards. It also offers a framework - the Triple-T framework - that can be used as an instrument for this. Thus, the framework may assist boards, and specifically their chairpersons, to reflect upon, and improve, their performance on the micro level of board conversations. Moreover, the Triple-T framework adds to the notion that chairing collaborative governance boards demands continuous balancing among many, and sometimes conflicting, concerns by highlighting tensions, or paradoxes, that have not yet received much attention.

In addition to the practical implications for interaction on the micro-level of board conversations, as outlined above, the observations gathered during the two case studies induced me to formulate three recommendations on the more general level of managing collaborative governance board meetings.
1. **Evaluate the interaction among board member frequently, or rather continuously, even when things are going alright.** A process that is going in the right direction also needs maintenance. Think of the three key concerns - trust, tension and team-shared ambition: which deserves perhaps extra attention?

2. **Organize a board meeting exclusively dedicated to team-shared ambition on a regular basis, for example once a year.** Shared ambitions need to be further defined and adjusted to changing circumstances along the way. This does not happen out of the blue.

3. **Audio-record board meetings.** People tend to remember selectively and subjectively. At times when things get rough, listening back to a recorded meeting helps enormously in reconstructing what happened and viewing the course of the conversation from diverse angles. This helps to decide on future (chairing) actions that are better and more objectively informed.

**Reflection on research process**

**Dilemmas**

During the research process, I faced several challenges that required careful balancing. A first dilemma related to the study of trust. If I wanted to study its relationship with conversational interaction behaviour, I realized that I had to study it (also) apart from its enactment in behaviour. Therefore, I conceptualized trust as a cognitive phenomenon. This allowed me to study it through perceptions. However, since trust is a very abstract notion, I found that it was not very easy to discuss during interviews. Moreover, I learnt that the meaning of trust in collaboration relationships may differ among people, contexts and situations. The dilemma I faced was maintaining a consistent definition of trust versus incorporating accumulating insights about its conceptualization emerging from the data. I attempted to do both at the same time: in the second case study, trust was conceptualized in a way similar to the conceptualization in the first case study but with the dimension of commitment replacing the dimension of benevolence, because commitment appeared to be a trust dimension specifically relevant in this voluntary collaboration case.

A second and major dilemma related to the positioning of the research project and its papers within the academic field. Since I applied insights drawn from a variety of academic fields, it was not clear from the beginning in which academic community (beyond my own chair group) it fitted best - the trust re-
search community, the communication science community, the organization science community or the public administration and management community. The dilemma I faced was the need to link to a wider academic community (for example, through conferences) versus the strategic desire to keep my options open regarding the positioning of my research. I realized that the language I used to speak and write about my research necessarily implicated choices in this respect. I can illustrate this as follows. At the beginning of the PhD project, I read literature on public-private partnerships and trust. When, in conversations on my research, I referred to the first case study in terms of a public-private partnership, I felt people often responded to that in ways that showed this term had connotations that confused the conversation. It was in a much later stage that I became familiar with the collaboration literature and the terminology commonly employed in that literature. From that moment, I started to use the terms collaboration and collaborative governance. It was also at that time that I conducted the final rewriting of the first paper—linking it to the collaboration literature—and, at last, considered it ready for submission to a journal.

A third important dilemma involved maintaining a specific analytical focus versus doing justice to the complexity of reality. As the research project progressed, I increasingly realized that the relationship between trust and interaction in collaborations was intertwined with other factors, especially the state of partners’ commitment to a shared ambition and of their motivation to find consensus-based, integrative and creative solutions. For a good understanding of collaboration practices, one cannot isolate the interplay of trust and interaction completely from other factors. The interpretive, iterative approach (see chapter 1) allowed me to integrate new elements into the research design. In line with this, in the second case study (see chapter 4), I incorporated the element of creativity in a way that maintained the primary focus on the interplay of trust and interaction. In the final, theoretical study (see chapter 5), I integrated the elements from a practice-oriented, chairmanship perspective, thereby allowing a wider locus of attention that included, in addition to the key concern of trust, two more key concerns.

A fourth dilemma related to my behaviour as a researcher towards the board members of Campus Connect and Platform Inspire. As explained in chapter 1 (see Selected cases), I had opted for limited participation in the cases. The idea was to refrain from participation in board conversations other than so-called social talk with the exception of the moments of reflection (once during the first case study and twice during the second case study). During the moments of reflection, I presented my main insights that had emerged from the data so far to the
respective board and discussed these with them. However, during both case studies, board members asked me questions concerning my opinion on board developments - during interviews or before or after board meetings. The dilemma I faced was not getting involved in conversations about board developments - in conformity with my intention - versus the need to connect to board members for the sake of my relation to them as a researcher. It did not feel good to ask them to elaborate extensively on their experiences and opinions and, at the same time, not want to answer their questions to me in any way. What helped me enormously to find the balance in this matter was a remark from a trainer during a course that I followed at Kwalon, the Dutch platform for qualitative research. The trainer’s remark made me realize that it was indeed alright to answer such questions insofar as I felt it was important for rapport between me and board members. This rapport, after all, was crucial for the collection of valuable data.

**Evaluating interpretive research**

As Yanow and Schwartz-Shea point out, evaluating the quality of interpretive studies requires different criteria than those commonly used for evaluating positivist research (Yanow, 2006; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Objectivity, validity, reliability and replicability standards have only limited applicability here or have a fundamentally different meaning. The logic of these standards is not very suitable for evaluating interpretive research, since interpretive research is based on philosophical assumptions different from the assumptions underlying positivist research. There is an evolving debate on the specific criteria to be applied to evaluate interpretive research. Standards suitable for evaluating interpretive research relate to a significant extent to practices researchers engage in as ‘checks on their own sense-making’ (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 100). For an overview of the different approaches to evaluative criteria for interpretive research, I refer to Schwartz-Shea (2006). As Schwartz-Shea points out, across the literature on the evaluation of interpretive research, there is inconsistent usage of criteria and techniques. A criterion refers to an overarching principle whereas a technique refers to a means of achieving that principle. However, what one author calls a criterion is called a technique by another. Against this background, I have chosen to briefly describe, in relation to this research project, three principles that are widespread in the interpretive literature and that I have constantly taken into account during the research process: credibility (e.g. Patton, 1999; Van Bommel, 2008), consistency in argumentation (or explanatory coherence) (e.g. Yanow & Schwartz-Sea, 2012) and transparency (e.g. Schwartz-Sea, 2006).
With regard to this research project, credibility can be argued for by emphasizing the following aspects. First, I, the researcher, was engaged in the two case studies - in order words, submerged in the field - for the considerable period of time of a year or longer. Second, different kinds of data and different methods were applied in order to triangulate data and methods (see Tellis, 1997; Yin, 1984, 2003). Third, ‘member checking’ (see e.g. Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2012) was applied in both case studies through the so-called moments of reflection with the boards as well as during the second of the two interviews conducted with all individual board members - by checking interpretations of material drawn from the first interview.

Consistency in argumentation was worked on and checked during the research project in the following ways. I indulged in elaborate discussions on all papers included in this thesis during, usually bi-weekly, meetings with the supervisor(s) of the project, during research meetings of the chair group, during PhD courses, and in informal conversations with people within the chair group and wider department. In addition, the papers presented in chapters 2, 4 and 5 were all subjected to peer review both during international conferences and through review processes for publication in international academic journals. These discussions were very important for sharpening, refining and checking the consistency in argumentation and explanatory coherence.

In order to provide transparency, I have striven to report on the research project as openly and honestly as possible. In the different papers, or chapters, I have sought to include as many aspects that might be important to the reader as possible while still keeping them to the point. I realize that the result of these endeavours is influenced by my personal biases. As an interpretive researcher, I do not claim to be objective in any way: I and my considerations cannot be free of values and socially constructed meanings. Nevertheless, throughout this thesis, I have given insight into the major choices that I have made and the reasons why I made them, thereby offering the reader the opportunity to evaluate these.

Limitations and avenues for further research

In this thesis, the interplay of trust and interaction has been explored from several angles. On the basis of the two empirical cases studied, I have been able to draw some interesting conclusions. However, the exploration is far from complete and calls for further studies. In this section, I describe four areas worthy of future research: further case study research into the interplay of trust and interaction in
collaborations; further research into the connection between turn-taking patterns and trust in collaboration meetings; research that further develops and defines the concept of interaction flow; and research into facilitative chairmanship practices.

With regard to further research on the interplay of trust and interaction in collaborations, I propose three issues that specifically deserve attention. First, in addition to the growing-trust case and the high-trust case included in this thesis, a trust-decline case is required to inform us on the interplay of trust and interaction in that specific situation. Unfortunately in this respect, it is impossible to know at the start of a case study how trust will evolve. Therefore, it is only by chance that in a future case study this scenario will emerge and can be studied. Second, I note that it is important to realize that the collaborative governance boards studied for this thesis are both Western European, Dutch cases. Collaborations in other regions of the world may provide a different picture. It is widely known that conversational interaction patterns in high-context, collectivistic cultures are different from conversational interaction patterns in low-context, individualistic cultures (Hall, 1976). From that perspective, the interplay between trust and interaction in a high-context - for example Asian - case may also have different features than those found here. Comparative research on high-context and mixed-context settings is necessary to further inform us on that matter. Third, I draw attention to the interaction aspect of non-verbal behaviour, which was not included in the case studies conducted for this thesis. Future studies could use video-recordings in order to supply additional, non-verbal data on conversational interaction patterns.

Now I turn to the remaining three areas that I propose for further research. With regard to the proposition that changing turn-taking patterns form an indicator of trust changes, further studies are needed that analyse multiple audio-recorded meetings of collaborative governance boards or similar bodies over time to provide a wider empirical grounding. If the proposition is further supported, the measures of interaction applied in this thesis may need to be extended and refined, and to be validated as indicators of trust in order to fully develop an interaction-based method for measuring trust changes. Also the concept of interaction flow would benefit from the investigation of more empirical cases. I suggest that future studies examine interaction flow both qualitatively and quantitatively in order to enlarge its empirical basis and to further refine the concept. Developing further insights into the phenomenon of interaction flow would also make it possible to define increasingly precisely the conditions that make interaction flow episodes possible. Moreover, I recommend that future studies on interaction flow investigate the concept within other kinds of problem-solving settings as well, because the value of the concept may reach beyond collaboration settings. Finally, further studies on
facilitative chairmanship practices are desirable for assessing the analytical and prescriptive value of the Triple-T framework. Questions to be addressed are, for example: What do chairpersons of collaborative governance boards actually do in practice, in terms of the nine behaviours outlined in the Triple-T framework? Do they consider the Triple-T framework a useful instrument, and, if yes, to what extent or for what purposes?

Final words

The study underlying this PhD thesis did not follow a traditional, positivist path. I have chosen to go an unorthodox way, seizing chances offered by the data during the research project. From the moment that the first case study started, the data have taken the lead. I have attempted to use them wisely by focusing on aspects that looked promising because they had not, or hardly, been studied before and could bring genuinely innovative insights valuable for collaboration practices. The resulting thesis reporting on the research project is not a monograph, with a story that continues smoothly over the proceeding chapters. It is a collection of very diverse papers, which - as I hope the reader will agree - is fresh, innovative and relevant.

*Working both ways*, the title of this thesis, includes the participle of the action verb to work. This refers to the notion that collaborating is an on-going process and that it can be hard work. Also, the title refers to a dynamic that occurs in three kinds of relationships addressed in this thesis - either interpersonal or theoretical. First, trust among collaborating partners entails a dynamic that goes in two directions. Often, having trust and receiving trust go together, or not having trust and not receiving trust go together. *It works both ways*. Second, the conversational interaction among members of a collaborative governance board is a mutual process. It involves being allowed and allowing to speak, receiving and offering speaking turns, talking and listening. *It works both ways*. Third, and most central to this thesis, the link between trust and interaction is a reciprocal one. Trust dynamics may be impacted by interaction behaviour. At the same time, trust dynamics shape interaction patterns. In other words, trust influences interaction and interaction influences trust. Once again, *it works both ways*.

I conclude this thesis by expressing the wish that this thesis will form part of an on-going conversation. I invite scholars and people professionally involved in collaborative governance projects to build further on the contributions offered here. As we have seen in this thesis, building on one another’s contributions holds a
promise of creative insights and innovative outcomes. Hopefully, this thesis has succeeded in fuelling the discourse on collaboration practices with some inspiration to that end.
References


References
References


Summary

This thesis addresses a key theme for multi-stakeholder collaborations - trust - in relation to conversational interaction. It is not difficult to see that trust dynamics and interaction dynamics are interrelated. However, how exactly this interplay may unfold in the practices of collaboration meetings is still a largely unexplored area.

First chapter

The first chapter starts from the observation that, in present-day society, collaborations - in all kinds of domains and scales and with various kinds of goals - prolife-rate. Collaborating, however, often is not easy. Partners may have different goals, different expectations, different languages and different ways of working. An important condition to make collaboration work is trust. Trust can be built through repeated interaction among collaboration partners, if this interaction leads to predominantly positive experiences. At the same time, the interaction among partners is affected by how much they trust one another. Studies have shown, for example, that trust boosts openness and information exchange. This thesis is aimed at producing more insight into this interplay.

The literature on collaboration is multi-disciplinary and offers a wide variety of perspectives on, and definitions of, collaboration. This thesis focuses on collaborative governance arrangements: collaborations that involve a public theme or value. Moreover, it is concerned with the process of collaboration, which is one of three overarching themes in collaboration research, alongside preconditions and outcome. In line with the focus on processes, the perspective on trust adopted here concentrates on trust dynamics over time. Trust is regarded as a continuously transforming, multi-faceted perception regarding a person or a group of persons. Not only the amount of trust, but also the basis and essence of trust perceptions change over time because of interaction experiences. At different points in time, people may have, consciously or not, different reasons for trusting or not trusting a collaboration partner. How interaction experiences relate to expectations is central in this. In collaboration settings, important ingredients for trust are perceptions regarding partners’ integrity, benevolence, competences and - especially in highly voluntary collaborations - commitment. By the term interaction, I refer to the conversational interaction that occurs among collaboration partners during board meetings. It is conceptualized as having three overlapping dimensions: content, atmosphere and process.
The study on which this thesis is based was designed in accordance with the interpretive approach. This approach assumes that people act on the basis of interpretations that arise from social interaction. Interpretive researchers attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them. In interpretive studies, data are used to both pose and resolve questions. Two cases were selected and studied. During the case studies, which lasted over a year, monthly board meetings were observed and multiple interviews were conducted. The data collection also included at least one moment of reflection with each board. The data were analysed through extensive qualitative analyses. Furthermore, in both case studies, additional methods were employed to study conversational interaction dynamics.

Second chapter
The second chapter explores the question of how trust developments and interaction patterns are related in case I. Case I is a Dutch, regional, collaborative governance board in the domain of vocational education, which I call Campus Connect. The board consisted of representatives of several schools and various other public and private partners, in total nine board members. Together, they were involved in developing a centre that would locate vocational education and businesses in four interconnected professional areas. The concept was expected to stimulate exchange and boost innovation.

Drawing on board members’ perceptions and interpretations, the results of the case study show that, within the Campus Connect board, an overall increase in trust - based on perceptions regarding integrity and benevolence (goodwill) and the interplay during board meetings - boosted interaction in a positive way. Moreover, the interaction during board meetings was sometimes an inducement for the board members to have more trust. These findings suggest that, with regard to the connection between trust and interaction, a self-reinforcing cycle was involved here. Furthermore, the results reveal that the increase in trust was accompanied by changes over time in three interaction aspects: openness, responsiveness and speed. Among these three, the aspect of conversational speed is specifically noteworthy because this aspect, as far as I know, has not been studied in relation to trust before and because this is a relatively tangible and observable aspect of interaction.

Third chapter
In the third chapter, the link between conversational speed and trust is explored further. This chapter presents a quantitative analysis of turn-taking patterns in the
board meetings of the Campus Connect case. Turn-taking is not only a coordination mechanism among different speakers, it also expresses social relationships. In line with this, the findings of the study reveal that the increase in trust (see chapter 2) was accompanied by an increase in the speed of interaction as shown by turn-taking numbers. On this basis, it is argued that turn-taking patterns have promising potential as an indicator of trust developments. Turn-taking patterns could form a prime element of a novel trust measure based on small-group interaction patterns. Such a measure would have the significant benefits of not suffering from self-report biases and of not depending on rapport between researcher and research participant, making it a valuable addition and alternative to commonly applied trust measures.

Fourth chapter
The fourth chapter addresses the interplay of trust and interaction in case II. Case II is a Dutch, national-level, collaborative governance board at the intersection of technology and the creative industries, which I call Platform Inspire. The board consisted of five people from knowledge institutes and commercial companies who jointly strove for novel collaboration structures in order to develop and upscale new types of services, generating economic success.

During the time of the case study, trust within the board was found to be high: although concerns about other board members’ commitment caused a temporary and relative decrease in trust, perceptions about integrity and competences remained very stable. In addition, interesting material emerged connecting trust and interaction dynamics to group creativity. A repeatedly occurring conversational interaction pattern that often produced breakthroughs in the process of finding solutions for issues at hand was analysed in-depth through a conversation analysis. I named this pattern interaction flow.

Interaction flow is described as a typically lively and synergistic interaction mode that can be recognized from sudden and temporary increases in turn-taking, distribution (alternation of speakers) and overlap (speaking at the same time). In addition, it involves increases in creative shifts and in a positively inspired atmosphere. It is argued that interaction flow can only occur in a high-trust environment. The concept of interaction flow draws into perspective the creative dimension of conversational interaction. It helps us better understand how creative group interaction episodes develop and evolve.
Fifth chapter
The fifth chapter is a theoretical chapter that discusses, from a conversational interaction perspective, the role of chairpersons in collaborative meetings. Effective facilitation is generally considered an important success factor for multi-stakeholder collaboration; however, collaboration scholars have so far virtually neglected chairing processes. This chapter presents a framework for chairmanship behaviour that fosters effective collaboration. Within this framework, trust is brought forward as one of three key concerns for chairpersons, alongside creative tension and team-shared ambition. The Triple-T framework entails nine chairing behaviours, illustrated with empirical examples from the Platform Inspire case.

By inter-relating the atmosphere, content and process dimensions of board interaction with respect to chairmanship, this chapter sheds a different light on the commonly held notion that facilitator-chairpersons should predominantly be concerned with process. Alongside moderating behaviour, the Triple-T framework includes modelling and addressing behaviour. It is argued that chairmanship of a collaborative governance board requires careful and continuous balancing among the three key concerns and among the different types of chairing behaviour that can boost effective collaboration.

Sixth chapter
In the sixth chapter, the contributions of both case studies are summarized. Furthermore, the cases are compared in order to provide additional observations that deepen the insights into each case individually. After that, the contributions of the thesis to the literature on collaboration processes are described, contending that it enhances this stream of literature more specifically with regard to three themes: trust, group interaction and consensus building, and chairmanship. Contributions to other bodies of literature are also indicated. Next, the implications of this thesis for practitioners are outlined. First, the insights offered in this thesis may better enable chairpersons and members of collaborative governance boards to observe developments in board conversations that provide information about the evolution and status of trust relations, reaching beyond gut feeling. This can help them to conduct appropriate and timely interventions that foster a fruitful interaction process leading to solutions and innovative outcomes. Second, it provides points of departure for monitoring and evaluating conversational interaction processes on collaborative governance boards. The practical implications are followed by a reflection on the research process, describing four important dilemmas that I faced as well as three principles for evaluating this interpretive study. With regard to avenues for further research, I suggest four areas as highly worthy of study: further
case-study research into the interplay of trust and interaction in collaborations; further research into the connection between turn-taking patterns and trust in collaboration meetings; research that further develops and defines the concept of interaction flow; and research into facilitative chairmanship practices.

*In sum*

By addressing the interplay of trust and interaction on a micro level over time, this thesis makes tangible the elusive concept of trust in collaborative relations. It delineates specific aspects of conversational interaction within meetings that make visible either trust growth (case I) or a high-trust climate (case II). Moreover, it describes the interplay of trust and interaction in both cases in detail, revealing the processes and events through which the self-reinforcing dynamics take place. In addition, this thesis offers points of attention with regard to conversational interaction that are important in building, balancing and maintaining trust within collaborative governance boards.

In this thesis, the interplay of trust and interaction in collaborative governance meetings is approached from two directions, as - in conformity with the title - it works both ways. The exploration of this interplay has resulted in novel insights regarding the question of how trust dynamics may be influenced through interaction behaviour and, above all, in innovative insights regarding the question of how trust is enacted in interaction patterns. These insights may help professionals to conduct and enable the kind of interaction needed for sound group relations and a successful progression of collaboration processes.
Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift behandelt een thema dat erg belangrijk is voor multi-stakeholder samenwerking – vertrouwen – in relatie tot conversatiedynamiek. Het ligt voor de hand dat vertrouwensdynamiek en conversatiedynamiek iets met elkaar te maken hebben. Echter, hoe de relatie tussen vertrouwen en conversationele interactie er in de praktijk van samenwerkingsbijeenkomsten precies uit ziet, is tot nu toe een grotendeels onontgonnen terrein.

Eerste hoofdstuk

In de hedendaagse maatschappij breidt het fenomeen multi-stakeholder samenwerking zich steeds verder uit – in allerlei domeinen, op uiteenlopende schaal en met verschillende typen doelen. Samenwerken is echter vaak niet gemakkelijk. Samenwerkingspartners kunnen verschillende doelen hebben evenals verschillende verwachtingen, verschillende manieren van praten en verschillende manieren van werken. Een belangrijke voorwaarde voor een geslaagde samenwerking is vertrouwen. Vertrouwen kan opgebouwd worden door regelmatige interactie tussen partners, in het geval dat deze interactie in belangrijke mate tot positieve ervaringen leidt. Tegelijkertijd wordt de interactie tussen partners beïnvloed door de mate van vertrouwen die er tussen hen bestaat. Uit studies is bijvoorbeeld gebleken dat vertrouwen openheid en informatie-uitwisseling bevordert. Dit proefschrift is erop gericht om meer inzicht te krijgen in deze wisselwerking tussen vertrouwen en interactie.

De literatuur over samenwerking is multidisciplinair en biedt een grote variëteit aan perspectieven op, en definities van, samenwerking. Dit proefschrift gaat over een specifiek type samenwerking, dat in de literatuur collaborative governance wordt genoemd: samenwerking ten aanzien van een publiek thema of met een publieke waarde. De focus ligt in dit proefschrift bovendien op het proces van samenwerken en dus niet zozeer op voorwaarden voor en uitkomsten van samenwerken. Vertrouwen wordt in dit proefschrift, in lijn met deze proces-focus, bestudeerd door de tijd heen. Vertrouwen wordt opgevat als een voortdurend veranderende, meervoudige perceptie ten aanzien van een persoon of een groep van personen. Niet alleen het mate van vertrouwen is onderhevig aan verandering, ook de essentie van het vertrouwen verandert op basis van interactie-ervaringen. Op verschillende momenten gedurende een samenwerkingsproces kunnen partners, bewust of onbewust, verschillende redenen hebben om elkaar wel of niet te vertrouwen. Het draait hierbij om de vraag hoe verwachtingen en ervaringen zich tot elkaar verhouden. In samenwerkingssituaties zijn belangrijke ingrediënten voor
Samenvatting


De studie waarop dit proefschrift is gebaseerd is ontworpen volgens de interpretatieve benadering. Deze benadering gaat er van uit dat mensen handelen op basis van interpretaties die voortkomen uit sociale interactie. Interpretatieve onderzoekers proberen fenomenen te begrijpen door middel van de betekenissen die mensen aan deze fenomenen toedichten. In interpretatieve studies worden data gebruikt voor zowel het stellen als beantwoorden van onderzoeksvragen. Twee casussen zijn geselecteerd en bestudeerd. Tijdens de casusstudies werden, gedurende meer dan een jaar, maandelijkse bestuursvergaderingen geobserveerd en werden meerdere interviews gehouden met de verschillende bestuursleden. De dataverzameling omvatte ook minimaal één moment van reflectie met elk bestuur. De data zijn geanalyseerd door middel van uitgebreide kwalitatieve studies.Daarnaast zijn in beide casusstudies aanvullende methoden gebruikt voor de analyse van de conversationele interactiedynamieken.

Tweede hoofdstuk
Het tweede hoofdstuk verkent de vraag hoe vertrouwensontwikkelingen en interactiepatronen gerelateerd zijn in casus I. Casus I is een Nederlands samenwerkingsverband met een regionale reikwijdte binnen het domein van het beroepsonderwijs. Ik heb dit samenwerkingsverband met het oog op vertrouwelijkheid Campus Connect heb genoemd. Het bestuur hiervan bestond uit vertegenwoordigers van verschillende scholen en diverse andere, publieke en private, partners: in totaal negen bestuursleden. Samen streefden ze ernaar een centrum op te zetten dat zowel beroepsonderwijs (op verschillende niveaus) als ondernemingen op een aantal samenhangende beroepsterreinen zou huisvesten en waarbij het onderwijs en de ondernemingen nauw verbonden zouden zijn. Innovatie stond hierbij hoog in het vaandel.

De resultaten van deze casusstudie laten zien dat, binnen het bestuur van Campus Connect, een groei van het onderling vertrouwen - die was gebaseerd op percepties ten aanzien van elkaars integriteit en welwillendheid (goodwill) - en van de dynamiek tijdens bestuursvergaderingen - ervaren werd als een stimulans voor de interactie tijdens vergaderingen. Soms vormden de veranderende interactiepatronen, omgekeerd, juist een reden om meer vertrouwen te hebben in elkaar. De resultaten schetsen het beeld van een zichzelf versterkende cyclus tussen de
Samenvatting

vertrouwens- en interactiedynamiek. Daarnaast komt uit de resultaten naar voren dat de toename van het vertrouwen gepaard ging met veranderingen ten aanzien van drie interactieaspecten: openheid, responsiviteit en snelheid. Van deze drie aspecten is bij uitstek het aspect van conversatiesnelheid interessant, omdat dit aspect, voor zover mij bekend, niet eerder in relatie tot vertrouwen is onderzocht en dit juist een erg concreet en goed observeerbaar aspect van interactie vormt.

Derde hoofdstuk
In het derde hoofdstuk wordt de relatie tussen conversatiesnelheid en vertrouwen nader verkend. Dit hoofdstuk rapporteert over een kwantitatieve analyse van turn-taking patronen in de bestuursvergaderingen van de Campus Connect casus. Turn-taking verwijst naar het mechanisme dat spreekbeurten tussen verschillende sprekers coördineert. Turn-taking dynamiek weerspiegelt sociale relaties. De resultaten van de studie laten zien dat de, door de betrokkenen ervaren, toename van vertrouwen (zie hoofdstuk 2) gepaard ging met een toename van de interactiesnelheid zoals weergegeven door het aantal spreekbeurtwisselingen. Op basis hiervan wordt gesteld dat turn-taking patronen een indicator van vertrouwensontwikkelingen vormen. Vanuit dat licht bezien, kunnen turn-taking patronen een belangrijk element vormen van een nieuw - op interactiepatronen gebaseerde - methode om vertrouwensveranderingen binnen kleine groepen te meten. Voor delen van een dergelijke methode zouden zijn dat ze niet te maken heeft met vertekening doordat betrokkenen over zichzelf rapporteren en ze ook niet afhangt van een goede betrekking tussen onderzoeker en de deelnemers aan het onderzoek. Daarmee zou het een waardevolle aanvulling zijn op gangbare methoden om vertrouwen te onderzoeken.

Vierde hoofdstuk
Het vierde hoofdstuk behandelt de wisselwerking tussen vertrouwen en interactie in casus II. Casus II is een Nederlands, op nationaal niveau opererend, samenwerkingsverband op het grensvlak van technologie en het creatieve domein. Ik noem deze casus Platform Inspire. Het bestuur van Platform Inspire bestond uit vijf bestuursleden afkomstig van kennisinstellingen en commerciële organisaties die gezamenlijk streefden naar nieuwe samenwerkingsstructuren met kleine en middelgrote bedrijven binnen het creatieve domein. Het doel hiervan was het ontwikkelen en opschalen van nieuwe typen diensten en, daarmee, het realiseren van economisch succes.

Tijdens de periode van de casusstudie bleek het vertrouwen binnen het bestuur hoog: hoewel zorgen ten aanzien van een blijvende betrokkenheid van
andere bestuursleden een tijdelijke, relativie afname van het vertrouwen veroorzaakten, bleven de percepties ten aanzien van integriteit en competenties erg stabiel. Daarnaast kwam er uit deze casus interessant materiaal naar voren dat vertrouwen en interactie koppelt aan creativiteit. Tijdens de bestuursvergaderingen deed zich een terugkerend conversatiepatroon voor dat leidde tot doorbraken in de besluitvorming over ingewikkelde kwesties. Dit conversatiepatroon, *interaction flow* gedoopt, werd geanalyseerd door middel van een conversatieanalyse.

*Interaction flow* wordt beschreven als een levendige en synergetische interactiemodus die kan worden herkend aan de plotselinge en tijdelijke stijging van (1) het aantal spreekbeurtwisselingen (*turn-taking*), (2) het aantal verschillende sprekers dat participeert in de discussie (*distribution*) en (3) het aantal keren dat sprekers tegelijk spreken (*overlap*). De *interaction flow* episodes worden daarnaast gekenmerkt door inhoudelijk creatieve verschuivingen en een positief geïnspireerde sfeer. Er wordt gesteld dat *interaction flow* alleen kan voorkomen in een setting met een hoog vertrouwen. Het concept *interaction flow* draagt bij aan een beter begrip van de creatieve dimensie van conversationele interactie. Het werpt licht op de proceskant van hoe creatieve groepsinteractie-episodes zich ontwikkelen.

**Vijfde hoofdstuk**

Het vijfde hoofdstuk is een theoretisch hoofdstuk dat ingaat op de rol van voorzitters in samenwerkingsbijeenkomsten. Effectieve facilitatie wordt algemeen beschouwd als een belangrijke succesfactor voor multi-stakeholder samenwerking, maar wetenschappers hebben de dynamiek van het voorzitten van samenwerkingsvergaderingen tot nu toe nauwelijks aangeroerd. Dit hoofdstuk presenteert een raamwerk voor voorzittersgedrag dat effectieve samenwerking bevordert. Het raamwerk is opgebouwd vanuit een conversationele-interactiebenadering en rondom drie centrale aandachtspunten voor voorzitters: vertrouwen (*trust*), creatieve spanning (*tension*) en gedeelde ambitie (*team-shared ambition*). Dit *Triple-T* raamwerk omvat negen typen voorzittersgedrag en deze worden geïllustreerd met empirische voorbeelden vanuit de Platform Inspire casus.

Doordat sfeer, inhoud en proces van de interactie in bestuursvergaderingen alle drie, en in relatie tot elkaar, worden beschouwd, werpt dit hoofdstuk een ander licht op de notie dat *facilitators*, ofwel voorzitters, van samenwerkingsbijeenkomsten zich hoofdzakelijk met het proces dienen bezig te houden. Naast zogeheten *moderating behaviour* (gedrag met focus op proces), omvat het *Triple-T* raamwerk *modelling behaviour* (gedrag met focus op sfeer) en *addressing behav-
Samenvatting

134

De wisselwerking van vertrouwen met conversationele interactieprocessen op een microniveau en door de tijd heen te analyseren maakt dit proefschrift het fenomeen vertrouwen in samenwerkingsrelaties meer grijpbaar. Het benoemt specifieke aspecten van conversationele interactie tijdens vergaderingen die een vertrouwenstoename (casus I) of een hoog-vertrouwensklimaat (casus II) zichtbaar maken. Daarnaast beschrijft dit proefschrift de wisselwerking tussen vertrouwen en
interactie in beide casussen door de tijd heen in detail en legt daarmee de processen en gebeurtenissen bloot die deel uitmaken van de zichzelf versterkende dynamiek in beide casussen. Ook brengt dit proefschrift aandachtspunten ten aanzien van de conversationele interactie naar voren die belangrijk zijn voor het opbouwen, balanceren en bewaren van vertrouwen binnen collaborative governance besturen.

In dit proefschrift wordt de wisselwerking van vertrouwen en interactie in collaborative governance vergaderingen benaderd vanuit twee kanten, de kant van vertrouwen en de kant van de interactie. Zoals ook de titel van dit proefschrift aangeeft, “werkt het twee kanten op”. Het exploreren van deze wisselwerking heeft geresulteerd in nieuwe inzichten ten aanzien van de vraag hoe vertrouwensdynamiek beïnvloed kan worden door interactiegedrag en, bovenal, in nieuwe inzichten ten aanzien van de vraag hoe vertrouwen weerspiegeld wordt in interactiepatronen. Deze inzichten kunnen professionals helpen bij het realiseren van het soort interactie dat nodig is voor gezonde relaties binnen het samenwerkingsbestuur en voor een succesvol verloop van het samenwerkingsproces.
Dankwoord

Een proefschrift schrijven is doorgaans een tamelijk solistische onderneming. Desalniettemin zou dit promotieproject ondenkbaar zijn geweest, als ik niet gefaciliteerd, gecoacht en geïnspireerd was door mijn begeleiders en nog vele andere personen. Ook de medewerking en welwillendheid van de mensen wiens gedrag en ervaringen ik onderzocht heb tijdens de casusstudies waren cruciaal. En niet te vergeten het thuisfront, waar de randvoorwaarden werden geschept.

Cees van Woerkum, mijn promotor van het eerste uur, jij schonk mij vertrouwen door me (samen met John Dagevos) te selecteren voor de functie van promovenda. Ik heb veel van je geleerd - te veel om op te noemen. Eén van de dingen die er daarbij voor mij uitspringen, is de manier waarop jij naar kwalitatieve data kijkt en je me altijd grondig doorvroeg over mijn observaties in de casusstudies. Door deze benadering heb je me enorm geholpen om de data optimaal te benutten en tot innovatieve papers te komen. Ook je aandacht voor pragmatische keuzes was voor mij erg belangrijk. Ik dank je zeer voor alle tijd die je in mijn promotie-traject hebt gestoken en voor je constante en altijd evenwichtige begeleiding.

Noelle Aarts, aanvankelijk jij op afstand een inspirator en meedenker en begin 2011 werd je op mijn verzoek tweede promotor. Ik waardeer je altijd aanstekelijke enthousiasme enorm. Ook van jou heb ik veel geleerd. Ik noem in het bijzonder je scherpe oog voor detail en consistentie. Ook heb je me wegwijst gemaakt in (de onzichtbare kant van) de dynamiek rondom het geaccepteerd krijgen van een paper door een wetenschappelijk tijdschrift. Ik dank je zeer voor al je inhoudelijke inbreng en voor de manier waarop je mijn zelfvertrouwen hebt gestimuleerd.

Ik bedank alle WUR-collega’s van CPT - in het bijzonder de Strategic Communication group en het voormalige COM - voor de plezierige werksfeer waarvoor ik altijd graag naar Wageningen kwam en kom. Sylvia Holvast, dank je wel voor de ontelbare keren dat je mijn afspraken met Cees en later ook Noelle in goede banen in hun agenda’s hebt geleid. Ik bedank ook de andere dames van het secretariaat en Vera Mentzel en Joke Janssen, die altijd zorgden voor een fantastische facilitering. Ik bedank Catherine O’Dea voor het corrigeren van mijn Engelse teksten en voor alles wat zij me tussen neus en lippen door over de Engelse taal leerde.

Veel dank ben ik verschuldigd aan de bestuursleden van, en nauw betrokken bij, de samenwerkingsverbanden die in dit proefschrift ‘Campus Connect’ en ‘Platform Inspire’ worden genoemd. Dit proefschrift drijft op de praktijk van hun werk. Speciale vermelding hierbij verdient de voorzitter van Platform Inspire,
wiens voorzittersgedrag een belangrijke inspiratiebron vormde voor hoofdstuk 5 van dit boek.

Ik bedank John Dagevos omdat hij het initiatief heeft genomen voor de promotieplek bij Fontys die aan de basis ligt van dit proefschrift. Yolanda te Poel, dank je wel dat je binnen Fontys de rol van beschermvrouwe op je hebt willen nemen en diverse jaren mijn begeleider vanuit Fontys was. Daarnaast bedank ik alle voormalige collega's en promovendi-maatjes bij Fontys – in het bijzonder Fatima El Bouk en Dana Feringa, met wie ik geruime tijd een kamer en wel en wee heb gedeeld.

Lydia Fikkert, hartelijk dank dat je tijdens het eerste van mijn twee zwangerschapsverloven als scherpzinnige student-assistent de data-verzameling hebt voortgezet en hebt meegedacht over, en geholpen bij, de verwerking van de data.

Lieve Els, Ingrid, Josien, Marjolein, Marjon en Neeltje, ik voel me bevoorrecht met jullie als vriendinnen. Dank jullie wel dat ik altijd op jullie kan rekenen en dank voor het begrip als ik het weer eens druk had met dat proefschrift dat telkens toch nog niet klaar was. Neeltje, jou over je werk als onderzoeker te horen praten heeft mij destijds gesterkt in mijn keuze om het professionele roer om te gooien. Els en Marjon, ik ben heel blij dat jullie mijn paranime zijn.

Lieve Maaike, ik herinner me nog goed dat jij destijds de vacature voor een promovendus bij Fontys voor mij hebt gespot; daarmee is dit hele project begonnen.

Lieve Jochem en Katelijne, dank jullie wel dat jullie mijn fijne broer en zus zijn en altijd interesse hebben getoond in wat mij bezighoudt.

Lieve mama en papa, en lieve schoonouders Alice en Peter, dankzij de opvang door jullie van Sterre en Kilian heb ik de ruimte gehad om aan dit proefschrift te werken. Het is een enorme luxe om je kind(eren) onder werktijd onder de hoede van hun oma en opa te weten. Ik vind dit heel bijzonder en ben hier buitengewoon dankbaar voor. Mama en papa, daarnaast ook mijn dank voor het feit dat ik me altijd door jullie gesteund weet.

Lieve Sterre en Kilian, dankzij jullie heb ik me nooit kunnen verliezen in mijn proefschrift. Jullie plaatsen – zonder het te beseffen – de dingen voor mij in perspectief. Sterre, dank je wel ook voor je prachtige tekeningen waar ik altijd vrolijk van word en die me inspireerden om een regenboog op de voorkant van dit boek te zetten.

Lieve Aernout, jij bent als mijn vriend, maatje en man de grote constante in de afgelopen intensieve, hectische en soms pittige jaren geweest. Ik bof enorm met de vanzelfsprekendheid waarmee je me altijd hebt gesteund en je in diverse
opzichten hebt aangepast aan mijn promotietraject. Bovenal bof ik met jou als persoon in mijn leven. Ik kijk uit naar een volgende periode met nieuwe dynamiek, nieuwe dromen en nieuwe belevingen samen met jou en onze kinderen.

Lise van Oortmerssen
Baarn, september 2013
About the author
About the author

Biography

Lise van Oortmerssen was born in Ede in 1973. She was raised in Bennekom, a village near Wageningen. After having completed secondary school, she studied at the Faculty of Humanities of Utrecht University during one year. She then moved to Amsterdam, where she studied Communication Science at the University of Amsterdam, receiving her MA degree in 1997. After her studies, she spent some time traveling to far places and working as a trainee at the European Parliament in Luxembourg with a Robert Schuman scholarship. From 1999 onwards, she worked for the City of Amsterdam at various positions. Initially, she assisted the City Council and Board of Aldermen. Later on, she was concerned with advising on communication matters and broader - often in organizational change projects. In 2006, she started a new position at Fontys University of Applied Sciences in Eindhoven as a lecturer and PhD student, with a guest PhD position at Wageningen University. She taught bachelor students at Fontys communication and research skills courses. In 2011, she left Fontys in order to dedicate all her time to the PhD research and thesis. Lise currently lives in Baarn with her husband and two children, a daughter and a son.
Publications and conference contributions

Peer-reviewed articles

Paper and poster presentations

Book chapter
### Completed Training and Supervision Plan

**I. Project related competences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the course</th>
<th>Department/Institute</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ECTS*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting ‘Vertrouwen grondstof voor PPS’</td>
<td>City of Amsterdam</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance crossing borders</td>
<td>Mansholt/WASS</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIASM 4th workshop on trust</td>
<td>EIASM</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congress Innovation dialogue</td>
<td>WUR</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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**II. General research related competences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the course</th>
<th>Department/Institute</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ECTS*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction course</td>
<td>Mansholt/WASS</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information literacy</td>
<td>WGS</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scientific writing</td>
<td>Maastricht University</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative research methods</td>
<td>Mansholt/WASS</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics ‘in vogelvlucht’</td>
<td>IOPS</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing of research proposal</td>
<td>Mansholt/WASS</td>
<td>2006/7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case research</td>
<td>NIG</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operationalization</td>
<td>NIG</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative data analysis</td>
<td>Kwalon</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atlas.t</td>
<td>Kwalon</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative interviewing</td>
<td>Kwalon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observing</td>
<td>Kwalon</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological quality</td>
<td>Kwalon</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific publishing</td>
<td>WGS</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing and presenting a scientific paper</td>
<td>WGS</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretive analysis</td>
<td>Mansholt/WASS</td>
<td>2010</td>
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**III. Career related competences/personal development**

Teaching: Communication concepts, Communication theory, Advisory projects, Communication research, Professional writing skills, Observation skills, Interview skills (maximum credits for teaching)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the course</th>
<th>Department/Institute</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ECTS*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress I am accountable</td>
<td>WUR/ Logeion</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress ‘Valorisatieparade’</td>
<td>Rathenau Instituut</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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</table>

**IV. Presentations at conferences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the presentation</th>
<th>Conference/Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ECTS*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘The visibility of trust’</td>
<td>Etm. v.d. Comm., Gent</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘On the visibility of trust in discussions in a collaborative governance board’</td>
<td>WASS PhD day</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘On the visibility of trust in the interaction dynamics of collaborative governance board discussions’</td>
<td>ICA, Singapore</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘On trust and interaction in an innovation-oriented collaborative governance board: introducing the concept of interaction flow’</td>
<td>MOPAN, Glasgow</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Trust-inspiring chairmanship of a collaborative governance board’</td>
<td>MOPAN, Wageningen</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total (minimum 30 ECTS)**

37.3

*One ECTS on average is equivalent to 28 hours of study load*
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