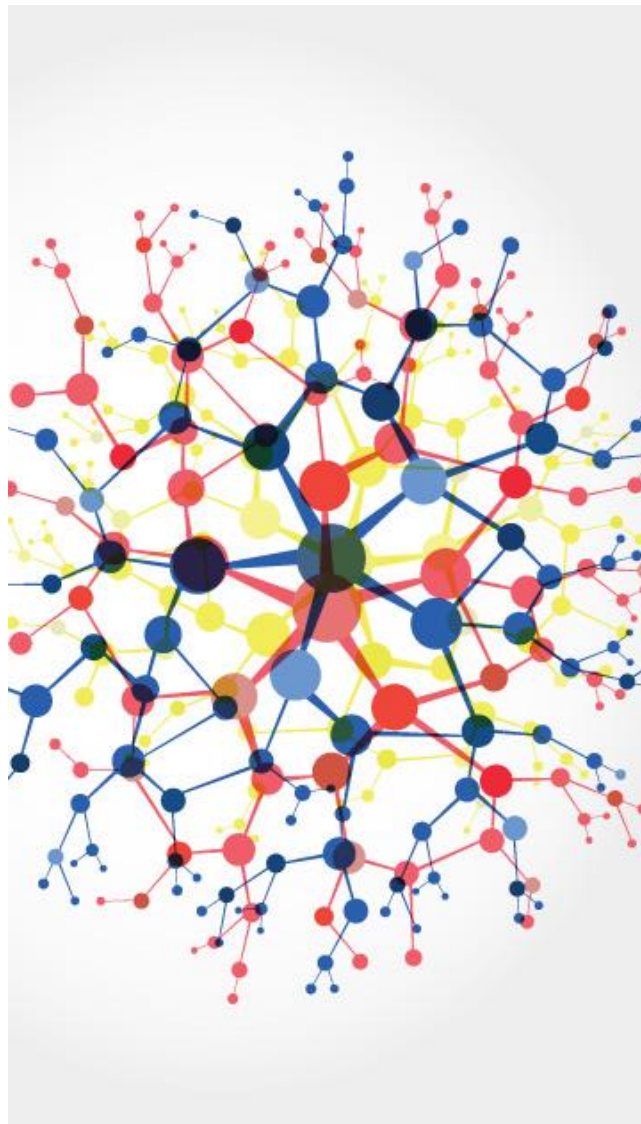


A contribution to the understanding and strengthening of network governance

A theoretical and empirical exploration of governance capabilities



June, 2015

Master International Development

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A theoretical and empirical explanation of governance capabilities

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Science
at Wageningen University and Research Centre, The Netherlands.

June, 2015

Wageningen, The Netherlands

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LAW-80436 – MSc Thesis Law and Governance Group

Acknowledgment

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor for his useful comments, remarks and involvement through the learning process of this master thesis. Although things were not always going easily, I always enjoyed our discussions. Furthermore I would like to thank my lovely wife Jacolien for her unconditional support during the process of writing my thesis. I also like to thank the employees, board-members and volunteers involved in Connect Network, who have willingly shared their precious time during the process of interviewing.

Abstract

In response to the growing societal complexity, governance networks are proliferating in different fields, policy areas and levels of governance. In order to ensure that governance networks maintain effective mechanisms of coordination, the concept of metagovernance receives increasingly attention from academics. The introduction of the concept of governance capabilities provides an alternative on how to ‘metagovern’. By looking into network governance this article assesses the role of governance capabilities for network. It is argued that a governance capability could best be understood as a collection of immaterial assets, composed of two dimensions: actor and structure. It aims to strengthen reflexive, responsive, resilient and revitalizing interactions in networks in order to ensure that a network is able to deal with the wicked problems. A framework is presented that describes how different network tools can be used to strengthen capabilities. As such, it contributes to the strengthening of network governance. This argument is illustrated by empirical data derived from a case study of a network organization in South Africa.

Keywords: governance capabilities, networks, network governance, metagovernance

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The role of networks as new mode of governance has received much attention from academics in the last two decades (Rhodes, 1997; Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti, 1997; Provan and Kenis, 2008; Provan, Fish and Sydow, 2007). It has become increasingly clear that networks are an effective and legitimate mechanism of governance and provide an alternative next to hierarchies and markets (Sørensen and Torfing, 2005). Networks tend to have a key strength in bringing together different actors and in coordinating joint action with regard to addressing ‘wicked’ problems¹. As a result, governance networks proliferated in different countries, policy areas and levels of governance (Klijn, 2008). Examples are plenty and for instance include networks in the health sector, resource management, education, development sector, and public community organizations (Provan, Fish and Sydow, 2007).

However, within the recent network governance debates, critical inquiries about the functioning of networks have emerged. Until recently, network governance scholars primarily paid attention to uncover “how, and under what conditions, governance networks are capable of realizing their significant governing potential” (Sørensen, 2005:348). Nevertheless, more recent works indicate serious internal concerns and tensions affecting the functioning of networks. One of these problems has to do with the democratic level of networks (Sørensen, 2005), Networks undermine the position of elected politicians and institutions because it leaves network actors with more “channels of influence than other citizens (...)” (Sørensen, 2005:350). As such “governance networks might be efficient, but they are certainly not democratic” (Sørensen, 2005:350). A second problems is about the decision-making processes in networks (Klijn, 2008). Decision-making processes in networks are “often complex because of the involvement of various actors and levels of governance” (Klijn, 2008:517). For example, consensus-seeking among actors could take extensive periods of time. The tensions resulting from a high number of network actors involved in decision-making may cause deadlocks and stagnations (Klijn, 2008). As such, it could negatively affect the functioning and potential of networks. The third issue is about the effectiveness of networks. Provan and Milward (2001) question and discuss the criteria used to measure effectiveness for networks. In doing so, they underscore the extremely complex task of assessing the performance of networks and the lack of measures of effectiveness. From these examples it can be concluded that networks are not a final solution nor a panacea in their attempt to improve co-ordination for the purpose of solving societal problems but need further. As a result, a new strand of network governance literature developed since scholars started to acknowledge these problems and tensions inherent to governance networks. This new strand of literature covers a renewed attention for democratic theories and the introduction of the

¹ Wicked problems are unstructured, multi-layered and cross cutting problems which lack a stopping rule (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Wicked problems are not bound to a particular domain but could be found in for instance the environmental domain (Stewart, Desai and Walters, 2011), in agriculture (Termeer, Dewulf, Breeman and Stiller, 2013) in natural resource management (Lach, Rayner and Ingram, 2005), and in policy planning in general (Rittel and Webber, 1973).

concept of metagovernance, “the governing of governing” (Kooiman, 2003:170; Klijn and Koppenjan, 2012) in order to consolidate the role of networks as effective and legitimate instruments (Sørensen and Torfing, 2005).

At the same time the concept of governance capabilities has been introduced. This concept offers a new approach for governance systems in dealing with wicked problems (Termeer, *et al.*, 2013). This approach differs significantly since it takes into account both the governance system (governing system) as the wicked problem (system-to-be-governed) (see: Kooiman, 2009). Most authors in this field primarily address the governance system and pay little attention to the environment these systems operate in. The concept of governance capabilities regards governance systems in relation to wicked problems and in doing so provides means to strengthen governance systems in order to be better able to deal with wicked problems.

1.2 Problem Statement

The concept of governance capabilities stems from the need to strengthen governance systems in addressing current-day, societal wicked problems (Termeer *et al.*, 2013). The authors argue “that it takes a set of four capabilities, for governance actors (and systems) to deal wisely with wicked problems (...)” (2003:3). In addition, every capability should include three dimensions: acting, observing and enabling. The three dimensions are three mutually reinforcing aspects and draw attention to how problems are perceived by the way one looks at them (observing), how governance systems are equipped for alternative strategies (enabling) and how these two inform the development of action strategies (acting). The three dimensions and the four governance capabilities form an integrative approach aimed to achieve small wins in wicked problems (Termeer *et al.*, 2013).

However, in spite of the recognition that governance capabilities matter, it is still largely unclear what the concept encapsulates. My critiques are threefold: (1) the concept lacks a differentiation for different modes of governance, (2) it is unclear how capabilities are situated and (3) how capabilities are to be understood. The lack of a differentiation for different modes of governance leaves us with a shallow understanding. Governance capabilities are presented as a one-dimensional approach but require differentiation to address the unique features and challenges of the different modes of governance. Subsequently, an understanding of how governance capabilities are situated in governance systems is crucial in order to develop strategies to enhance capabilities, and to develop an understanding of how governance capabilities could be perceived. To address this gap this thesis provides an explanation of how governance capabilities in network governance could be understood and how they could be strengthened.

1.3 Research objectives

Governance capabilities need a critical examination in order to develop towards a fully-fledged concept. This thesis aims to do so by exploring the concept of governance capabilities in network governance. The specific objectives of this thesis are threefold. The first objective is to explore how governance capabilities are situated in networks. For that purpose, I conduct a literature review to assess how governance capabilities are situated. Second, I want to use and develop notions on network governance and governance

capabilities to propose methods to strengthen governance capabilities for network forms of governance. I aim to do so by closely looking at the characteristics of governance networks in order to propose specific methods. My last objective is to empirically assess governance capabilities. I will do so by analyzing a network of development organizations in South Africa: Connect Network. I will assess the governance capabilities by examining interactions in order to recommend methods that could strengthen governance capabilities.

1.4 Research questions

In order to guide this research I formulated three questions that correspond with the objectives of this thesis. The specific questions are:

1. How are governance capabilities situated in networks?
2. What are options to strengthen governance capabilities in networks?
3. To what extent are governance capabilities reflected in the interaction patterns of Connect Network and how can these be strengthened?

The main research question that covers these specific questions is:

- **How to understand and strengthen governance capabilities in network governance?**

1.5 Methodology

This thesis is both theoretical and exploratory. It aims to conceptualize governance capabilities for network governance in two ways: theoretically and empirically. The theoretical conceptualization covers a literature review that is based on two pillars. The first pillar addresses two concepts: networks and governance. The synthesis of these two concepts describe the features of network governance. The second pillar addresses governance capabilities and addresses. For the literature review, two databases were used: Web of Science and Scopus. I used (a combination of) the terms “networks” and “governance” to search for relevant literature. Academic articles were judged potentially relevant based on their abstract and forward citation searching. In addition, backward citation searching led to additional articles. The most relevant articles and books used for this research stem from a small group of authors: J. Kooiman, E.H. Klijn, E. Sørensen and J. Torfing.

The empirical conceptualization involves a case-study of Connect Network. This network of organizations has faced some challenges with regard to its finances, participation of network members, and network size. An analysis of their (inter)actions with regard to these challenges could provide insight about the presence and effect of governance capabilities. The governance capabilities of Connect Network are examined through the analytical framework and by making use of policy documents, observations, interviews and surveys. The data is obtained in the period between March and June 2014. Interview questions and surveys were structured around the four governance capabilities and informed by the theoretical conceptualization. The policy documents were collected and used for this research with explicit permission of Connect Network. Subsequently, I attended meetings and conferences to gain insight in the governance processes of the various actors.

1.6 Validity of the data

The data obtained and used for the case study needs some attention in order to assess its value. I recognized, especially during interviews, that non-whites were often afraid to criticize the board and/or daily staff since these were to a large extent made up from whites. Subsequently, I experienced many moments where interviewees beat around the bush and did not freely express their opinion. Many times I've encountered suspicion, for example reflected in questioning the usage of a voice-recorder, my connection with Connect Network, and my role as researcher. I learned that most of this is a result of the legacy of apartheid that still influences interactions between whites and non-whites. However, I tried my best to obtain objective information during my interviews and in the selection of data. Nevertheless, everything that has been said during the interviews and meetings represents the South African reality where race still is a vulnerable issue and influences interactions.

1.7 Outline thesis

This thesis is made up of three sections: *part A* covers the theoretical conceptualization, *part B* encompasses the empirical conceptualization, and *part C* forms the conclusion of this thesis. *Part A* involves the literature review and focuses on governance capabilities in network governance. Subsequently, the analytical framework – used to empirically assess governance capabilities – is also element of *part A*. *Part B* provides a description of the case-study as well as an analysis thereof. *Part C* elaborates on the conclusion and the findings of this research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature of network governance and examines the concept of governance capabilities. It aims to shine light on how network forms of governance function and on the role of governance capabilities therein.

In order to develop an understanding of network governance, the next two sections pay attention to networks and governance. In section 2.2 the debates and perspectives on networks are presented, while in section 2.3 the emergence and different modes of governance are described. Subsequently, in section 2.4, the concept of network governance is further elaborated by using insights from the previous sections and additional literature. In section 2.5 governance capabilities are introduced. This section focuses on the promising role as well as the deficiencies of governance capabilities for network governance. This section eventually presents a framework aimed to strengthen governance capabilities in networks.

2.2 Networks

The concept of networks takes a prominent role in our current-day society. Although this resulted in an overwhelming amount of literature, it is still difficult to define what networks encompass. The uniqueness of each network (e.g. how it came into existence, how it operates and functions) hampers to define it in a narrow sense. In addition, different perspectives on networks and several academic debates further add to a differentiated picture of networks. For example, networks could be demarcated by highlighting the form of relations (e.g. friendship) or the function of the network (e.g. managing resources or service delivery) (Provan, Fish and Sydow, 2007, Borgatti and Foster, 2003). Producer networks, criminal networks and social networks are examples of this differentiation.

A broad definition of what networks constitute is provided by Provan and Kenis (2008), describing it as a set of ties and entities. This definition leads them to differentiate between three modes of networks based on their functioning: a participant-governed networks, a network administrative organization (NAO), and a lead organization-governed network. A participant-governed network is characterized by the idea that network actors govern themselves with no separate and unique governance entity” (Provan and Kenis, 2008:234). A NAO is described as a network with a central entity which facilitates the needs of the network. A lead organization-governed network is characterized by a central actor, in which “all major network-level activities and key decisions are coordinated through and by a single participating member, acting as a lead organization” (Provan and Kenis, 2008:235). However, this enumeration only forms a simple and basic distinction between different modes of networks.

This definition shines light on what networks are, but not so much on their emergence and functioning. Carlsson and Sandström (2007) and Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti (1997) argue that the emergence of each networks results from a shared common concern between a variety of autonomous actors, resulting in a joint coordination of actions. As such, networks can be understood as a specific form of governance (Podolny and Page, 1998) in which the network is considered a mechanism of coordination (Provan and Kenis, 2008). Where

economic markets are characterized by ‘the invisible hand’ as main steering mechanism, and hierarchies by the ‘iron fist’(Jessop, 2003:143), networks differ significantly and could therefore be considered a unique form of governance. What stands out with regard to networks as unique modes of coordination is the relatively autonomous position of actors. This is reflected through the open and often voluntary character of networks. Actors are free to choose whether or not to participate in networks and work together to achieve common goals.

In order to distinguish and demarcate the unique features of these networks, this research refers to them as governance networks. This indicates their unique ability as a steering mechanism and mode of coordination.

2.2.1 The evolution of network literature

The literature on networks can be divided in two parts. This division results from the development of the concept causing a shift of focus. This shift made Torfing (2005) distinguish between a first and a second generation of governance networks literature. The first generation focused on what constitutes governance networks, explaining its emergence and uniqueness and how it may contribute to problem-solving. As such it explains the increase in attention for networks as instrument for governance. Thereafter, the focus of attention shifted towards the problems and potentials that networks bring along. Areas of interest in this second generation of literature have to do with the democratic level of networks and network design (Torfing, 2005). So, where the first generation of literature merely focused on the phenomenon of networks as a new mode of coordination, the second generation is more focused on the internal dynamics, deficiencies and potential.

The shift in focus resulted in new questions and findings on how to govern networks. and in a search for new modes of networks. Substantive issues in this light are how equity, accountability, legitimacy and effectiveness are being realized in networks (Bogason and Musso, 2006; Sørensen and Torfing, 2005; Papadopoulos, 2007; 2010)). Discussions in this field predominantly evolve around how networks could build and maintain democratic standards. This reflects the lack of direct justification of authority in networks, since network actors are not chosen like democratic governments (Suchman, 1995). The attention for these issues and the attempts to overcome them shows the new and shifting focus towards governance networks and its conditions under which they emerge and thrive (Sørensen and Torfing, 2005). This strand of literature acknowledges the promising role of networks but also indicates the need for new methods and strategies to be able to actually maintain and fulfill this role. This search for methods to address the deficiencies of networks is referred to as metagovernance. Section 2.4.3 will further examine this concept.

2.2.2 Different perspectives on networks

The broad concept of networks allows for different interpretations on what a network entails. This section explicates four broad paradigms in order to contribute to a more differentiated view on networks. These four paradigms each try to explain the emergence of networks as an instrument of coordination.

The first paradigm is mentioned as ‘positivism’ and regards networks as a feature of governance. The positivist paradigm is associated with empirical research and adheres to the view that knowledge is created through observation. A network, as an instrument of

coordination, can be verified through empirical research. Most positivists therefore would argue that networks evolved in response to the need of more collaboration between sectors to address societal issues (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). Although positivists tend to look at network governance from a macro-level, interpretivists focus on the micro-level and take the practices and beliefs of individuals as starting point. Such an approach states that the beliefs and practices of individuals create the identity and practices of networks. This school of thinking is also referred to as the decentred or interpretive approach (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005). A smaller school of thinking is the critical realist perspective. This methodology is merely state-focused and therefore mainly underscores the new responsibilities of the state in relation to the emergence of networks. “The state’s role is in redesigning, not only the way in which hierarchy, markets and networks function independently of one another, but also how the state alters the strategic terrain to favour particular hybrid combinations” (Fawcett and Daugbjerg, 2012:197). This perspective states that the role of the state turned into one of a regulator of networks since (Börzel and Risse, 2010:116). The fourth school of thinking is the functionalist school. The main argument of this school of thinking is that “networks are a response to failures of markets, failures of hierarchical coordination, and to societal and technological developments” (Provan and Kenis, 2008:233). Networks should be seen as functional instruments which can produce positive outcomes in current society problem solving. Due to the nature of networks they are in need of a different approach in ways they can be managed compared to markets and hierarchies.

2.3 Governance

In chapter 1 attention has been drawn to the changing role of state in order to understand the emergence of governance. Due to the state’s loss of capacity in upward (inter and transnational agencies), downward (decentralization) and horizontal direction (non-state actors) new actors joined in the process of governing society. The concept of governance reflects the end of the state monopoly of governing and points to the new order of governing actors in society (Rhodes, 1997). Generally speaking, there are two broad ways to look at governance. The first is the instrumental view and characterized by assumptions on how to ‘do’ governance. It is mainly prescriptive in that its focus is particularly goal-oriented (see: Loorbach, 2010; Weiss, 2000). Second there is an analytical view involved with developing a better understanding of governance. It is focused on describing and analyzing governance and involves a more pluralistic view of governance processes (see: Kooiman, 2003; Rhodes, 1997).

This section takes an analytical and uses an interactive approach in order to analyze it. As such, it follows an already vast strand of research considering the whole of interactions as main concept of governance (Jentoft and Bavinck, 2014). Interactive governance forms a lens that allows for systematic analysis of interactions, which may contribute to the identification of opportunities and challenges in modes of governance (Jentoft and Bavinck, 2014:76). The coming section introduces the concept of interaction as a building block to understand governance processes. Thereafter it will pay attention to how interaction patterns constitute modes of governance. Lastly, attention is paid to the interplay between two complementary levels of interaction and the implications for governance networks.

2.3.1 Understanding governance through interactions

The usage of the concept of interactions in order to understand governance is nothing new, on the contrary. Many authors underscore and use interactive governance to examine, describe and explain governance processes in different fields. One of the most cited authors in this field is Kooiman who states that an analysis of interactions involves two levels: an intentional and a structural (2003:13-15). The intentional level of interactions is about the actions and intentions of actors and informed by their aims, interests and identity. The structural level refers to the context in which interactions take place and is defined as the structural dimension of governing interaction. This dimension “point to the material, social and cultural contexts in which interactions come about and into effect. It consists of those circumstances that limit, broaden and at the same time condition its intentional level: institutions, general social constructs, patterns of communication, material and technological possibilities and societal power distributions” (Kooiman, 2003: 15). Thus, an interaction perspective on governance implies a focus on the intentional and structural level

2.3.2 The intentional and structural level of interaction

The two levels of interaction distinguished by Kooiman (2003) are complementary and should be analyzed accordingly. This implies that both levels should be viewed in relation to each other. This section will first focus on the features of the structural level of interaction and subsequently to the intentional level of interaction. This analysis shines light on how interactions are constituted and as such contribute to understanding governance.

The structural level of interaction is known for its ability of ‘structuring’ the intentional level of interactions. It consists of “institutions, general social constructs, patterns of communications, material and technological possibilities and societal power distributions”. These factors affect the intentional level of interaction since it limits, broadens and conditions them (Kooiman, 2003:15). The structural level is the structure in which interactions take place. Although some conditions may be a given, this does not imply all factors are unchangeable. “Values, norms, principles, institutions and legal practice may well be stable and routinized creating inertia, but they are not written in stone” (Jentoft and Bavinck, 2014:75). The structural level of interaction is thus constantly being shaped and reshaped.

The intentional level of interaction involves the actual, intended actions of the actors informed by the goals and interest deriving from their identity. These interaction are often goal-oriented informed by the goals and interest of an actor. However, due to the complexity and dynamics of governance, interactions at the intentional level often have unintended consequences (Kooiman, 2003). The role of the structural level of interactions is that it ‘structures’ the intended interactions. This process of structuring is a result of the conditions of the structural level of interaction.

In addition, Kooiman (2003) indicates that Giddens’(1984) structuration theory applies to the relation between the intentional and structural level of interaction. “Structuration theory stresses that broader structural contexts shape individual action, but also argues that these actions un turn shape the structure in an interactive and recursive way” (Kooiman, 2003:16). This implies that the two levels of interaction are constantly being produced and reproduced and are both means and outcome “of the practices they organise” (ibid.). With regard to interaction it implies that they consist of processes and structures.

“Processes are the outcome of the capacity of governing actors or entities to act, while the structure of interactions points at the material, social and cultural contexts in which interactions come about” (Kooiman, 2003: 13). The interplay between processes and structures and the outcome thereof reflects how interactions are constituted.

2.3.3 Differentiating between modes of governance

This section reviews how differences in interaction result in different modes of governance. Interactions reflect unique processes and structures that made Kooiman (2003) distinguish between three modes of governance since these origin from different patterns of interactions. The three modes of governance are self-governance, co-governance and hierarchical governance. Self-governance is about actors organizing and governing themselves. It is characterized by the informal, decentralized and horizontal relations between actors as well as their autonomous position (ibid.). Interaction between actors is the essence of what these systems bring forth (Luhmann, 1995). Kooiman (2003:93) describes relations between actors in such a mode of governance as a mutually influencing, horizontal relation. The second mode of governance, co-governance, is a broad field of all kinds of co-concepts, such as collaboration, co-operation and coordination. It reflects the interdependencies that exist between actors involved. The interdependence stems from two main features of co-governance: a shared common concern (Kooiman, 2003:96) and the need to join forces in order to achieve objectives (Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti, 1997). These principles challenge actors to participate in new modes of governance. However, in practice, many varieties and hybrid forms exist (Kooiman, 2003). The third form of governance, hierarchical governance, may seem outdated but still is a significant mode of governance despite the changing role of the state. Kooiman states that the hierarchical model of governance should be given its due place since it still influences many areas of social-political life (Kooiman, 2003:115). Hierarchical governance “has its own rules and procedures for compliance, with combinations of coercion and consent” (Kooiman, 2003:118). It is reflected by the top-down character of interactions between actors and aims to steer and control actors (Kooiman, 2003).

Although interactions occur at the micro-level they altogether affect the macro level. As such, the concept of interaction helps to understand how modes of governance develop and evolve. The way how interactions occur further add to the understanding of governance and the evolvement of different modes of governance. Kooiman (2003) only highlights three basic modes of governance, but underscores the notion that many more hybrid modes of governance exist.

2.4 Network governance

In the previous sections, attention was paid to the concept of ‘networks’ and ‘governance’. This section focus on the combination of these concepts: network governance. This is done by providing a brief overview of the insights gained from the previous sections. Thereafter the concept of network governance will be further examined in order to develop an understanding of what it encompasses. Attention is paid to the two levels of interaction and how this influences policy- and decision-making in networks. In addition, it pays attention to the question on how to improve the functioning of network modes of governance.

The two previous sections presented three unique features of network governance. First, network governance is characterized by autonomous but interdependent actors. This is a key point because the driving force informing networks is that all kind of actors realize that they cannot solve a particular problem alone, but need each other. A second feature of network governance is that the collaboration between actors take place within a self-constructed structure. When the actors first come together, there will be no structure in which interactions take place, but when they interact with each other they will gradually develop a structure which informs interactions. A third feature of governance network is their ability to work on complex social problems. Actors come together around a common concern and through joint coordination of actors try to work towards a solution (Sørensen and Torfing, 2007). Thus, the merging of the concepts networks and governances provides an understanding of network governance as “governing with and through networks” (Rhodes, 1997 and differs significantly from other modes of governance such as markets and hierarchies (Rhodes, 1997; Jessop, 2003)

2.4.1 The structural and intentional level of interaction in network governance

In order to develop a thorough understanding of network governance it seems important to look at how interactions take place. In order to examine the unique features of network governance I apply the notion of the structural level of interaction and the intentional level of interaction discussed and presented in section 2.3.2.

In section 2.3.3 it was made clear that different patterns of interaction lead to different modes of governance. It also indicated that networks are characterized by a high degree of interdependence between actors (see also: Jones, Hesterly & Borgatti, 1997; Kickert, Klijn & Koppenjan, 1997; Provan & Kenis, 2008; Sørensen & Torfing, 2005). A situation of interdependence is mostly defined as a situation in which “none of the actors can attain their aims unless they cooperate with others” (Bevir, 2008:138). A more in-depth contribution is presented by Provan (1993) who highlight two features of interdependencies present in networks: (1) the need for collaboration to address problems since no single actor possesses all the necessary resources, and (2) the horizontal cooperation as the unique feature of governance networks. These two features of interdependence describe how interdependence affects the level of the actor and the level of the network. At the level of the actor it highlights the need for collaboration through interaction. This notion also indicates the autonomous position of actors in networks resulting in horizontal cooperation. However, horizontal cooperation is not necessarily about equality in terms of power but rather underscores mutual dependence between actors (Provan, 1993). At the level of the network, Provan’s (1993) contribution explains the incentive behind the formation of networks. The proliferation of networks in the last decades as instruments of coordination could be interpreted as an answer to the growing societal complexity and the need to join forces. These processes are captured in the concept of interdependence.

The role interdependence plays, both as stimulus for interactions and as arena in which interaction takes place, could be identified as a reflection of the structural level of interaction. The variety of material and immaterial factors that constitute the structure create a situation which can best be described as interdependence. This notion in turn affects the intentional level since these interactions are conditioned by the structure. However, interdependence is

only articulated through interactions at the intentional level. Although the structural level brings forth the conditions of interdependence, it is only objectified in the interaction at the intentional level. For example, the hierarchical character of the structural level (i.e. power with a central entity, command-and-control) becomes visible when actors in such a system interact (Kooiman, 2003). The same goes for interdependence in networks. This underscores the need to critically reflect interactions as drivers of (network) governance.

2.4.2 Policy and decision-making in network governance

Despite the fact that modes of governance are constituted by interaction, no attention yet has been paid to how policy and decision-making occurs in networks. Because governance networks are not directly guided or steered (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009) attention needs to be drawn towards other areas of a network to investigate how decisions are made. This section aims to shine light on how interactions affect these processes and analyzes the role of interactions as instruments for policy- and decision-making.

Klijn, Koppenjan and Termeer (1995) use the concept of games to describe how actors try to achieve their goals in networks. Games are defined as the “continuing, consecutive series of actions between different actors, conducted according to and guided by formal and informal rules, and which arises around issues or decisions in which actors have an interest” (Klijn, Koppenjan and Termeer, 1995:439). This continuing and consecutive series of actions affects two levels: (1) the formal and informal rules that guide interaction, and (2) the issues and decisions in which actors have an interest. First, the formal and informal rules guide actions but are also informed by the outcome of games. In addition, Klijn, Koppenjan and Termeer (1995) argue that the resources that actors (virtually) possess, could change informal and formal rules since future interactions are influenced by the balance of resources between actors. Rules thus are constantly shaped and reshaped in the context of interactions, but do also confine the balance of resources (1995:435). These rules can be considered part of what constitutes the structural level of interaction (Kooiman, 2003). Second, games influence the issues and decisions in network governance. Because “policy is a result of interaction between actors in games” (1995:441), the development of policy heavily relies on interactions between network members. Since actors aim to achieve individual and collective goals through interaction in networks, the outcome of games indirectly inform and define how decisions are made. Games thus form the arena in which policy is being developed. In this process, the balance of resources possessed by actors has a determining role, since it may favor the actors that (virtually) possess most resources in achieving their goals. This implies that interactions are influenced by the position of the actor vis-a-vis. For instance, actor x may hold a stronger position, as a result of former series of interactions that took place within the network compared to actor y (Klijn, Koppenjan and Termeer, 1995). As a consequence, the stronger actor is more able to influence policy and decision-making processes.

Games thus could be understood as a collection of interactions (at the intentional level) between actors. These games are more than the sum of these interactions but involve former series of interactions since these influence future interactions. The outcome of interactions in games determines how decision and policy-making is filled in. Interactions thus not only constitutes networks, but also inform its course.

2.4.3 Facilitating governance, facilitating interactions

Section 2.2.1 showed that attention for external attempts to address the governance deficiencies receives increasing attention in governance literature. This process of facilitating modes of governance with the aim to improve them is what Kooiman (2003) calls metagovernance. This form of governance should not be understood as governance at a higher level but is about “an imaginary governor, teleported to a point ‘outside’ and holding the whole governance experience against a normative light” (Kooiman, 2003: 170). Metagovernance is supposed to ask basic questions about the functioning of governance. It implies governing the changes that are inherent to modes of governance and (re)designing processes from a normative point of view (Kooiman, 2003: 171).

However, metagovernance lacks a univocal interpretation. Different methods are introduced by different authors but are often unilateral in their approach and impact. For example, Jessop (1998) states that metagovernance is “the organization of self-organization” and focuses on designing institutions and generating visions to facilitate self-organization, coherence of diverse objectives and actions. From this perspective, metagovernance is a result of governance failure. However, according to Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan (1997), metagovernance is mainly involved in coordinating strategies of actors with different goals and preferences. In doing so, it aims to facilitate and initiate interaction processes for better coordination (1997:10-11). Another perspective is presented by Whitehead (2003) and Milward and Provan (2001). Their perspective is rather narrow since they primarily focus on the role of the state as meta-governor. The changed order of governing actors and the role of governments therein is illustrated by stating that governments are involved in steering, rather than rowing. A more compelling perspective on metagovernance is provided by Sørensen and Torfing (2009) who define metagovernance as ‘the governance of governance’. They describe it as a “reflexive and responsive process through which a wide range of legitimate and resourceful actors aim to combine, facilitate, shape and direct particular forms of governance(...)” (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009:245). In addition, Kooiman (2003) describes metagovernance as a third-order governance, involved with the normative ideals that govern the institutional system (second order). This second-order facilitates the daily-activities of a governing system (first-order).

This enumeration shows that the process of metagovernance is an “inherently imperfect strategic practice” as well as governance (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009). Nevertheless does it teach us something about the efforts of both academics and non-academics in addressing the deficiencies of governance. In principle, the activity of metagovernance focuses on the enhancement of the structures and processes. In doing so, it is primarily focused on adjusting the context (material, social and cultural) in order to enable and constrain particular forms of interaction. I would therefore rather speak of facilitating governance, since facilitating governance is facilitating interactions.

A metagovernance perspective that is solely focused on facilitating interactions is suitable and beneficial for three reasons. First, the activity of facilitating interactions results in addressing modes of governance in the broadest sense. If modes of governance are the result of different patterns of interactions, facilitating these same interactions addresses the entire governance system. Although this is easier said than done, it provides insight in the importance of interactions. Second, since interactions consist of a structural level of

interaction and an intentional level, directed actions to ‘restructure’ could be identified and performed. Third, a deliberately adjusted structure benefits the processes occurring between actors in networks. It should be able to address possible deficiencies in governance systems through certain actions. How this is performed depends on the specific situation.

From this notion I would argue that the concept of governance capabilities (Termeer *et al.*, 2013) form a suitable approach to inform which types of interaction are to be facilitated in order to enhance governance systems. An enhancement of the governance capabilities – through facilitating types of interactions – helps governance system to be better able to deal with wicked problems. These capabilities affect the three dimensions of acting, observing and enabling (Termeer *et al.*, 2013) that assist governance systems to get a grip on wicked problems. Facilitating governance capabilities thus contributes to the ability of governance systems to deal with wicked problems.

2.5 Governance capabilities

This section provides an introduction of governance capabilities, followed by a reflection on their potentials and deficits. It aims to provide insight in what the concept of governance capabilities entail in light of governance failure and to position it in the current academic debates.

2.5.1 Introduction to governance capabilities

The concept of governance capabilities is introduced by Termeer *et al.* (2013) and is an approach aimed to deal wisely with wicked problems in order to make small wins possible. This statement derives from the notion that actors are often unable to implement new strategies in light of wicked problems. Therefore, the authors offer a theoretical exploration “of how actors can observe and handle this wickedness in their daily activities and what they need from their governance system to enable this” (2003:3-7). A set of four capabilities is introduced in response to address this wickedness: reflexivity, responsiveness, resilience and revitalization. Table 1 is an overview of the governance capabilities and their expected effect on the different facets of wicked problems.

Table 1: The four governance capabilities (Source: Termeer *et al.*, 2013)

Governance Capability	Definition	Aspect of the wicked problem domain to be addressed
Reflexivity	The capability to appreciate and deal with unstructured problems and multiple realities	Unstructured problems Multiple frames and perspectives
Resilience	The capability to flexibly adapt one’s course in response to frequent and uncertain changes without losing identity	Interconnected problems Unpredictable consequences of action

Responsiveness	The capability to respond legitimately to unlimited demands and concerns	No stopping rule Unlimited number of issues and demands Moral responsibilities
Revitalizing	The capability to unblock stagnations and reanimate policy processes	Stagnating and unproductive interaction patterns

2.5.2 The promising role of governance capabilities

The concept of governance capabilities is a promising approach in strengthening governance systems. Three general advantages could be identified. First, governance capabilities are a deliberately developed to deal with wicked problems and therefore address the governance system as well as the system-to-be-governed (wicked problem). This inclusive perspective favors the concept of governance capabilities since it recognize and acknowledge the features of governance as a response to the complexity of society. As such, governance capabilities can be used in any governance system and be adjusted flexibly according to the requirements of a particular situation. Second, the concept of governance capabilities moves away from and offers an alternative on how to ‘metagovern’. The concept of governance capabilities underscore the necessity to build strong modes of governance instead of increasing the role of the state in governance (Milward and Provan, 2001), searching for values and norms (Kooiman, 2003) or designing institutions (Jessop, 1998). Although these contributions add to our understanding of metagovernance, I consider governance capabilities more useful and effective. A third advantage of governance capabilities is there applicability. As such, it provides an alternative next to the more normative ideas which are often presented as means to underpin metagovernance. Nevertheless should the four capabilities not be seen as exhaustive nor as a replacement of values and norms but rather as another layer in the process of metagoverning. A focus on capabilities enables organizations to enhance interactions processes without interfering with the rules, norms and values of a network.

2.5.3 Deficits of governance capabilities

The promising role of governance capabilities mainly results from an under-theorization. Due to the fact that governance capabilities are still a novelty several theoretical aspects of the concept are still unclear. The relevance of governance capabilities in dealing with wicked problems is clear but the question about the origination and meaning of capabilities as means to enhance governance systems remains unanswered. For instance, a capability is defined as “more than just the ability to deploy a particular capacity but involves skills, repertoires, capacities, commitments and readiness” (Termeer *et al.*, 2013:5). This description lacks a further elaboration about what could be considered a capability in light of a governance system. Subsequently, it is unclear how governance capabilities are conceptualized for different modes of governance. It also remains unclear where capabilities are situated: are they for instance solely possessed by actors or are they institutionalized? Another critical remark is the role of power which to a large extent is neglected by Termeer *et al.* (2013). In light of developing the concept of governance capabilities it is essential for

future research to elaborate on these matters in order to conceptualize a solid notion of governance capabilities.

2.5.4. Understanding governance capabilities

Although governance capabilities are used in a specific way by Termeer *et al.* (2013) this research is aimed to use it otherwise. Before proceeding, this section briefly explains the author's perspective on governance capabilities, with regard to the aforementioned topics.

From my perspective, a governance capability could best be understood as a collection of immaterial assets and aimed to strengthen a certain type of interaction. The governance capability of responsiveness, for example, is focused to strengthen the level of responsiveness in interactions. The immaterial assets of a governance capability thus are linked with its very nature (i.e. reflexivity, responsiveness, resilience and revitalization).

Although Termeer *et al.* (2013) speak of governance capabilities, I would rather speak of network governance capabilities since they seem most suitable in a context of network governance. Though capabilities could be used in other modes of governance as well, it would probably thrive best when used in a governance network. The three features of network governance, described underscore this argument. First, since governance network are made up from various interdependent and autonomous actors, a governing principle as governance capabilities would benefit a network more than hierarchical governance or market. It could even be argued that network actors are in need of a governing principle that enables both the network as the actors to deal with wicked problems. Since network actors all hold some sort of ownership over the network, it is of crucial importance that the network thrives. Second, the structure in a network determines how interactions take place. The structure includes norms, rules and values, as well as other material and immaterial assets that 'structure'. This structure is informed by all actors through the structural level of interaction. All actors thus hold some sort of ownership, while this might be less in other modes of governance. Third, governance capabilities not only enhance the network, but also enhances the network actors. Since network actors make up the whole network, the whole network could only be enhanced through the enhancement of the individual network actors. Governance capabilities thus apply to network actors first. Compared to markets and hierarchies and their unique mechanisms of coordination, it seems that governance capabilities are less useful. For instance in a hierarchical organization: which employees benefit from a more reflexive or responsive capability, while the decisions are made at the board level and ratified top-down?

A major implication of governance capabilities in network governance is that the degree of capabilities depends on the capabilities of the individual network actors. The set of network actors make up the whole network in which each individual actor contributes to the governance capabilities of the network. This implies that a strengthening of governance capabilities should first be about strengthening the governance capabilities of network actors.

Despite the attention for the four governance capabilities in this research so far, it is good to be aware that these capabilities serve to inform actors in the dimensions of acting, observing and enabling of governance systems. An enhancement of governance capabilities implies that actors are better able to act, observe and enable. A governance capability is not a solution, but is able to facilitate solutions

2.6 Governance capabilities and network governance

This section deals with the issue of how to strengthen governance capabilities in network governance. In doing so, it first analyzes the literature about where governance capabilities are located. The insights gained from this analysis are used to develop a comprehensive framework that aims to strengthen the governance capabilities of a governance network. This framework should be informed by methods and strategies that address the interactions and relations of network actors, in order to adjust the structural level of interaction.

2.6.1 Situating governance capabilities in network governance

In order to strengthen governance capabilities a thorough understanding of where they are situated is crucial. In fact, only an understanding of where capabilities are located gives way to an approach that not only recognizes capabilities but is also able to enhance them. In order to do so, this section will pay attention to where governance capabilities are situated by elaborating on the definition of Termeer *et al.* (2013) and by making use of the forward citation checking.

The definition of capabilities by Termeer *et al.* (2013) state that the concept of capabilities includes skills repertoires, capacities, commitments and readiness. The selection of these concepts as drivers of capabilities are in no case a random choice but form an enumeration of relevant methods introduced by Huxham (2000), Weber and Khademian (2008) and Weick and Suttcliffe (2001). These contributions focus on the methods and tools to add value and understanding to make collaborative governance work (Huxham, 2000), on the development of a mind-set that guides network managers to build long-term collaborative problem-solving capacity (Weber & Khademian, 2008) and on the creation of a mindful infrastructure to be more capable of maintaining function and structure in light of uncertainty (Weick & Suttcliffe, 2001). It thus implies a collection of different tools and methods focusing on the way a governance system can be enhanced in light of complexity and uncertainty as well as a manner to effectively manage public problems. This collection is clustered by Termeer *et al.* (2013) resulting in the four categories reflexivity, resilience, responsiveness and revitalization which make up the governance capabilities.

Huxham (2000) mentions that despite the vast attention for collaborative governance few attention is paid to the matter of management and skills. “There are no easy answers to making collaboration work effectively, but the research does demonstrate that it is possible for participants to behave in ways that make a difference to the outcome” (Huxham, 2000:353). Collaborative governance could “provide the platform for participants to think about how to devise creative and sophisticated responses to the idiosyncrasies of their particular situation” (Huxham, 2000:353). However, as argued by Huxham (2000), skills are necessary for managers to make collaborative governance work. Three processes of collaborative governance are described that are in need of skills in order to succeed: the coordination of activities and services, the transfer of good practice from one partner organization to another, and for the purpose of the financial imperative (e.g. sharing costs) (2000:340). Huxham (2000) explicitly prescribes these skills to managers. Their contributions

to the process of collaborative governance is necessary to make collaborative governance work. Skills thus clearly have to do with managers and can therefore be assumed to be located at the level of the actor.

Weber and Khademian (2008) underscore the necessity of a ‘collaborative capacity builder’. Such a person is someone who works according to a mind-set which benefits networks. This mind-set is based on six points: (1) commitment to governance with government, (2) commitment to govern within the rules yet think creatively, (3) commitment to networks as mutual-aid partnerships with society, (4) acceptance that a collaborative capacity builder can be someone without an official government portfolio, (5) an understanding of the intrinsic separability of performance and accountability in wicked problems settings and, (6) a persistent commitment to the collaborative process (Weber and Khademian, 2008:341). These points are proposed in light of the transfer, receipt and integration of knowledge across participants in networks. According to the authors, these processes pose a fundamental challenge to effectively manage any public problem from a networked setting (Weber & Khademian, 2008:335). A successful completion of these tasks affect the network effectiveness, long and short-term problem-solving capacity, improved policy performance and the maintenance of accountability (Weber & Khademian, 2008:344). A ‘collaborative capacity builder’, as stated by Weber and Khademian (2008), benefits organizations through holding certain commitments and understandings which should benefit the positive attributes of networks (the capacity to solve problems, govern shared resources, create learning opportunities, and address shared goals). The commitments and understandings as part of a mind-set serves the greater purpose of enhancing the performance of a network. “The lesson for public managers is that, to the extent they understand the mind-set in collaborative network settings, they will be in a better position to make appropriate choices in terms of tools, strategies, and skill application” (2008:344). With regard to the question where the commitment and understanding are situated in network governance, it can be concluded that this mind-set is situated at the actor.

Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) highlight the need for a mindful infrastructure in order to prevent organizations from getting into trouble when managing the unexpected. Repertoires are part of such a mindful infrastructure and could be considered a readiness reflecting the capacity to anticipate and to contain unexpected events (2001:9). This resilience is based largely on repertoires of “action and experience, the ability to recombine fragments of past experience into novel responses, emotional control, skill at respectful interaction, and knowledge of how the system functions” (Weick & Sutcliffe:2001:3). The extent to which an organization is prepared for unexpected events relies heavily on the repertoire. Enlarging repertoires could be reached through training and learning which could lead to the identification of more threats “because what they see, they can now handle” (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001:157). Repertoires, as part of a mindful infrastructure, can be seen as the capacity of an organization to deal with unexpected events. A solid mindful infrastructure refer to a high organizational capacity with regard to resilience wherein repertoires as well as readiness are properly developed and tested. A repertoire and the readiness thus form a capacity and are located in the institutional norms, rules and procedures that enables organization to act whenever necessary.

When the different parts of what a capability entails are separated and examined, one aspect with regard to location of capabilities in particular stands out. This has to do with the interconnectedness of the described tools and methods leading to a situation of mutually reinforcement. It is not a coincidence that the notions on which Termeer *et al.* (2013) base their definition is interrelated. The skills (Huxham, 2000), commitment and capacities (Weber & Khademian, 2008), repertoires and readiness (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001) which substantiate the idea of capabilities could be ordered in such a way which tells us something about how capabilities are constituted and where they are situated.

Another interesting insight has to do with the difference in focus of the authors in describing ways on how to improve organizations. Where Huxham (2000) and Weber and Khademian (2008) focus on the role of the actor, Weick & Sutcliffe (2001) draw attention to the institutionalized procedures instead of the actor. The locus of a capability is thus not necessarily bound to one place but should rather be sought at both the actor and in the structural design of a system. In this light it would be helpful to decompose a capability into two dimensions: a dimension of the actor, and the dimension of the structure. At the dimension of the actor it refers to the idea that actors are able to contribute to a capability, for instance by obtaining specific skills or develop a particular mind set. It reflects the role actors could play in the deployment of a capability. At the dimensions of the structure it implies the institutional and organizational competency to enable and strengthen the actor's ability². For example, practices and actions could be embedded in institutionalized rules, norms and procedures. A response repertoire is an example of institutionalized practices and adds to the organizational capacity.

However, these dimensions should not be seen as opposite but rather as complementary. For instance, a collaborative capacity builder is an example of the ability of an actor, but strongly associated with the structure, since they both influence each other. Also, a solid mindful infrastructure deals with unexpected events but as a result influences the ability of an actor in his commitment since the organizational capacity should be robust enough to deal with unexpected events. Subsequently do these elements jointly constitute the notion of a capability. This means that it is crucial to pay attention to the ability and the capacity. Only when these two are in matched and balanced will they generate the appropriate and desired result. A low organizational capacity and a low ability of the actor is not desirable since it suggests a underdeveloped capability. A high organizational capacity combined with a low ability of the actor is neither viable. It implies an unbalanced relationship where actors are hardly able to make use of the institutionalized opportunities concerning the particular capability. For instance, when an organization's capacity for reflexivity is high (e.g. reflection meetings are arranged regularly and material to help reflect upon actions available) but the actor's ability to participate in and make use of this capacity is low, a situation arises where hardly any results are produced. Another unbalanced situation also arises when the actor's ability is high but the organizational capacity is not able to canalize this. In light of the capability of responsiveness this could occur when actors hold weak ties (Grannovetter, 1974) which produce valuable information but where the organization lacks a platform to share this

² This is a narrow description of structure, but we base this conception on the concept of structure used in social network theory (Burt, 2000) . From this perspective structure refers to the organizational design of the network.

information. The most desired situation is one whereby both the of the actors as well as the organizational capacity are high and in line. Such a situation reflects a situation in which the ability of actors as well as the organizational capacity complement each other, and enhance the capability at stake. Table 3 summarizes these outcomes.

Table 2: The two dimensions of a governance capability

	Actor (-)	Actor (+)
Structure (-)	Not desirable	Not viable
Structure (+)	Not efficient	Desirable

In short, the concept of governance capabilities is made up from different concepts, all focused to improve the effectiveness of a governance system. The three highlighted aspects of capabilities highlight different parts of what a capability stands for. These different parts of capabilities are not situated at one particular place, but could be found both at the actor and in the organizational design. In light of this analysis, a distinction is created to highlight the differences within the governance capability. The distinction between the dimension of the actor and the dimension of the organizational structure complements and together make up a capability. It is from this understanding that we try to find manners in which governance capabilities could be enhanced.

2.6.2 Strengthening governance capabilities: a framework

Although the concept of metagovernance receives increasing attention (Jessop, 2003; Kooiman and Jentoft, 2009), integrative and inclusive approaches are scarce. This section therefore tries to identify a framework that could be used to propose methods and strategies that aim to strengthen governance capabilities. This framework needs to meet the following criteria³: (1) to leave considerable space and autonomy for network actors, (2) applicable on networks (i.e. not to infringe with the self-regulatory capacity of networks), (3) comprehensive (i.e. to be able to address the whole network), and (4) it must provide space for a variety of tools and methods⁴.

An approach that might be useful is introduced by Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan (1997) who describe the available instruments of a governance system to govern networks. These three families of instruments are the legal family, economic family and the family of communicative instrument. Their argument is that the context determines which instruments are required. Although such an approach provides flexibility on how these instruments could be deployed practically, few attention is paid to how the organizational structure could be changed. A more useful approach on how to steer networks is introduced by Sørensen and Torfing (2009). They distinguish between four tools that capture the whole range of what a network entails. These four different tools are: network design, network framing, network

³ These criteria are based on the main features of network governance

⁴ Since interdependencies may be present on different levels, at different points in time, and with regard to different resources it adds to the complexity of interactions between actors (Bevir, 2008). The way to address this is only through a variety of tools and methods (De Bruijn and Ten Heuvelhof, 2007).

management, and network participation (2009:246-247). These tools are focused to achieve effective network governance and enhance different parts of the network. As such, it meets the criteria. The four network tools all address the network in a different way. Network design, as a tool, is focused on the scope, character, composition and institutional procedures of the networks (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009: 246) and should contribute to the achievement of effective network governance in four several ways. It is involved in the process of which actors fit in and benefit the network in terms of their resources and objectives. Network design also deals with the replacement of unsuccessful links in the network. Network design is thus not only important at the phase in which a network comes to being but is as well useful to adjust the structure of the network according to a certain situation. Network framing is, according to the authors a tool “aimed at shaping the arena for network interaction (Sørensen and Torfing: 2009:249)” which could be done in several ways. For instance in the process of the creation of the objectives and the setting of the boundaries (e.g. fiscal or legal). Framing, storytelling and ‘best practices’ are only three of the methods to influence such processes (Sørensen and Torfing: 2009:250). The third tool of network management “involves the dialogue and interaction with the network” (ibid.) and is focused to stimulate and smoothen the processes that are crucial for effective network governance. It is deliberately set up to” reduce tensions, resolve conflicts and empower particular actors by providing different kinds of material and immaterial inputs and resources” (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009:247). Network management thus is involved in a broad range of activities to enhance interaction processes within the network. The fourth tool is network participation and prescribes that a steering actor should as well participate as a network member among the others. In this way the steering actor is able to influence network and interaction processes. Network participation is a precarious activity, but could lead to a further enhancement of effective network governance.

The framework set out by Sørensen and Torfing (2009) seems suitable for proposing methods and strategies to enhance governance capabilities in governance networks. The framework allows for different approaches and a certain flexibility.

2.6.2 Methods and strategies to strengthen governance capabilities

In order to let the four tools contribute to the strengthening of the governance capabilities in networks, a table is developed that links the network instruments with the governance capabilities. Subsequently, corresponding methods and strategies are proposed that could contribute to the strengthening of a governance capability. The methods and strategies that aim to strengthen the governance capabilities are alternately focused on the dimension of the actor and the dimension of the structure. The methods and strategies derive from social network theory, network management theory, public management theory and network governance literature. The proposed methods and strategies are not exhaustive but form an indication of possible ways to enhance governance capabilities. The coming four section briefly describe the proposed methods and strategies as described in table 3.

2.6.2.1 Strengthening reflexivity

Network Design: The governance capability of reflexivity could be strengthened by embedding ties between actors (Burt, 2000). This form of network design enhances the degree

of interdependence and results in ongoing interactions among actors. In this way, actors are better able to share experiences.

Network Framing: The creation of open-mindedness will contribute to the creation of knowledge (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998) and as such influences reflexivity. An open-mind make actors more eager to share and listen to each other and apply different sorts of knowledge and to learn and critique them.

Network Management: The empowerment of weak and marginalized actors, by the governance system, provide them with adequate resources and skills. This could result in a situation in which more network members are able to, and participate in, joint reflexive interactions (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009).

Network Participation: The tool of network participation with regard to reflexivity focuses on how to build trust. For some actors, reflexive interactions are new or unknown, therefore a facilitating entity could build trust by taking the lead (Levi, 1998). This implies that a facilitating entity is actively involved in the processes of reflexivity and invites actors to follow their example. In this way, the conditions for trust are developed which helps in sharing experiences and reflection.

2.6.2.2 Strengthening responsiveness

Network Design: The governance capability of responsiveness could be enhanced through new external relations. This process is referred to as bridging and could result in the obtainment of valuable information which was previously unknown. New information could help governance systems in making hard choices and substantive decisions and react to new developments (Grannovetter, 1983).

Network Framing: The creation of strong interdependencies within the network makes it likely that information is more easily transferred from on actor to another (Burt, 2005). Redundant relations among actors contributes to strengthening responsiveness because it obtains and provides information faster.

Network Management: Interdependencies between actors also contribute to the closure of the network and as a consequence safeguards the interactions (Burt, 2000). Stronger interdependencies that keep interactions going could for instance be created by the formation of (focus) groups in the network. Creating strong interdependencies thus could result in the closure of a network as well as it keeps interactions ongoing (Provan and Kenis, 2008).

Network Participation: Termeer *et al.* (2013) advise to be present at venues where information is created since this makes the organization visible. This could for instance result in new opportunities (e.g. partnerships, cooperation, information).

2.6.2.3 Strengthening resilience

Network Design: The governance capability of resilience could be enhanced through a process of bonding (Burt, 2005). This implies that parts of the network organization work more closely together, for instance based on their experience, working field or geographical area. In this way actors in a network are coupled with others to learn by sharing experiences and knowledge. As such, the diverse experiences of different actors may result in new initiatives.

Network Framing: Innovation contributes to resilience since it allows networks to anticipate to new developments (Burt, 2000). An active stance towards innovations and the willingness to implement them prepares actors and networks to sudden changes.

Network Management: Interactive learning (Lundvall, 2010) contributes to resilience since it empowers network members to learn from each other's experiences. Negative experiences from one actor, for instance, could contribute to the awareness of another actor to prevent itself from similar mistakes.

Network Participation: A facilitating entity should be transparent about the decisions they make in order to create transparency among the actors in the network (see: Sørensen and Torfing, 2005). Transparency also refers to accountability since it ensures actors to be both accountable and transparent about their operations (Benner, Reinicke and Witter, 2004; Klijn and Skelcher, 2007)).

2.6.2.4 Strengthening revitalization

Network Design: The capability of revitalization benefits from ongoing interactions. In times of deadlocks or stagnations this could for instance be achieved through inviting new actors in the network. Not only do new actors add new value to the network, it also prevents it from vicious (policy or decision-making) cycles (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000).

Network Framing: Story telling as a form of framing might also have a great impact on revitalization since it forms the perceptions of network members. In challenging times, storytelling might motivate and inspire actors (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009).

Network Management: As with resilience, interactive learning also contributes to revitalization. It helps to ensure ongoing interactions. In this way it prevents deadlocks or stagnations in interaction processes (Lundvall, 2006).

Network Participation: The evaluation of their own performance make actors more keen to take ownership of their deeds and makes it possible to identify deficits. It also contributes to actors taking up responsibility and to hold each other accountable (Provan and Milward, 2001).

Table 3: Methods and strategies to strengthen governance capabilities

	Reflexivity	Responsiveness	Resilience	Revitalization
Network design	Embedded ties (Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti, 1997)	Bridging (Granovetter, 1983)	Bonding (Burt, 2005)	Bring in new actors (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000)
Network framing	Creating open-mindedness (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998)	Create strong interdependencies (Burt, 2000)	Creating innovation (Burt, 2000)	Story telling (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009)
Network management	Empower the weak and marginalized – provide adequate resources (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009)	Initiating interactive processes (Provan and Kenis, 2008)	Interactive learning (Lundvall, 2010)	Interactive learning (Lundvall, 2010)
Network participation	Build trust by showing trust (Levi, 1998)	Being present at venues (Termeer <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	Ensure transparency (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009)	Network evaluates its own performance (Provan and Milward, 2001)

Chapter 3: Analytical Framework

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter it was described that governance capabilities could contribute to amplify reflexive, responsive, resilient and revitalizing interactions. These types of interaction reflect the degree of capabilities present in the structure. This chapter presents an analytical framework that serves to analyze the governance capabilities of Connect Network. It is based on four points: reflexivity, responsiveness, resilience and revitalization. These four points are discussed later in this chapter in order to clarify what they encompass.

The governance capabilities of CN are examined and assessed for two reasons. First, it complements the theoretical part of this research. I believe that a case study focused on governance capabilities offers new insights (as well as questions) which could contribute to the theoretical development of the concept. Second, an analysis of the governance capabilities of CN forms an evaluation of their performance and could inform future decisions. As such, it could contribute to their functioning.

The literature review identified some issues that are included in the analytical framework. First, in order to analyze the governance capabilities of a network, one needs to focus on all network actors, because the unique features of networks cause that the degree of governance capabilities is only examined through analyzing the whole network. Subsequently I distinguish between the dimension of the actor and the dimension of the organizational structure when analyzing governance capabilities. This differentiation is set out in Table 5, which creates insight into how the analysis of CN will take place.

Table 4: Structure of the analytical framework

	Reflexivity	Responsiveness	Resilience	Revitalization
Actor				
Structure				

3.2 Governance capabilities

This exploration on governance capabilities focuses on the identification of capabilities in CN. In line with this research it takes an interactive approach. In analyzing governance capabilities, I focus on the intentional level of interaction. This implies a focus on the interactions between actors. By looking into these interactions, I aim to evaluate the degree of each governance capability. The four capabilities are reflexivity: the capability to deal with multiple frames of references in society and policy; resilience: the capability to flexibly change course in response to frequent and uncertain changes; responsiveness: the capability to respond quickly to changing agenda's and societal expectations; and revitalizing: the capability to unblock deadlocks or stagnations in policy processes (Termeer *et al.*, 2013). However, in order to indicate the role of each capability, additional literature is used to develop and expand the analytical framework. The coming four sections describe the importance of each governance capability in order to understand the concept. Subsequently the concept is pinned down in order to have a usable analytical framework.

3.2.1 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a concept that receive great attention with regard to its role in governance and metagovernance processes (Hendriks and Grin, 2007; Jessop, 2003). Termeer *et al.* (2013) define reflexivity as the capability “to deal with multiple frames of reference in society and policy” (Termeer *et al.*, 2013:21). This touches upon the notion of being able to reconsider one’s practices and frames through the exchange of ideas and opinions (Hendriks and Grin, 2007). Reflexivity encourages actors to “loosen their grip on the desire ‘to control’ problems” (2007:334). It is through such a willingness that actors can become self-aware of their position and perceptions which make actors develop better strategies (Gurtner, Tschan, Semmer and Nagele, 2006). This is useful in light of the nature of wicked problems whereby no single truth, frame or perception fully captures and addresses the wickedness of the problem (Rittel and Webber, 1973). These notions of reflexivity stem partly from reflexive governance that sees problems as social constructions. Reflexivity of actors dealing with these problems could shine light on the complex patterns that constitute these constructions (Jessop, 2003).

Despite the increasing attention for reflexivity in governance processes, few attention is paid to the practicalities of strengthening reflexive processes between actors. A practical definition is provided by Jessop (2003) who defines reflexivity as the “ability and commitment to uncover and make explicit to oneself the nature of one's intentions, projects, and actions and their conditions of possibility; and, in this context, to learn about them, critique them, and act upon any lessons that have been learnt” (2003:7). This definition draws attention to three important issues. First, the ability and commitment involves an active stance of actors. Second, reflexivity is not solely about uncovering of one’s intention but is strongly related to learn about them and critique them. Third, reflexivity should include some form of evaluation in order to inform future actions. These three points capture the actions that reflect reflexivity. I therefore propose that an analysis of reflexivity takes into account the three aforementioned activities. I believe that this focus allows for a thorough analysis of reflexivity in interactions at the level of the actor and the structure.

3.2.2 Resilience

Frequent and uncertain changes occur in any environment and affect every organization. The capability of resilience deals with this continuing change. Termeer *et al.* (2013) define the capability of resilience as the “capability to flexible adapt to frequently occurring and uncertain changes” (Termeer *et al.* 2013:21). The concept of resilience in processes of governance stems from the field of adaptive governance. The field of adaptive governance is rooted in resource management and ecological theories of resilience. It highlights the fact that management of ecological systems is dynamic and unpredictable (see: Folke *et al.*, 2005). Authors in this field argue that governance networks as well are dynamic and unpredictable in the ever changing environment they operate in. Termeer *et al.* (2013) build upon this notion in developing the governance capabilities of resilience. The main requirement for an organization to enhance resilience is to require “a culture that tolerates continuous processes of change in unpredictable directions” (Termeer *et al.*, 2013:11). But how to build such a resilient culture? Folke *et al* (2005) argue that a resilient culture is build with and through experience and point towards “social sources of resilience, such as social

capital (...) and social memory” (Folke *et al.*, 2005:313). It is argued that low levels of social memory and social capital makes a system vulnerable to changes. However, these sources “cannot be easily be subject to planning and control” (Folke *et al.*, 2005:463). They rather are a result of experience, trial-and-error, and a contextual approach. From these notions I conclude that being resilient involves an open-mindedness that allows for bottom-up innovative initiatives, tolerate failures and change, and uses the diverse experience of actors in adapting to change. This combination reflects the degree of resilience in networks.

3.2.3 Responsiveness

The governance capability of responsiveness is defined as “the capability to respond quickly to changing agenda’s and societal expectations” (Termeer *et al.*, 2013). Organizations dealing with wicked problems are in some way involved in a competition whereby they constantly need to be aware of the continuous flow of information and ways this could be handled. An important dynamic in relation to this capability is the agency that a network possesses with regard to their ever changing environment. The position of a network in their broader environment is not a given but can be influenced and adjusted for instance through a proactive approach towards information and events (Burt, 2000). It is of importance to have different sources of information to stay updated about the broader environment one operates in. New connections with actors not involved (exclusively) in the network could result in new, valuable information. This is referred to as the strength of weak ties (Grannovetter, 1974) or structural holes (Burt, 2000). On the other hand, a network consisting out of similar actors (i.e. organizations with similar backgrounds and identities) will hardly obtain new and valuable information. Information obtained through these valuable ties can inform the network about their environment and upcoming changes.

Termeer *et al.* (2013) mention four requirements on how to enable responsiveness. The first one has to do with the monitoring and filtering of relevant information. Consuming all the information costs time and energy and it will therefore benefit organizations to have systems in place that monitor the usefulness of the information. The second condition is about being present “at the venues where the attention is being produced” (p.15). Examples of venues where attention is being produced are Parliament, press releases and conferences, as well as social media. The third condition to enable responsiveness is to divide an organization into groups. Such groups can be clustered and in that way interact with others around the network to gain information. In this way antennae are created which help the network stay up-to-date on what is going on ‘outside’. The fourth condition to enable responsiveness is to develop response strategies. These conditions enable organizations to deal with the continuous flow of information and could be seen as strategies to deal with wicked problems (Termeer *et al.*, 2013).

From these notions it can be concluded that responsiveness has an internal and external dimension which has to do how information is handled. I therefore focus on how information is obtained, monitored and provided. These three activities draw attention both to how an actor is involved and how the structure is designed to receive information. As such, it reflects the degree of the governance capability of responsiveness.

3.2.4 Revitalization

The capability of revitalization is about the ability to unblock deadlocks or stagnation in policy processes. Examples of stagnated patterns and deadlocks are the presence of taboos, vicious circles and escalated conflicts (p. 17). A stagnated process is often caused by the inability of actors to reflect on their thoughts and actions because these have become self-evident. People are not always aware of this since thoughts and actions once were useful but have lost their strength over time. Such fixations have two sides: cognitive and social. In order to create a breakthrough one should focus on the latter one in order to make the actors able to look in a new way, or through a new perspective of for instance a new participant, to their thoughts and actions (Termeer and Kessener, 2007). The first prerequisite to achieve this is according to Termeer *et al.* (2013) the willingness of actors to tolerate different worldviews and even recognize these different perspectives of vital elements of policy-making and problem-solving processes. Such a mindset could have a positive impact on the organizational ability to perform and reduce the risks of deadlocks. A second manner to enable revitalization is to make actors aware of the possibility of failures and disappointments when it comes to their performance, and subsequently learn them to reflect on this “to try to understand what is going on and how we tend to act and react toward the issue and toward one another” (2013:18). This creates understanding of possible failure and contributes to learning within the organization. Given the complexity of society such a capability is essential for organizations and networks to keep interaction processes between actors going in order to function effectively (Termeer *et al.*, 2013).

In order to analyze this particular governance capability within the network and governing agency of CN we look at how the steering actors prevent deadlocks and stagnations from happening by keeping interactions going and how attention is paid to emerging problems. The focus is on how actors deal with these situations, as well as how the structure of the network is equipped. The way how actors deliberately recognize different perspectives and use these for problem-solving processes tell something about this capability. This implies a willingness and mindset of actors to actively adjust the network design in order to keep interactions going.

Chapter 4: Description

This chapter analyzes the interactions of Connect Network (CN) in order to provide data to answer our third specific question. CN is reviewed for the period from 2004 till 2014. The materials that provided insight for the observation are policy documents, minutes, strategy and action plans, observations and (semi-structured) interviews. This chapter takes the facilitating entity (board + daily staff) of CN as central actor in order to describe the evolvement of the network. As such it pays considerable attention to the facilitating entity in order to find out more about the presence of governance capabilities.

The structure of this chapter surrounds around six issues: the structure of the network, goals and mission of the network, ownership, governance activities, communication and donors. These issues were identified as possibly insightful after all the data was collected. These six issues are interesting domains in analyzing the interactions of Connect Network. However, first a distinction is made based on the different phases CN went through. This distinction serves to get a clearer view on the interactions of the facilitating entity.

4.1 Introduction

At its foundation in 2004, CN consisted of ten organizations that shared the desire to collaborate. The idea of collaboration arose from the assumption that it would benefit them to exchange ideas, knowledge and experiences, to pool resources and organize joint activities. The period between 2004 and 2008 can be characterized as one of initiating and building up. In this period many other organizations joined the collaboration which led to a total of sixty organizations in 2008.

From 2008 till 2012 CN experienced further growth. The number of organizations almost doubled from sixty to one hundred. More important, a process of professionalization took place since a daily staff was hired in order to cope with the growing number of involved organizations. The main task of the daily staff was to coordinate and facilitate the network and its activities. In this period, two office buildings were hired to assist the organizations and the network. This period can be described as one of professionalization and steady growth.

The year 2013 marks the start of another phase in the existence of CN. Due to financial set-backs, the steering actors needed to change course of action which resulted in the resignation of six staff members (out of ten) and the termination of the rental contract of one of the offices. The way CN was ran in the past was no longer feasible. These events forced the daily staff and the board to redefine its position.

From these descriptions, three different phases can be identified. These are set out in figure 2. The transitions between these phases have to do with the changing circumstances which forced CN to change course of action. The main process behind these transitions were the growing number of organizations involved in the network (phase 1 – phase 2) and changing financial circumstances (phase 2 – phase 3).

Figure 1 – Connect Network’s phases of existence



The transition phases was resulted from new challenges the network faced. These could provide information on the issue of governance capabilities by analyzing the specific actions undertaken to deal with them. The focus of this chapter is primarily on the transition between phase 2 and phase 3 but will to a lesser extent also focus on the earlier transition of the network (phase 1 – phase 2). The transition phases will be analyzed by looking into six different issues: the structure of the network, the goals and mission, ownership, the steering actor’s activities, communication and donors.

4.2 The structure of the network

CN’s organizational structure received little attention for a long time. Between 2004 and 2008 it was of no interest since the network functioned well. During that period, the network was comprehensible mainly due to the small number of involved organizations., according to some founding organizations. However, the increase of organizations put pressure on the role of CN’s facilitating entity in its role as overseer. However, in phase 1 of CN, no changes nor adjustments were made with regard to the structure of the network. The network was a web of relations between actors, under the banner ‘CN’. No central actor was present in the network, although some organizations hold a more central place. This implies that some organizations possessed more relations in the network than others. This also resulted in a situation where some members organizations were loosely connected to CN due to the few relations they possessed.

Eventually, maintaining oversight of the network became difficult. The lack of a central entity resulted in a situation in which none of the member organizations had the responsibility to coordinate or regulate the network. Some of the founding organizations therefore decided, in consent with most other organizations, to appoint a daily staff in order to deal with the ‘inactive parts of the network’. It was clear for most member organizations that change was necessary in order to be able to keep the network thriving. Nevertheless, a few member organizations opposed firmly against the idea of ‘formalizing’ the network.. An HIV support-group for instance opposed the idea of a central staff since they were afraid of the bureaucratization of the network which could possibly undermine the informal character of the network. They argued that the network needed stability and that this could be reached in other ways as well (for instance by a temporal cessation of new enrolments). However, the group of founding organizations ignored this vision and decided to appoint a staff. This decision gained support by most of the member organizations due to the need for an coordinating body. Most member organizations supported this decision because the network

was thriving at that time. Next to a daily staff of three paid members (2008), an office was hired with the intention to further facilitate and accommodate the member organizations.

From 2008, the structure of CN's network gradually changed. Due to the employment of the staff and the running of an office, member organizations were more directed to the facilitating body. In order to be able to further facilitate the network, in light of the ongoing growth of CN, the number of staff members increased. This reinforced the central position of the steering actors. However, some member organizations were not actively participating in the network and remained out of sight. This inflicted with the attitude of active member organizations in the network stating that the reason to participate in the network was "to be informed" and "to share ideas and knowledge" in order "to unlock potential". However, the facilitating entity did not deal adequately with this discontent. The problem of inactive member organizations was recognized by the facilitating entity but was addressed by appointing more staff members. As a result, overhead costs were growing. The number of staff members reached its height in 2012 with a total of ten employees. However, the facilitating entity were unable to deal with the matters which formed the reason for their appointment. As a result, the daily staff gained a more central place within the network. This resulted in member organizations wondering who or what CN was. They complained that it was unclear to them what CN encompassed, if they could speak on behalf of CN and how the daily staff should be seen. Member organizations expressed these questions during the interviews and told that they had no idea of what was happening at the office at that time. However, few opportunities were given to express these opinions with the staff or daily board. This uneasiness therefore rested mainly with the member organizations.

The board recognized that the goal of the daily staff (to coordinate and regulate the network) was not reached. The network moved in a direction that was never intended by the founders of CN. The office and the daily staff became known as CN, both among member organizations and third parties outside the network. This matter caused ambiguity about what CN constitutes among the steering actors. These issues inspired the board to rethink the organizational structure at the end of phase 2.

The unintended consequences that were brought forth by the daily staff, detracted from the potential networks in general possess. At that time, CN was actually moving to a more top-down organisation in which the daily staff more or less determined its route. The process of developing a new strategy provided insight and space for the implementation of a new structure to reorganize CN. The board discussed this development in 2012. This issue was identified by all board members. Attempts were made to involve the inactive parts of the network by personal invitations for meetings, but did however not succeed. Structural changes never occurred. Due to the unstable financial situation of CN in 2013 the board decided to make structural changes.

In hindsight the process of adjusting the organizational structure seemed quite easy. However, its realization has been accompanied by various bottlenecks. The board took the lead in this process but wanted to prevent that member organizations felt excluded. In total, four meetings were organised in which every organization involved in CN was able to express its opinion about the way forward. This time, the board was extremely aware of the issue of

inclusiveness of member organizations. The board identified two matters that stood central within these discussions: (1) how to run a network with less resources, and (2) how to achieve active involvement of all network members. These two matters were drafted beforehand by the board. Member organizations expressed their feelings and opinions with regard to these matters.

It could be argued that three particular frames stood out in light of the possible restructuring of the network: the desire to keep things as they were, a radical change in which CN is only constituted by its member organizations (and the daily staff is terminated), and the wish to divide the network in smaller network groups. About 60 percent of the member organizations present at these meetings expressed their wish to regain autonomy and to decide themselves what is most suitable. The perspectives and wishes expressed by the member organizations were received with considerable attention from the board. Internal tensions existed among board members about how member organizations could be given more autonomy without losing grip. Some board members supported the desire of member organizations to regain more autonomy, while the others were afraid to do so. This tension was solved by restructuring the network to its current form. In this restructuring process, attention was given to two issues: involvement of member organizations in the governance system of CN, and providing more autonomy to member organization (under the auspices of the steering actors). The proposed structure was informed by the UNOPS organizational model (UN Office for Project Services). This proposed structure aims to combine the different frames and different interests and is known for a high degree of public participation. The board therefore decided to restructure according to this scheme.

Due to the structural changes, the board had to change its legal status as well. This meant that CN is regarded as a non-profit company (NPC) instead of a non-governmental organization. In practice this implies that the network is actually owned by its member organizations. This led to the creation of a new body, the NPC-members. This body consists of representative network member organizations who advise the CEO and board. In this way the public participation of member organizations is given more attention. The NPC-members meet three times a year to discuss relevant matters. The Board of Directors is not actively involved in the day-to-day activities, but consults and advises on how things should take place. Ideally, the board made up of 5 to 7 people. The board members are drawn from the membership of CN as well as third parties who underscore the vision of CN. The board members represent a variety of professional skills and experience in both corporate and non-profit sector. The board meets every 6 weeks for 4-5 hours. All the board members together with the executive director are involved in this meeting where day-to-day activities, bottlenecks and new developments are discussed. The minutes of these meetings are not publicly distributed. These meetings serve to inform board members about the processes in the network in order to make informed decisions. Agenda-setting in these meetings is not restricted and issues could be raised by all board members as well as the executive director. The operational staff only facilitates the working of the focus groups. This could be done in several manners, for instance by providing resources or equipping member organizations. The daily staff of CN involves four people and execute the vision and mission of Connect. The daily staff is situated in their office, which could be seen as the home base from where the operations and activities are carried out. The executive director is part of the daily staff and as

such responsible to the board with regard to the functioning of the network. This new structure seems to meet the requirements uttered by the member organizations, and is in line with the requirements to tackle the threats the network faces.

4.3 Goals and mission of the network

In 2004, CN started as an idea of a few people that saw a need to collaborate in order to have a greater impact on the lives of children. As a result, the first 10 organizations formed CN. A steering group was formed to lead these introductory phases of the network. However, little was known about the workings of a network, but nevertheless an understanding was available that saw the potential of organizations working together instead of alone. By then, the objective of CN was to build safe communities for children, develop opportunities for improved education and ‘builds resilient mothers of vulnerable children’. This resulted in the slogan of the network: ‘together for women and children at risk’. The main goal was to enhance the skills of children who were deprived of (good) education to improve their literacy skills. In light of the increased HIV/aids outbreaks at that time, education was one of the pillars of CN to enhance the position of women. Prevention through education was considered crucial. In addition, safe havens were created for pregnant women who were unable to meet their subsistence or whose lives (or that of their babies) were in danger. The focus of the network was informed by the objectives of the individual organizations. The intention to collaborate stemmed from the similar objectives and their wish to be of greater impact.

The idea of networking bore fruit since many organizations joined CN. At that time, no regulations with regard to the organization’s objectives were in place. In practice this meant that any organization, working in the Cape Town area, dealing with women and children, could become involved. It seemed that the main principle at that time was: the more, the better. This led to the situation that the network consisted of 60 organizations in 2008. At that point, paid staff members were hired to start facilitating the network. These staff members, together with the board, took a different position within the network namely that of a facilitating entity. The board and the daily staff provided the direction of the network through strategic plans and strategy meetings. These strategy meetings were chaired by the board which at that time consisted out of four people from different fields (pastor, legal advisor, education and consultancy) and one member representative. This strategy contributed to the network since the number of member organizations grew steadily to over a 100 organizations in 2011. Since many organizations were part of but not that actively involved in the network (e.g. absent during meetings, training days and similar events) the board wanted to further equip and enhance the position of member organizations through training. In order to underscore the necessity of such a training for both the individual organization as well as the network, a scheme was introduced that distinguished between different sorts of membership. All member organizations are automatically general affiliates but by participating in the Quality Improvement System (QIS, an extensive training module, aimed to enhance six parts of an organization) member organizations could ‘upgrade’ their membership to accredited affiliates. This membership structure was developed to accommodate the needs of organizations and to be able to assess their involvement in the network. The member organizations had different ideas about this structured membership.

Those organizations who were already able to spend time and resources were merely enthusiastic about it while others expressed their doubts. Some organizations did not see the point of having a structured membership, others complained about the expenses (i.e. finances and time), while another group of member organizations mainly criticized the substance of the QIS as a means to structure membership. The enthusiastic group was mainly made up from professional organizations with paid-members who already were active in the network and saw QIS as a method to further invest in their organization. The group of member organizations that considered a structured membership unnecessary consisted both of active as inactive organizations. They did not see the added value of a structured membership based on QIS. NGOs ran by volunteers also felt excluded since they had the intention to further develop their organization, but simply were unable to pay the costs QIS would bring along. Other active groups criticized the board for using QIS as a method to structure membership. They argued that other methods were available and more appropriate to install different forms of membership. .

However, QIS became a great tool for CN. Not only did member organizations benefit from participation, the whole network did as well. The steering actors therefore put major effort in attracting member organizations to participate in QIS. The steering actors of CN found a way to integrate this training into their own network by linking the structured membership with QIS. However, in hindsight, the QIS did not fulfill its role. Only those member organizations who could afford it to take part in the training did so. The organizations that did not participate in the QIS, felt more and more excluded. The steering actors eventually found that the QIS, as a tool to classify forms of membership, was insufficient. However, this was only realized after it was already decided to implement it. The decision to implement the QIS was taken solely by the board, member organizations had no say in it. In hindsight, board members admitted this was a mistake.

Meanwhile, due to the growth of CN, the scope of the network's vision expanded, although the focus still was on the empowerment of vulnerable women and children. In 2011 a log frame was presented during an Indaba (strategy meeting at the start of the year) which, besides children, focused on women, thriving families, basic rights and sustainability of livelihoods. None of the staff members nor the board could explain why this decision was made. It seems most likely that along the way aspects of these issues were already carried out. However, by incorporating these into the log frame and strategic plan, the scope of the network officially expanded and became part of the objectives of CN. Despite the fact that this occurred mainly unconsciously. Member organizations had no say in determining these goals, but were only informed afterwards. In previous years, the goals of the network were presented in another way and not in such a specific log frame. The board however decided to make use of such a log frame to clearly demarcate the boundaries of the network's activities.

However, new changes were underway. Due to the financial constraints six employees were dismissed in 2013. The four remaining staff employees were not able to fulfill and reach the objectives the board of CN presented beforehand, due to the simple fact that four employees were responsible for the work that formerly was done by 10 employees. The board therefore took a decision which impacted the objectives of CN again.

In January of 2014 the board of CN presented a memo that provided recommendations to the daily staff and the network members. This memo was developed by taking into account the feedback that member organizations provided in meetings facilitated by the steering actors to discuss and develop a new organizational structure for CN. This was done deliberately in order to prevent itself from mistakes and not to exclude member organizations. Next to a new network structure, a new focus was presented with regard to achieve the network's new goals. The goals described by the board are:

1. To develop nurturing and protective environments for children, to address the issue of orphans and vulnerable children
2. To develop improved opportunities for education to address the issue of limited education
3. To develop resourceful and resilient women, in order to address the issues of sexual exploitation, violence and crisis pregnancy

In order to draw a distinction between the goals of CN and the role and function of the steering actor, a new strategy was introduced to reach them. This new strategy puts the main responsibilities with its member organizations. The strategy of the facilitating entity contains five smaller strategies. These are:

- Networking - Facilitating spaces where network participants can meet each other and build effective relationships
- Resourcing - Sharing resources, providing information and fundraising for collaborative projects
- Equipping - Strengthening organizations and people through the Quality Improvement System, a six module capacity building program
- Collaborating - Enabling organizations to work together on specific joint ventures, which not only benefits women and children at risk but actually helps strengthen the organizations themselves
- Advocating - Joint advocating and lobbying efforts to government, the private sector and church mobilization

These strategies together describe the role and duty of the facilitating entity. It introduces a more facilitative role, compared to the former strategies in which the daily staff was more involved in the activities of the member organizations.

The new strategy was developed mainly by the board members but input of member organizations was used. The idea of networking – that formed that starting point of CN in 2004 – was one of the main sources of inspiration. Another incentive to develop this strategy had to do with the financial situation CN was in. A facilitating role of the daily staff seemed therefore most appropriate. However, this was not directly clear. In the process of developing a new strategy, three scenarios were available: to continue in the same way but provide less activities, to shut down the office and the daily staff and just let the network be the network (as it operated in 2004-2007), and a redefinition of the steering actors role. Eventually, consensus was found. One board member argued to move on in the same direction hoping that the situation would improve, while another member pushed for the idea to shut down all governance and steering activities (but to reinstall former functions when possible). The four other members promoted the idea of redefining the role of the steering actors. Eventually, the two other members agreed as well.

This whole process of developing a new strategy for the steering actors was harder than expected. It was therefore that meetings were held to address this issue. In total, four open meetings were held in which every individual and/or organization part of the network was asked to reflect upon the issue of how to run the network and how to involve member organizations in this process. The importance of the network as well as suggestions for of CN predominated. However, some member organizations did not participate at all in these series of meetings to develop a new network strategy. The ones that did were mainly enthusiastic about the network and their involvement in the network, but lacked practical ideas on how to move forward. The proposed network strategy was further developed by the board, and was presented as a strategy that dealt with both the board members' and member organizations' concerns.

The goals and mission of the steering actors of CN thus gradually changed over time. While at the start of CN in 2004 organizations themselves mainly came together to discuss matters and find ways to collaborate, things changed in 2008 with the employment of staff. At that time the staff was served the network but was also involved in many of the programs and activities of the member organizations. Changes in these strategies occurred in combination with the resignation of staff employees. A new role for the daily staff was presented in order to deal with the reduction of the staff and the increased workload. This strategy can best be characterized as facilitative. It distinguishes the steering actor from the network members and could be seen as a way to enhance member organizations in their day-to-day-activities.

4.4 Ownership

The ownership of the network relates to a critical point of being a network. I already touched upon it in describing the goals and structure of the network but will further elaborate on it in this paragraph. Many in the daily staff of CN are concerned about the issue of ownership. This discomfort stems from the period before the organizational structural adjustments when many member organizations and third parties saw the daily staff as the network. However, "the members make up the network, without them there is no network. We are just there to serve them". However, the reality is more stubborn.

When CN was founded in 2004, ownership of the network was not an issue. Collaboration was deliberately sought to further improve impact of organizations on their community. However, over time and with the increase of member organizations, parts of the member organizations lost the feeling of being part of the network. It also seemed that some organizations only joined CN to gain a benefit out it, instead of being a benefit to others and the network. This is admitted by some of the board members who told that this partly resulted from the way CN was organized. "It wanted to be a strong and large network, but we looked at numbers, not at people". This paved the way for free-riders. However, for many years this was not much of a concern to most involved in the steering bodies of CN since the network thrived. However, a distinction was introduced between different sorts of membership in 2008. It assessed member organizations whether or not they took part in the Quality Improvement System (QIS). Since the distinctions in membership brought no other responsibilities or duties along it was of no importance for the overall network and the performance of activities.

The financial constraints CN faced in 2013 forced them to rethink many aspects of the network. Ownership was one of the important issues to be dealt with. If CN wanted to

maintain her importance, the member organizations themselves had to take active ownership of their role of being part of CN. This was one of the leading principles behind the structural changes. With regard to ownership of the network two issues stand out. The withdrawing role of the daily staff and the formation of focus and working groups. These developments force member organization to take responsibility of their own organizations and activities.

However, the idea of focus and working groups still is a fragile one. Many within the steering bodies of CN are not entirely sure if working and focus groups are of a solution for CN. Issues that were discussed with regard to the formation of focus groups are if member organizations themselves are ready for such a change in which they need to take the lead, if they are equipped enough for this task, and what the consequences are for the network. However, the board decided to follow the wishes expressed by the member organizations to gain more autonomy. This decision corresponds with the need to create an active network where ownership primarily is taken by network organizations. By coupling member organizations both on thematic and geographical characteristics, cross fertilization could lead to new ideas and practices.

4.5 Governance activities

The activities performed and organized by the steering actors of CN changed over time. The activities that the staff performed – before the resignation of six staff members in early 2014 – were very diverse. Next to the executive director, office manager and a finance manager several coordinators and administrators were involved. Those staff members closely collaborated with the member organizations in the development and achievement of CN's objectives. For instance a 'Youth at Risk' coordinator was responsible for the activities and programs in the network with regard to youth. The same goes for the 'Children at Risk' coordinator. These coordinators were involved in the development of programs within their particular area of attention. These programs were spread throughout the network members. In this way, the staff was considered the head of the different programs. Administrators were involved to assess the programs and, if possible, link up different activities. Their role was more one of an overseer. Examples of the activities developed by coordinators are homework clubs, day care, educational methods to improve literacy and training sessions for pregnant women. Many of these activities took place at the CN's offices.

Despite the strategy changer in transition phase 2, member organizations were keen to further participate in these activities. Member organization expressed their appreciation for the developed activities of CN. It provided them with grounded materials they could not develop themselves due to constraints in resources. These programs and activities became the banner of CN and were, especially in the period between 2007 and 2010, very successful. However, the other side of the coin was that member organizations became more and more reliant on CN's staff, which was never intended. CN's steering actors were, at the start, appointed to improve collaboration between member organizations instead of becoming one themselves. However, this line between the network members and the daily staff became unclear. This was one of the major issues during the talks and discussions in search for a new strategy. Some of the member organizations were keen to follow the same route: invest in new program and activity developers. However, the board and the daily staff saw they were moving away from what they originally intended. They saw that the programs and activities

indeed did function and supported the member organizations and communities. A part of the member organizations however argued for another form of network. This small part consisted out of some of the founders of CN and can further be characterized as the one's most active within the network in terms of attending meetings, participating in activities and interaction with the steering actors. The standoff that resulted from these different views were not easy to overcome.

Eventually, the board decided to change the strategy of the daily staff. With regard to the activities, this was done because of two reasons. The first has to do with the reason behind the formations of the network, namely to collaborate and benefit from collaborations. The second reason stemmed from the question of how organizations would respond if there is no program or activity to participate in. Since activities rely heavily upon the financial possibilities, a lack of funds would decrease the number of activities. In the end, it would therefore be better to enhance and improve the member organizations so that they are able to be independent, run programs themselves and grow steadily to professional organizations.

The current strategy for the daily staff of CN (networking, resourcing, equipping, collaborating and advocating) is informed by the original vision of CN at its foundation. This vision is combined with the expectations and wishes from current member organisations. It is through these strategies that the daily staff can fulfil its role as facilitator of the network.

4.6 Communication

When CN was founded, most member organizations got to know CN by word of mouth. There was no marketing or policy in place that actively sought for new member organizations. Despite the relative small world the success of CN was unforeseen. However, even with the recruitment of staff in 2008 no marketing strategy was laid out. It is not clear if this was done intentionally or that board members considered it unnecessary due to the positive developments the network went through. Even at the beginning of 2014, no marketing or policy was created to actively recruit new member organizations.

Internally, communication mainly occurs through e-mail. However, since 2008 one staff member is involved with the visitation of member organization. Many member organizations indicated that this was of major benefit for them. However, the particular staff member indicated that she is not able to visit each member organization regularly, and only visit those member organizations that are in trouble. Issues that are discussed at such meetings range from their objectives to practical bottlenecks, and from network involvement to personal difficulties.

CN also possess relations with third parties. These third parties could assist them in the achievement of their objectives through for instance donations, knowledge exchange and students who are looking for an internship place. These third parties are consultancy firms, private businesses, universities and donor agencies and are based globally. However, it seems that they are hardly used. For instance, relations exist between consultancy firms and universities, but during transition phase 1 and transition phase 2, no assistance was requested by CN. On a general level one could even ask what the actual role of these relations is since very few interaction occurs between CN and third parties.

CN is present at venues such as conferences, but does however lack a communication policy on how to regulate new information. It is unclear if CN is not able to invest in such

policies and regulations, or that they chose to do so. No monitoring of information does take place on a regular basis. Board members now and then share new experience, but no board or staff member is responsible for monitoring relevant news, events or literature.

An interesting event in light of the internal communication occurred in the first months of 2014 after the new strategy and structure was being implemented. In this period, network organizations complained about the lack of communication and transparency of the board and staff. In combination with the changes to the organizational form of the network, it made member organizations wondering what was going on in ‘their’ network. Some were more disappointed than others, but negativity was present. The steering actors were aware of this, but did however not respond in a direct manner to clarify things. It was deliberately decided not to do so, based on arguments that processes of change ‘need time’. Vague statements like ‘we are on the right track’, and ‘it will not benefit them to involve them in our matters’ were communicated toward the network organizations. This reflects the uneasiness of both network members and board and staff members to deal with the new situation.

A more critical point was reached when the executive director resigned. Many of the NPC members as well as member organizations were uninformed about this decision and his motivation. The executive director was appointed at the start of 2014 and resigned in June 2014. The reason of his resignation had to do with his disagreements with decisions made by the board about the progress of the implementation of the strategic plan. After he resigned, two interim directors took over his work. However, both the reason of his resignation and the activities of the board to solve this issue remained unclear to the network members. A stronger feeling of distrust was growing at some of the NPC members and member organizations. Even when the board sparsely provided insight in their thoughts and choices, this feeling did not just disappear. Member organizations complained that this kind of communication was undesirable since it left them without understanding of the processes going on at the steering actors. “If you want to run a network, you have to be transparent”.

4.7 Donors and finances

The issue of funds only became prominent in 2008 and onwards. In the preceding period, when CN functioned more informal, funds were not necessary for the continuation of the network. In that particular period member organizations relied upon their own funds and collaborated to seek benefits in the area of organizational programs and strategies. However, with the professionalization of CN (phase 2) funds were necessary to support the work of the daily staff. With regard to the funds in 2008, the largest part of CN’s revenue was detracted from organizing events. From 2009, this balance shifted resulting in a situation where income was mainly generated through donors. Since then, CN is financially depending on donors for their existence because they still form the major part of its funding. The financial dependency on donors is eventually what forced CN to change course in 2013/2014. Due to a decrease in funds the daily staff could no longer continue and therefore change was necessary.

In the first four years of CN, funds were of secondary interest to the member organizations. The member organizations had a desire to collaborate in order to create added value. Finances did not play a significant role in this process but however were generated. The entrance fees events were used to organize new events. This system functioned well but eventually

succumbed to its own success. The number of people that wanted to participate in events and led them to change its organizational structure with a new emphasis on the daily staff.

This transition placed CN in the spotlight rather than its renowned activities and events. In practice this meant that the network had to generate more attention to attract new network members, next to activities and events. It was the task of the daily staff to do so. One of the main prerequisites to fulfill this was to generate income which should come from donors. At that time, it was unclear how exactly this should take place since the network had no experience with fundraising. It was unanimously decided that it seems wise to become a member of a funding agency in order to learn about the practices around donors and funding. This eventually led to the development of an own group of adherents who supported CN (mainly) financial. At that time, the group of donors consisted mainly out of local donations from private individuals. However, the financial manager expressed her discontent with this situation. She recognized the fragility of the situation in which CN, for a great part of her finances, relied mainly upon the donations of individuals. The board, at first, saw no direct dangers and underscored the potential of new donors. The financial manager however insisted to diversify the group of donors in order to be too reliant. From her experience she mentioned that it was in the interest of the existence of CN to have a more varied group of donors. Based on these arguments, the board agreed to work towards a more varied group of donors.

As a result, local donations made up only 16% in 2012-2013. Further income was generated from overseas donations, BBBEE-donations⁵, donations from enterprises, membership fees (<2%) and other sources of income. CN had loose relations with most of its donors. There is no special insight or information for donors on what is happening with the donations besides the annual report. Also, no special activities are organized to enhance the involvement of donors in the network or to invite new donors. Communication between CN and its donors is solely about the donations. New donors are contacted by letters or a visit highlighting the work CN does and the need for financial support.

However, the financial crisis also hit the finances of CN. After the shift from the first to second phase where much emphasis was put on generating income, a new challenge was born. This challenge hit the whole network since the activities of the steering actors affected several parts of the network. This challenge was therefore addressed in multiple ways (e.g. changing the organizational structure and a change of the network's goals and mission) to anticipate to the new situation.

Nevertheless, few attention was drawn to the issue of donors in the transition phase between phase 2 and 3. Not a single time the board members indicated a new or adjusted way of approaching donors. In meetings, the issue of donors was not reflected upon nor discussed but rather was taken as a given. The discussion mainly unfolded about what could be reached with the given amount of funds. The issue of how donors could be kept informed and involved was slightly touched upon. A board member mentioned this issue in light of the way the steering actors would act in the new structure. The steering actors, in their facilitative role, would inform donors about the status of and processes in the network. However, no further attention was paid to this matter.

⁵ Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment, a policy initiated by the South African government to distribute wealth across a broad spectrum of previously disadvantaged South Africans

Chapter 5: Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the presence of the four governance capabilities and their involvement over time in Connect Network. This analysis is based on the analytical framework presented in chapter 3. The data provided in the previous chapter forms the input for this analysis. The coming sections provide insight in the presence governance capability at the steering actors of CN. The governance capabilities will all be analyzed according to a similar scheme. This scheme distinguishes between the role of the actor and the role of the structure. This reflects the two components of a governance capability. Next to this, the sections are structured chronologically. This implies that each governance capabilities of Connect Network is evaluated over time.

5.2.1 Reflexivity – the ability of the actor

At the foundation of CN in 2004, no particular steering actor was present since all members were supposed ‘to steer’ together. The network was ran by and formed by its member organization. Since no formal body performed actions or possessed an overview of the past and ongoing actions, it is hard to assess the degree of reflexivity. However, some actions performed by the founding organizations may shine some light on this issue. First, the fact that ten organizations together formed a network in order to work together to address societal needs, reflects a degree of reflexivity. It reflects the ability to evaluate one’s course of action and change plans when necessary. The course of action of these individual organizations is being changed and subsequently deliberately adapted towards a new mode of collaboration in order to be better able to deal with the changing environment. Second, the decision to take action against the loosely connected member organizations reflects some degree of reflexivity. Their ability to both recognize the fact that not all member organizations were involved and to do something to prevent the network from further damage, can be indicated as reflexivity. This shows the active, reflexive stance with regard to question the value and direction of CN.

With the installation of a daily staff in 2008 new governing bodies were supposed to led the development the CN. The objective of the daily staff was to coordinate and regulate the network. This mandate stems from the issue of inactive member organizations within the network. However, the formulated objectives were not met in the following years. Programs and activities launched by the daily staff received great attention but did not specifically deal with the issue of inactive member organizations. This process was of course not intended, but at that particular time, no discussions or forms of reflection occurred to indicate this matter. According to the analytical framework, the degree of reflexivity was low. None of the actors from the steering group was actively involved in the process of uncovering and questioning the way CN operated. Neither learning nor criticizing took place. Instead, discussions were focused on the substance of programs and activities and their potential to reach new organizations. At the same time, another development also indicated the state of reflexivity at Connect Network in phase 2. This development was the implementation of QIS as a tool to differentiate membership. However, in practice this process was problematic since no

attention was paid to the implications. Member organizations held some uneasiness with the decision to use the QIS as a manner to install different types of membership but were not able to prevent it from happening. Eventually the board decided that it was the right thing to do, without the input of member organizations. The board's lack of action to uncover the opinion, values and interests of network member again reflects the low degree of reflexivity in the network.

The change of course of CN in phase 2 resulted in a gap between the steering actors and the network members. The steering actors primarily governed the network as a lead organization-governed network (see: section 2.2). The necessity to let member organizations participate in the decision-making process at that time was absent but became more clear at the end of phase 2. However, instead of a deliberate choice from the steering actors, the new challenges actually informed and caused the need to develop a new strategy. Only at that point the steering actors became aware of the necessity to involve the opinions of network members. This resulted in open meetings for those involved in CN to express their opinion. The board indicated that these opinions informed the new strategy and organizational model. The role of the network members is remarkable since this marked a change with the former practices and decision-making processes in CN. However, these processes underscore the renewed interest of the steering actors in the opinions and frames of network members and reflect a higher degree of reflexivity compared to phase 2. The steering actors deliberately chose to involve member organizations in the process of decision-making and policy-making in order to uncover their intentions, to learn from them and let these inform decisions.

5.2.2 Reflexivity – the capacity of the organizational design

For a long time, the organizational structure of the network received little attention. At the foundation of Connect Network, the small amount of network members allowed for a clear overview. However, the increase of network members over time made this more and more difficult.

In 2004, ten organizations joined forces and formed CN. In that first phase, more and more organizations started to join Connect Network. However, no attention was paid to how the structure of the network could facilitate reflexivity despite the increasing number. At that time, the network was loosely organized due to her informal character. As a consequence, no efforts were undertaken to actively change this order. Only with the installment of a daily staff did change occur. The decision to install a daily staff was informed by practicalities: the increased number of network members.

The appointment of a daily staff gradually changed the structure of the network into a lead organization-governed network. In this form, the network is led by a central entity which determines the route of the network. One could argue that such a form of network undermines the potential of a network. Nevertheless did this organizational structure not harm CN, on the contrary. CN experienced increasing numbers of network members. At the end of phase 2, over a 100 organizations were part of CN. However, the character of the network was diffuse. This means that network members were part of an organization, and not so much formed a network since most organizations were not connected with other organizations. The central entity took the main position in the organization. This structure disabled reflexivity since

actors were not able to meet, discuss, or learn from each other's experiences and interests. The structure of the organization was primarily focused on the central entity.

The input from member organizations with regard to the structural changes at the end of phase 2, eventually resulted in changes to the organizational structure of the network. Focus groups were installed in order to address the lack of redundant relations. The prominent role of the daily staff was also curbed: their new role was to only facilitate network members. These changes contributed to the degree of reflexivity since it enables actors to discuss and learn about each other's intentions and values. The need to reflect also increased due to the changing role of the daily staff. This resulted in a situation in which the network members have to take more responsibility and accountability of their deeds.

5.3.1 Resilience – the ability of the actor

The foundation of CN can be considered as a resilient move. The ten organizations joined forces in order to be able to address the challenges at that time. These challenges had to do with the overload of work which resulted from the widespread HIV/aids outbreak and the consequences it brought for children and disadvantaged communities in Cape Town. Co-operation seemed a useful method for these organizations to address this challenge. The organizations expressed this by stating that they want to enlarge their impact and to try something 'new'.

The increasing number of network members during phase 2 brought difficulties with inactive network members, and therefore change of course was omitted. During the first transition phase this matter was actively addressed. The intention was to reactivate parts of the network that had become inactive. Most of the founding organizations believed that activating the network by installing a daily staff would lead to a more flexible and better functioning network. However, the opposite occurs since CN became a more unwieldy organization instead of flexible. The daily staff that were supposed to coordinate and regulate, unconsciously took a more central role, increasing the level of bureaucracy. This process did not negatively affect CN since new network members were still welcomed. However, the unwieldiness became a barrier for CN to adapt to changing circumstance since the decision-making process was carried out only by the steering actors. The consent of the network members was not necessary and nor were they consulted about their opinions. In addition, bottom-up initiatives were not encouraged by the board. These features indicate a low degree of resilience at that time in the network.

With the structural change in 2013, another example of resilience at level the steering actors could be identified. By changing the organizations structure, several matters were tackled. First, the unwieldy character of CN was overhauled through the provision of better representation of member organizations in the decision-making process. Second, the top-down character of CN was adjusted into a more horizontal organizational structure, which could positively affect the degree of resilience. Third, the installation of focus groups contributes to the capability of both actors and network to adapt quickly to new circumstances. This process of decentralization, in which power is shifted towards network members, reflects the acknowledgment of autonomy for member organizations and reflects a higher degree of resilience. Focus groups for instance can adjust more easily to changing circumstances. However, the structural change should be seen as a first step in the direction of the

enhancement of the level of resilience. It shows the open-mindedness the steering actors have in order to constitute a resilient and flexible network. The new strategy further fuels this through the special emphasis the steering actors of CN put on: networking, resourcing, equipping, collaborating and advocating. Due to the more facilitative role of the daily staff, member organizations are better able to act resilient and are also better equipped to do so. This new strategy is focused on the empowerment of member organizations to reach their objectives. However, how all this works out in practice falls outside the scope of this research.

Despite the emphasis on resilient member organizations, it is surprising that the steering actor put few effort in adapting to the changed donor environment. For instance, no action is undertaken to develop a policy, appoint a fund manager, or be more active in this crucial part of the network's existence. The donor world is changing, but CN is standing still and not adapting to the new developments in any visible way.

5.3.2 Resilience – the capacity of the organizational design

The ten organizations that formed CN showed resilience with their choice to work closely together in 2004. Their desire to collaborate reflects a desire to try a new mode of governance in order to be better able to adapt to changing circumstances. However, from that point on, resilience was hardly visible.

In phase 2, few attention was paid to the organizational design of resilience. Despite the attempts of implementing a structure based on membership, no further attempts to differentiate between members, let alone to provide space for innovation or decentralization was performed. Only with the challenges faced at the end of phase 2 did the level of resilience increase.

The involvement of network members in the open meetings aimed to develop new strategy plans, resulted in more participation for network members in policy- and decision-making. Resilience was further amplified because of the clustering of network members in focus groups. This resulted in a more flexible network, which allows for the usage of knowledge of various actors, and provide space for bottom-up initiatives. This, for instance, allows for quicker adaptation to new circumstances and development. As such it reflects a moderate degree of resilience.

5.4.1 Responsiveness – the ability of the actor

The governance capability of responsiveness is built around the issue of responding to issues in politics and society (Termeer *et al.*, 2013). However, the analytical framework provides an understanding of responsiveness in terms of monitoring, obtaining and providing information.

In phase 1, little data is available to assess the issue of responsiveness of CN. Due to the largely informal character in which no central entity operated, responsiveness was more of an issue for individual organizations. Despite the absence of a central entity, transparency was an important issue for the member organizations. Member organizations were for instance free to discuss matters and minutes of meetings were provided to those involved in the network. The way communication spread in CN was informal and without restrictions.

The transparency in the network degraded when the network further expanded in phase 2. Minutes were no longer freely distributed and meetings of the daily staff and the board were not always open to member organizations. Although these issues are understandable, it does not contribute to the level of responsiveness of Connect Network. The

decision made by the steering actors not to provide all information about their meetings is neither good nor bad. However, not fully informing the member organization about the reason of this decision does not contribute to the level of responsiveness. This process resulted in discontent among the member organizations who felt excluded and expressed these feelings through complaining about the lack of transparency. This lack of internal transparency characterized the manner in which the steering actors communicated and brought distrust among the member organizations. Even active member organizations were often not informed about the matters discussed among the steering actors. The only reason provided by the steering actors was that policy prescribed that minutes were solely internally distributed. Despite the uneasiness of the member organizations, no changes were made by the steering actors. A similar issue also exist in the area of external communication. This contains two issues: first, it is unclear to member organizations if they are allowed to speak on the behalf of CN, and second, little effort was undertaken in maintaining and developing external relations. Member organizations mentioned that it was unclear to them whether or not they could speak on behalf of CN during public occasions. No policy existed that prescribed the requirements of external communication for member organizations. Because of that, member organizations often felt unsupported and insecure in speaking publicly about CN. Subsequently, CN mentions they hold several external relations with third parties, but in practice these relations were only used sporadically. These two issues also degraded the degree of responsiveness since the steering actors failed to provide policies with regard to external communication, and new information did not reached the network and therefore is not obtained.

During the transition phase between phase 2 and 3, the steering actors again made little effort to use their external relations with third parties in order to support their change. In general, no structural use has been made of the relations they possess with third parties outside the network. Nevertheless could this have been useful (Burt, 2000) in order to gain valuable knowledge or insight in the process of restructuring the network. Third parties were not even informed about the changes happening within the network. These valuable resources thus were unfortunately not used.

From these notions, I conclude that the capability of responsiveness is hardly seen in the interactions among actors in CN. These interactions rather show an internal focused organization that is afraid to look beyond their boundaries. In addition, the internal communication reflects a low degree of responsiveness. The capability of responsiveness thus needs greater attention if CN really wants to deal with their changed environment and the challenges they face.

5.4.2 Responsiveness – the capacity of the organizational design

In phase 1, CN functioned without a central strategy on how to deal with information. Organizations shared their experiences and expectations but no strategy nor policy was in place that contributed to how information was obtained, monitored and provided. This is not remarkable since, at that time, there was no need yet to actively obtain new information. For example, the new actors already brought new information. However, this policy resulted in a inward looking organizations, since in no attention was deliberately paid to the issue of information.

In phase 2, this process reinforced due to the position of the central entity that coordinated most of CN. Network members were predominantly focused on the central entity which resulted in a situation in which hardly any information entered CN. Besides that no information was obtained, mechanism that monitor information (e.g. a response repertoire) was also absent during this phase. Even during the development of the new strategy at the end of phase 2 CN hardly searched for or used new information. For instance, external relations were not utilized. This reflects a low degree of the governance capability of responsiveness with regard to its organizational design.

In phase 3, hardly anything changed despite the major challenges. External relations are hardly used in order to obtain valuable information, and still there is no policy on how's behalf network members speak in public occasions. Also, no mechanisms are in place to monitor information, internally and externally. This corresponds with the ability of the actor with regard to resilience: no effort is undertaken to actively gather and use information.

5.5.1 Revitalization – the ability of the actor

Stagnated patterns, deadlocks and similar symptoms of how actors are stranded in their attempts to deal with problems, have to do with the governance capability of revitalization. This capability highlight the need to prevent such patterns from escalating and find manners to overcome these. It is not directly clear, but CN faced unintended symptoms in their network. These symptoms could form a barrier in their functioning and should therefore be dealt with. In this section the focus is on how the steering actors of CN responded to identified deadlocks and stagnations. These issues bring unintended consequences for the functioning of the network and could therefore be analyzed in terms of revitalization. Special attention goes out to the matter of inactive member organizations and the QIS.

The issue of inactive members within CN is one that exists for a long time already. In phase 1, right after the foundation of the network, the issue was identified as disturbing and unintentional. By recognizing this matter, the first step in the process of working towards a solution is taken (Termeer *et al.*, 2013:17). This often is a painstaking process since actors are not immediately aware of the stagnated pattern (*ibid.*). This description is similar to the situation at CN, whereby, after the euphoria of the foundation and the growth of the network, negative patterns arose and needed to be dealt with. The member organizations tried to do so with the appointment of daily staff. However, the appointment of daily staff members resulted in a new unintended symptom since it did not address the issue of inactive member organizations.

In phase 2, the daily staff evolved into the central organization within CN. Due to this development the steering actors were not able to resolve the issue around the inactive member organizations since they lost oversight. Change of course only occurred with the forced resignation of daily staff at the end of phase 2. The new strategy of the steering actors aimed to resolve this issue by providing more autonomy to the member organizations by setting up focus groups. The idea behind the focus groups was to facilitate interaction and let member organizations generate new ideas, instead of the steering actors. Ongoing interactions are important in order to prevent processes from stagnating (Termeer *et al.*, 2013). However, it is

not said that this would resolve the already existing stagnated pattern of inactivity. Termeer *et al.* (2003) further argue that such a situation need some sort of intervention to unblock stagnations and revitalize learning (2003:17). Despite the new role of the daily staff, it seems insufficient to address this issue only in one way. In order to resolve stagnated patterns, it is necessary for actors to try to understand what is going on, on a higher level of abstraction. This still is a challenge for CN.

A similar pattern is the issue of member organization who feel excluded due to the lack of transparency of the steering actors. This exclusion could be the start of a stagnated process. However, the steering actors took little action to address this issue. Although little attention was paid to the issue of transparency in phase 2, renewed attention for this matter was born in the transition phase between phase 2 and phase 3. The steering actors organized open meetings in order for member organizations to express their opinions about the current course of action and possible ways forward. The outcome of these meetings translated the renewed attention into concrete policy changes. First of all, a new body was created (NPC-members) that gave representatives of the member organizations more decision-making power and as a result more insight in the decision-making processes. Second, the structure of CN was changed resulting in a new situation for how member organizations and the network functions. These developments reflect an enhancement of the degree of revitalization in CN in phase 3.

5.5.2 Revitalization – the capacity of the organizational design

Almost from the start of CN in 2004, situations of deadlocks and stagnations existed. The issue of inactive member organizations already existed in phase 1. Most of these organizations refused to actively participate in the network. Although many efforts were undertaken to solve this, the daily staff of CN was unable to eliminate this problem. Their attempt to install a daily staff only resulted in an escalation of this issue. It facilitated the opportunity for network members only to ‘consume’ instead of to participate.

With the changes to the organizational design of CN at the end of phase 2, some changes were achieved. The idea to give more responsibility to the network members, challenges members to take ownership of CN. However, it is still unclear how this will develop. So far, no major breakthroughs have been accomplished in dealing with deadlocks and stagnations.

5.6 Findings

The analysis of the data provided insight in how governance capabilities could be evaluated in practice. This analysis offered some insight on different aspects of the working of governance capabilities in general, and with regard to CN. The coming sections summarize the main findings on each of the governance capabilities and highlight some interesting insights of the analysis.

5.6.1 The degree of governance capabilities present at Connect Network

This analysis provided insight in the (fluctuating) degree of governance capabilities of CN. This section briefly summarizes the findings of each of the capabilities in order to substantiate the analytical framework.

During phase 1, reflexivity was visible in the actions of the member organizations, but was also hard to assess since no central entity was present at that time. However, the first transition phase indicated that some network members, who also were involved in the foundation of the organization, took the lead and decided to change course of action. This move proved some degree of reflexivity. Subsequently, the capability of reflexivity received little attention in phase 2. Instead of a reflexive attitude, the steering actors were mainly involved in organizing new activities and paid less attention to their mission, vision and the concerns of the network members. Eventually, during the transition to phase 3 reflexivity regained some attention. Where steering actors in phase 2 were busy running the network instead of asking themselves the right questions. These reflexive questions are heard more often and are given more space in phase 3, both among member organizations, as well as at the steering actors. Currently, the organizational structure is designed to facilitate these kind of interactions.

The capability of responsiveness is hardly seen in the governing interactions from CN. The interactions rather show an internal focused organization that is afraid to look beyond their boundaries. Even internally many issues are below standard. The capability of responsiveness thus needs greater attention if CN really wants to deal with their changed environment and the challenges they face, both at the dimension of the actor as on the dimensions of the structure.

Although CN puts great effort in addressing the issue of resilience, on crucial moments it misses the boat. While the foundation of CN can be considered a resilient move, few attempts to enhance the degree of resilience were performed. With the formation of focus groups and providing more autonomy to the network members, resilience is enhanced. Although the network structure is designed to facilitate resilience, it is questionable how it will work out since actors are new and lack experience in this new situation.

CN for many years faced the challenges of inactive network members. However, in all these years and despite many attempts, this issue is not resolved yet. It seems that CN struggles with the revitalization of its network. Deadlocks and stagnations were often unseen due to the focus on activities organized by the staff in phase 2. However, it constitutes a major deficit to the network. The new role of the steering actors seems like a step in the right direction to bring ownership back to the network members. However, this will not automatically be successful. The steering actors still need to be involved in the monitoring and facilitating of the network in order to keep interaction going.

Table 6: Analysis of the presence of Connect Network’s governance capabilities

	Reflexivity	Responsiveness	Resilience	Revitalization
Actor	Moderate	Low	Low	Low
Structure	High	Low	Moderate	Moderate

5.6.2 Methods and strategies to enhance the degree of Connect Networks's governance capabilities

This chapter made clear to what extent governance capabilities are present at Connect Network. This section focuses on which methods and strategies could be deployed in order to strengthen governance capabilities. It will especially focus on the governance capabilities of responsiveness, resilience and revitalization since it was showed that these capabilities need considerable attention due to their weak state.

The level of responsiveness in Connect Network is below standard, both at the dimension of the actor and at the dimension of the structure. Methods and strategies should therefore be focused to address both levels. From table 4, I would propose to initiate interactive processes. Such processes assists network members in obtaining new information and gives them the possibility to share theirs. This method deals with how the level of the actor is enhanced to facilitate responsive interactions. With regard to the level of the structure I would propose to develop and use external relations in order to obtain valuable information. By developing different external relations, valuable information could enter the network and be of an advantage for the network members. It could for instance inform them in policy- or decision-making processes. In addition, the level of resilience in Connect Network is especially low at the level of the actor. I would propose to create spaces for actors to innovate. These processes could contribute to the level of resilience since they enable for better adaptation. Innovating actors assist the network in adjusting to new circumstances. Lastly, the level of revitalization in Connect Network is under par. As a result of this low level, problems with stagnations and deadlocks remain unresolved. I believe that story telling could have a major effect in addressing these issues. Inactive members could only be motivated when they see things differently and feel intrinsically motivated. Story telling could contribute to this process.

5.6.3 General findings

Apart from the focus on individual governance capabilities, the analysis also provided insight on the general functioning of governance capabilities. I want to highlight four matters in order to contribute to the development of the concept of governance capabilities and to raise new questions which might form input for future research.

The actions undertaken by the steering actors made clear that a higher degree of governance capabilities might correspond with a better functioning of the network in dealing with wicked problems. A higher degree of a capability contributes to processes of observing, enabling and acting. Although, evidence is sparsely, it seems that a higher degree of a governance capability results in better outcomes. For example, in transition phase 2, network members were involved in decision-making and policy-making, since the board learned that excluding them would be potentially harmful for the existence of the network. This higher degree of reflexivity resulted in another way of observing ("it might be useful to involve network members and make use of their knowledge and experiences"), in another way of enabling ("invite network members to participate in policy-making and decision-making"), and in another way of acting ("formation of focus groups"), compared to past conduct of

CN's board and staff. An enhancement of a governance capability thus seems to benefit the performance of CN.

However, an increase in the degree of a governance capability should actively be sought after by governance actors. Although governance actors may experience sudden increases in their degree of a governance capability, an active strategy to maintain and increase the degree is necessary to build strong governance systems. The example of the increase of the degree of reflexivity needs further attention from CN in order to maintain reflexive.

The analysis of the governance capabilities in practice also showed that their practical effect as well as their origination are interrelated. The separation of the governance capabilities is sometimes diffuse as well as confusing. Despite the fact that governance capabilities are theoretically localized in chapter 2, many similarities and connections exist between them. Because of these relations, actions to strengthen a governance capability could affect other capabilities as well. Where Termeer *et al.* (2013) focused on one capability for different situations, combining the four capabilities to analyze a network is somehow more difficult in terms of distinguishing the four capabilities.

Lastly, the use of governance capabilities as indicators to evaluate governance systems provide accurate and insightful material about the condition of governance systems. It identifies strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and challenges. In case of Connect Network it was found that, although they on the right track, still much needs to be done in order to deal with the challenges they face.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and reflection

6.1 Conclusion

This research started with the development of three specific questions that supported the main research question of how to analyze and strengthen governance capabilities in network governance? The three specific questions addressed the issue of how governance capabilities are to be analyzed in network governance, how they could be strengthened in networks, and how the governance capabilities look like and how these could be strengthened. The previous chapters answered these questions and this chapter forms a wrap-up as well as a reflection on this research.

The first specific question on how governance capabilities are situated in networks was answered in chapter 2. The literature review made clear that in order to understand a governance capability in networks, two components are of importance: the actor and the structure. This distinction made clear that a capability is not institutionalized nor solely possessed by an actor, but is constituted in the interplay between these two components.

The second specific question addressed the issue of how to strengthen governance capabilities in networks. In order to answer this research question I developed a framework that proposes methods and strategies to enhance the degree of governance capabilities. These methods and strategies were classified for four different network tools: network design, network framing, network management and network participation. In this way, the network was addressed in its broadest sense. The proposed methods and strategies to enhance the degree of reflexivity are: to embed ties (Jones, Hesterly and Borgatti, 1997), to create an open-mindedness (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998), to empower the weak and marginalized (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009) and to build trust by showing trust (Levi, 1998). The proposed methods and strategies to enhance the degree of responsiveness are: to develop new external relations (Grannovetter, 1983), to create strong interdependencies (Burt, 2000), to initiate interactive processes (Provan and Kenis, 2008) and to be present at venues where information is produced (Termeer *et al.*, 2013). The proposed methods and strategies to enhance the degree of resilience are: to form redundant relations internally (Burt, 2005), to create innovation (Burt, 2000), by interactive learning (Lundvall, 2010) and to ensure transparency (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009). The proposed methods and strategies to enhance the degree of revitalization are: to bring in new actors (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000), by storytelling (Sørensen and Torfing, 2009), by interactive learning (Lundvall, 2010), and to let network members evaluate their own performance (Provan and Milward, 2001). This enumeration is inherently incomplete as it only forms an indication of possible methods and strategies for networks to enhance the degree of capabilities. I tried to provide an introductory framework for network governors and therefore searched for methods and strategies able to enhance governance capabilities. However, it is made clear that governance capabilities can be strengthened through directed (inter)actions.

The third specific question assessed the governance capabilities of Connect Network and methods to strengthen them. I found that the degree of governance capabilities at Connect Network is below average and substandard to deal with wicked problems. Especially the

capability of responsiveness is below standard in order to function effectively as a network organization. With regard to the structure, I proposed to develop new, external relations in order to obtain valuable information. With regard to the actor, I proposed to initiate interaction processes. This provides actors with the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences and to share theirs.

The main research question of how to understand and situate governance capabilities in network governance was covered along the way in this study. This research argued that governance capabilities are to be understood as a promising approach for dealing with the deficiencies of network governance but needs further examination in order to develop towards a fully-fledged concept. I argued that a governance capability could best be understood as a set of immaterial assets facilitating a certain type of interaction (e.g. reflexivity, responsiveness, resilience and revitalization). An increase in the immaterial assets could lead to an increase in a certain type of interaction. The four types of interaction together assist governance actors to be able to observe, enable and act in light of wicked problems. With regard to understanding network governance, the degree of a capability depends on all individual network actors. The set of network actors make up the whole network in which each individual actor contributes to the governance capabilities of the network. This also implies that an evaluation of governance capabilities for network governance involves the whole network instead of just one (central) actor.

A capability holds two dimensions: a dimension of the actor and a dimension of the organizational structure. This distinction derives from an analysis of relevant literature in which it was found that a capability is both possessed by an actor and complemented by the organizational design of a network. The combination of these two dimensions is what eventually make up the whole capability. This implies that an analysis of capabilities needs to pay attention both to the actor and to the structure of a governance system.

Apart from these findings, other essential issues were uncovered during this research with regard to how capabilities are to be understood. The literature review on network governance and governance capabilities made clear that capabilities might thrive best in a context of networks. Networks and network actors are not only in need for governance capabilities, but capabilities could also easily be 'installed' in networks to positively contribute to the network's functioning. Subsequently, the case study provided evidence that governance capabilities indeed might have a positive effect on the functioning of the network. It showed that the strengthening of a governance capability might benefit the performance of the network.

6.2 Reflection

This section reflects upon this research in order to position itself and to assess its contribution. It will in particular pay attention to the objectives of this research, its limitations, the implications for network forms of organizations and recommendations for future research.

With regard to the objectives of this research, several matters deserve attention. The first objective to explore how governance capabilities are situated in network forms of governance was achieved by addressing the literature to which Termeer *et al.* (2013) refer. However, the described governance capabilities cover such a broad field of literature that it seems practically unfeasible to capture them. A distinction between the dimension of the actor and the structure was appropriate for the scope of this research, but needs further differentiation to actually grasp what a capability entails. For example, the literature on reflexivity could not just be captured in a couple of sentences. However, for practical reasons it seems undoable to fully take into account what reflexivity stands for. This research therefore only considered some parts of the literature relevant in its attempt to develop how capabilities are situated. The distinction between a dimension of the actor and a dimension of the structure therefore leaves many topics unaddressed. In this research, the dimension of the structure referred to the organizational design of a network. However, cultural structures and power structures are just two examples from other sorts of structures that might have something to do with how governance capabilities are situated.

The second objective of this research left me with an understanding of the workings, versatility and tensions of governance and networks. It showed that network governance became a buzz word in many academic fields. However, the actual meaning of governance, in my opinion, depends on the situation and can only be found at looking into the unique web of repetitive interactions between actors. However, such a perspective on governance should inform governance capabilities as well. The interactive approach used in this research, influenced how governance capabilities are examined and assessed. The linkage between how one depicts governance has great implications for how governance capabilities are analyzed. This research should therefore only be seen as an introductory attempt. In addition, governance capabilities need further differentiation for different modes of governance. Although I believe governance capabilities are extremely useful for networks, it is crucial for the development of the concept to be applied in other contexts too.

The third objective of this research contributed to my understanding of governance capabilities as suitable method for networks. Its advantages can mainly be found in the way capabilities deal with current internal and external threats and challenges. However, it is not a panacea nor will it instantly improve the shortcomings. Governance capabilities need to be perceived as a process in which one strives to pay attention to the degree of the capabilities. Governance capabilities therefore are only useful when being actively sought after. However, it still is unclear who or what should perform the activity of implementing and enhancing governance capabilities. This research considers a facilitating entity, as with CN, most suitable. Such an entity could in some occasions easily be identified (e.g. in a NAO, see section 1.1.) while it may be more complicated in other circumstances.

As a result, this research left me with three notions for future research with regard to governance capabilities. The first notion for future research has to do with the theoretical depth of each of the unique capabilities. As described earlier, each of the capabilities reflect a large strand of literature. These strands of literature need to be further analyzed in order to make them more efficient for governance capabilities. The second issue I want to raise, is about the conceptualization of governance capabilities for other modes of governance. I presume that an analysis of governance capabilities in other modes of governance will benefit the development of the concept. The last point I want to mention has to do with evaluative research. Although this research evaluates governance capabilities, it was not fully able to measure their effect. In order to maintain her promising position, governance capabilities are in need of empirical research that underpins their effectiveness. In this way, governance capabilities could be assessed on their promising role.

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