THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC CORPORATE ACTORS

Essays on effects of institutional and network embeddedness in supranational, national, and local collaborative contexts

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THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC CORPORATE ACTORS

Essays on effects of institutional and network embeddedness in supranational, national, and local collaborative contexts

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Essays over de effecten van institutionele- en netwerkinbedding in supranationale, nationale en lokale samenwerkingsverbanden

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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Jelmer Schalk

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Promotoren:	Prof.dr. R. Torenvlied Prof.dr. W. Raub
Co-promotor:	Dr. A. Akkerman

Manuscript committee:	Prof.dr. A.W. Taris (voorzitter)
	Prof.dr. S.A.H. Denters
	Prof.dr. R.P.M. Wittek
	Prof.dr. B.G.M. Völker

Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction 11
1.1 The performance of public corporate actors in modern societies 12
1.2 The internal structure and performance of public corporate actors 14
1.3 The embeddedness of public corporate actors and their performance 14
1.4 Research question and aims 18
1.5 Research questions and chapter introductions 20
1.5.1 The power of the presidency in EU Council decision-making (chapter 2) *20*
1.5.2 Network embeddedness and public agency performance: The strength of strong ties in Dutch higher education (chapter 3) *21*
1.5.3 Linking stakeholder involvement to policy performance: Nonlinear effects in Dutch local government policy-making (chapter 4) *23*
1.5.4 Inter-organizational relations and goal consensus: An exploratory study in two local Dutch service delivery networks (chapter 5) *24*

Chapter 2
The power of the presidency in EU-Council decision-making 29
2.1 Introduction 30
2.2 Presidency power in different stages of involvement 31
2.3 A cooperative bargaining model of Council decision-making 34
2.4 Testing for presidency power 36
2.5 Research design and data 37
2.6 Analysis and results 40
2.6.1 Policy distances *40*
2.6.2 Parameter estimation *42*
2.7 Conclusion and discussion 46

Chapter 3
Network embeddedness and public agency performance: The strength of strong ties in Dutch higher education 49
3.1 Introduction 50
3.2 Research context: colleges for primary education teacher training 52
3.3 Theoretical background 54
3.3.1 Degree centrality and college performance *54*
3.3.2 Cohesive subgroups and college performance *56*
3.3.3 Contextual effects *57*

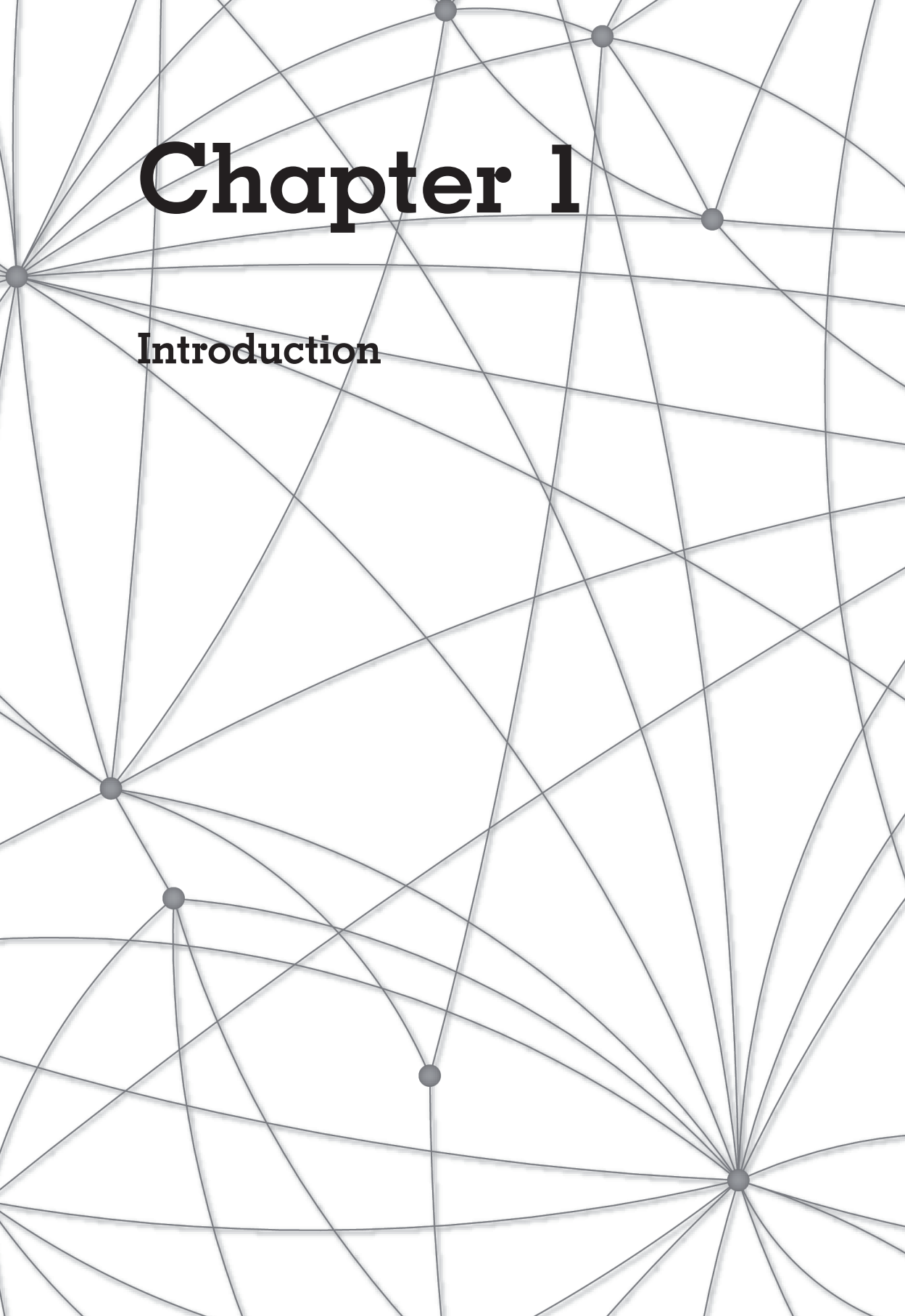
3.4 Research design and data 58
3.4.1 The inter-organizational PABO network 59
3.4.2 Context variables and other PABO characteristics 60
3.4.3 Graduate satisfaction and graduate-level control measures 62
3.5 Analysis and results 63
3.5.1 The inter-organizational network structure 63
3.5.2 Test of hypotheses for graduate satisfaction 65
3.6 Conclusion and discussion 71

Chapter 4
Linking stakeholder involvement to policy performance: Nonlinear effects in Dutch local government policy-making 77
4.1 Introduction 78
4.2 Stakeholder involvement in policy-making 80
4.2.1 A nonlinear effect of professional organizations' involvement on policy performance 82
4.3 Research context: the Social Support Act 85
4.4 Research design and data 87
4.4.1 The independent functioning of SSA clients 88
4.4.2 Professional and client-interest involvement 91
4.4.3 Political support 92
4.4.4 SSA budget 93
4.4.5 Goal specificity 94
4.4.6 Client-level control variables 94
4.5 Analysis and results 95
4.5.1 Multivariate results 96
4.6 Conclusion and discussion 100

Chapter 5
Inter-organizational relations and goal consensus: 107
An exploratory study in two local Dutch service delivery networks 107
5.1 Introduction 108
5.2 A theoretical framework for analyzing goal consensus in service delivery networks 110
5.3 Research design and data 114
5.3.1 Research context: two SSA service delivery networks in Breda 114
5.3.2 Data collection 117
5.3.3 Operationalization of the dependent and independent variables 117
5.4 Analysis and results 121
5.4.1 Description of the inter-organizational relations in the SSA service delivery networks 121
5.4.2 Multivariate analysis of goal consensus in the SSA service delivery networks 124
5.5 Conclusion and discussion 125

Chapter 6
Conclusion 131
6.1 Introduction 132
6.2 Summary of findings and conclusions per chapter 132
6.2.1 The power of the presidency in EU Council decision-making (chapter 2) *132*
6.2.2 Network embeddedness and public agency performance: The strength of strong ties in Dutch higher education (chapter 3) *134*
6.2.3 Linking stakeholder involvement to policy performance: Nonlinear effects in Dutch local government policy-making (chapter 4) *135*
6.2.4 Inter-organizational relations and goal consensus: An exploratory study in two local Dutch service delivery networks (chapter 5) *136*
6.3 Discussion 137
6.4 Suggestions for future research 139
6.4.1 Studying institutional and network embeddedness simultaneously *139*
6.4.2 Studying actor-versus-network performance *140*
6.4.3 Studying feedback effects between performance and embeddedness *141*
6.4.4 Studying cross-level effects of embeddedness on client outcomes *142*

References 143
Nederlandse samenvatting (Summary in Dutch) 159
Acknowledgements 171
About the author 175
ICS dissertation series 177



Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The performance of public corporate actors in modern societies

This book studies the performance of corporate actors in the public sector. The public sector is concerned with the production of goods and services for citizens by public means. The composition of the public sector varies by country, but it typically includes such domains as health care, education, social security, and defense. We define *public corporate actors* as corporate actors (Coleman 1990: 531) who are involved in the production and delivery of social services in those parts of the economy that are under government ownership, contracted by the government, or strongly regulated by government in the public interest. Public corporate actors thus include governments and government bureaucracies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), quasi-nongovernmental organizations (Quangos), and for-profit organizations insofar as they have been contracted by the state or have become heavily involved in the development and implementation of government policies. Understanding the performance of public corporate actors is important, as they comprise a large portion of our economy. To illustrate this point, government expenditures accounted for 50.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on average for European Union member states in 2009 (Eurostat 2010).

Although public corporate actors permeate many dimensions of our personal lives and address key social problems, they do not necessarily perform well. The financial and economic crisis that began in 2008, along with the associated government debts, will soon necessitate significant budget cuts in Western democratic countries (Brumby and Verhoeven 2010). The crisis places pressure on public corporate actors to deliver services more efficiently, and it potentially harms their effectiveness. At the same time, the crisis itself can be viewed as a demonstration of public sector failure. The current Greek sovereign debt crisis, for example, has been attributed to problems with Greek bureaucratic agencies (e.g., low-skilled workers and legalistic operating norms), corruption, weak governmental control over tax revenues, and the skewed representation of social interests in government and public service delivery (Featherstone 2011).

The primary aim of this dissertation is to investigate whether certain public corporate actors perform better than others and to explain such differences. More specifically, we focus on whether differences in performance can be attributed to the embeddedness of public corporate actors in their particular institutional environments and inter-organizational networks.

'Performance' is conceptualized as the degree to which a public corporate actor is able to attain its *public goals*, i.e., the goals that relate to its main client or target group. A key characteristic of public corporate actors is that they

face political accountability. That is, they are subject to public goals that are established through the political process. It is through the political process that normative principles of fairness and equity are determined. Public corporate actors are then held accountable to these standards. For example, representative governments politically determine the standards of educational quality to which all public schools must adhere. Public goals typically refer to a specific client group. Just as public schools must satisfy students, hospitals must satisfy patients, prisons must address the conditions of inmates, and so on.

Various explanations have been offered as to why public corporate actors may fail to attain their public goals. One such explanation relates to *task difficulty*, i.e., the severity of the problems and conditions of the client group. For example, predefined general standards of students' educational attainment at the conclusion of primary education (e.g., in terms of their arithmetic abilities) are more difficult for primary schools to attain if they are responsible for educating a large proportion of students from socio-economically disadvantaged families.

Second, public corporate actors may face unforeseen *external events*. The economic crisis of 2008 is one such event. Likewise, Hurricane Katrina caused a mass evacuation of Louisiana residents to Texas in 2005, including over 40,000 students who were subsequently enrolled in Texas public schools. The influx placed significant pressure on these schools and their managers (Meier, O'Toole and Hicklin 2010).

Third, performance can be hindered by *public goal ambiguity.* Often, the needs of a specific client group are unclear (Rainey and Bozeman 2000). Generally, scholars of public administration argue that performance in terms of client outcomes is difficult to define and to measure (Boyne et al. 2006).

Fourth, and importantly, performance may be hindered by *goal conflict*. Like private-sector organizations that may experience a conflict between maximizing growth, sales, or profits, public corporate actors experience a conflict between improving the conditions of a key client group and their other goals. The tension between competing goals is especially pronounced for public corporate actors, as the normative and equity-based motivations related to client outcomes conflict with market-based incentives. For example, public schools have an incentive to increase cost-efficiency (e.g., by increasing the number of students per teacher). This goal may conflict with the normative goal of offering a high-quality education to students (which is not necessary from a competitive point of view). In a similar vein, government bureaucracies are motivated both by budget maximization and by the necessity of addressing their clients' needs (Niskanen 1971).

1.2 The internal structure and performance of public corporate actors

Some corporate actors are better able to surmount such barriers as task difficulty and external events than others. In attempting to explain performance, organizational theorists such as Weber (1947), Simon (1947), and Coleman (1990) focused on the design of the internal structure of public corporate actors as a key determinant of their performance. These authors were all concerned with the optimal design of organizations. In his theory of the bureaucracy (1947), Weber conceives of the optimal organization as one in which the functions or offices 1) have clearly defined tasks, 2) have intentionally established rules that govern their decisions and transactions, 3) are part of a top-down hierarchy, and 4) are filled by individuals who are selected based on their technical qualifications and capabilities. Simon (1947) was primarily concerned with how an organization can elicit optimal decision-making from its members to achieve the organization's desired objectives while arriving at these decisions as efficiently as possible. He asked how management techniques, personnel policies, training goals and procedures, and communication processes could be designed to optimize members' decisions, given the limits on their rational decision-making.

Finally, Coleman (1990) was concerned with how the functional positions within an organization (e.g., chief executive, secretary, or lawyer) and the relationships between them can be designed to ensure that the interests of the individuals filling these positions are aligned with those of the organization as a whole. One of Coleman's key arguments is that the authority over the actions associated with a position should be allocated to those directly affected by the actions. A board of directors may, for instance, have the authority to appoint a company CEO, while the board itself may be held accountable to shareholders. For the organization as a whole, this arrangement results in a complex system of authority relations characterized by checks and balances to prevent any position from pursuing its own particular interests at the expense of the organization's.

1.3 The embeddedness of public corporate actors and their performance

Weber, Simon, and Coleman were primarily interested in a specific type of relationship, namely the relationship between public corporate actors and natural persons *within* organizations. Their focus on optimizing internal structures, however, neglects the notion that a public corporate actor operates within an

environment that both provides opportunities and imposes constraints. Given the prominence of public corporate actors in modern societies, a significant part of this environment consists of other corporate actors. To a greater or lesser extent, public corporate actors are dependent on other corporate actors to achieve their goals (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). The relationships that a public corporate actor maintains with other corporate actors, then, are likely to affect its performance (Powell 1990; Scharpf 1997; O'Toole and Meier 1999).

We can observe the interdependence between public corporate actors in various public sector domains and at different levels of government. At the *supranational* level, for example, European Union enlargement and the expansion of policy areas that fall under EU (i.e., communitarian) jurisdiction, from the Treaty of Rome (1957) to the Treaties of Maastricht (1992) and Lisbon (2007), have resulted in increased interdependence between the member states. To attain policy outcomes in EU legislation that favor a particular member state—e.g., France attempting to maintain strong protectionist agricultural policies—this member state depends upon the support of other member states. At the same time, the other member states have their own national priorities that may conflict with France's and can likewise only be realized with sufficient support. Consequently, the degree of support garnered from other member states affects the degree to which any member state will be able to realize its goals.

Similarly, at the *national* level, we observe that governments are dependent upon other actors for the realization of their policy goals. In the US, an 'iron triangle' describes the relationship between Congress, organized interest groups, and federal agencies, in which all three actors are interdependent. Congress depends upon the electoral support of interest groups and the effective execution of policies by federal agencies. In turn, interest groups and federal agencies depend upon Congress for favorable legislation and funding, respectively. In the Netherlands, similar patterns of interdependencies exist in the so-called 'polder model', wherein governments, unions, and employers collaborate to develop labor policies, despite their differing interests.

At the *local* level, governments increasingly outsource service production and delivery, both in the US (Brown and Potoski 2003) and the EU (Torres and Pina 2002). They secure the involvement of local stakeholders in the policy-making process through networks of local actors (Edelenbos and Klijn 2006). For example, Percival (2009) studies how Californian counties attempt to reduce local substance abuse and related criminal activities. Effectively treating substance abuse depends upon the expertise of law enforcement agencies, drug treatment providers, and public health agencies. It also demands the coordination of the diverse set of tasks and functions that these organizations perform, including identifying drug abuse and referring, monitoring and

treating abusers. At the same time, each actor has an interest in borrowing from others' successes while also competing with one another over resources provided by the state. Additionally, each may hold different views of how to effectively address the problems related to substance abuse (for example, law enforcement agencies may favor prison sentences, while treatment providers may emphasize treatment methods).

These examples demonstrate several points. First, they show that public corporate actors are often *behaviorally interdependent* (cf. Coleman 1990: 30). That is, the performance of a public corporate actor depends not only on its own behavior but also on the behavior of others. These actors share an interest in the same client group, but they also have competing interests.

Second, the examples show that public corporate actors are *embedded* in interdependent settings (cf. Granovetter 1985). Actors establish and maintain relationships with one another to manage their interdependencies. Characteristics of the actual interactions between public corporate actors are likely to affect their performance by shaping opportunities to monitor, reward, and sanction one another's behavior (Uzzi 1996; Rooks, Raub and Tazelaar 2006; Buskens and Raub 2002). Moreover, these interactions may shape beliefs and perceptions about what the public goals are, how important they are vis-à-vis other organizational goals, and how they can best be attained. They may thus shape what is considered to be appropriate action (Powell and DiMaggio 1991). This study examines the conditions under which interactions with other actors in a public corporate actor's environment will enhance or hinder its performance.

Third, the interdependent settings are varied and display substantial complexity. They vary with respect to the types of actors upon which a focal actor is dependent. Other actors may be of the same type—e.g., member states involved in EU decision-making—or of different types, as in the substance-abuse example. Moreover, there are different sources of dependence between actors, ranging from support for policies to financial resources to expertise in client treatment methods. The settings also vary with respect to the policy domains, for example, labor policy or substance abuse. Finally, interdependencies exist in different stages of policy-making, from decision-making in the examples of EU member states and the 'polder model' to implementation and program effectiveness in the substance-abuse example.

In what follows, we structure the analysis of public corporate actors' performance according to two analytical dimensions. First, we will structure the analysis according to the *level of collaboration*. The level of collaboration refers to the level of government at which the relationships between public corporate actors are analyzed. In reality, interdependencies exist across levels of government as well in what is called 'multilevel governance' (Hooghe

and Marks 2001). In the EU example, member states interact with national agencies implementing EU policy, as well as nongovernmental actors at other levels, such as local farmers in the case of agricultural policy. In the substance-abuse example, local organizations that treat substance abusers are dependent upon state and federal funding agencies. Within each of the following chapters, we restrict the analysis to a single level of collaboration, while across the chapters, we discuss three levels: supranational, national, and local.

Second, we structure the analysis according to two *types of embeddedness*: institutional and network embeddedness. First, institutional embeddedness refers to the socially constructed rules that constrain and govern actual interactions between public corporate actors in a given context (Weesie and Raub 1996; Nee 2005). Institutional rules are relatively durable, and they are collective in the sense that they are shared by all actors participating in that context rather than being tied to any particular subset of actors. Institutional rules may be formal or informal. Examples of formal institutional rules are constitutions, parliamentary decision-making procedures, laws, and property rights. An example of a formal institutional rule is the qualified majority rule that applies in most policy areas of EU decision-making (see chapter 2). This rule states that a certain number of member states, a certain percentage of the total EU population they represent, and a certain percentage of all voting weights are required to pass an act (the specific percentages vary by EU treaty). Informal institutional rules, however, refer to shared norms at the collective level. An example of an informal institutional rule is the 'norm of consensus' in EU decision-making. This norm is an implicit agreement among member states to make a legislative decision only if there exists unanimous support, even if a mere qualified majority is formally required.

In contrast, network embeddedness refers to the actual relationships that exist between public corporate actors in an interdependent setting (Cropper et al. 2008). These are the direct relationships subject to the institutional rules that govern that particular setting. We can usefully conceptualize network embeddedness in terms of four subdimensions (or elements) of the relationships between actors: content, strength, structure, and type of partner.

First, the *content* of a relationship refers to the types of information or other resources exchanged between any two actors in a given setting. The content of relationships is context-specific and may range from tangible resources such as monetary payments, grants or subsidies (Gazley and Brutney 2007), to intangible resources such as support for policies (Knoke 1990) and strategic managerial information (Koppenjan and Klijn 2004), to the referral of actual clients such as mental health patients (Provan and Milward 1995). Second, *structure* refers to an actor's access to other actors. Structure may

refer to direct bilateral access (or dyadic relations) of a focal actor to other actors. Alternatively, structure may refer to the pattern of all existing relationships between all actors in a setting, including patterns of indirect access of a focal actor to other actors or access between partners of a focal actor (Wasserman and Faust 1994). Third, the *strength* of interactive relationships refers to the magnitude or volume of what is being transferred between partners. It may refer to the contact frequency of public managers representing their organizations or to the measure of financial resources. Finally, although not necessarily a characteristic of a relationship, network embeddedness involves the *type of partner.* That is, independent of what is being exchanged, the strength of a relationship and the embeddedness of a relation in the larger network structure, the attributes of a partner may be related to performance, such as its total resource capability and its organizational culture. The following four chapters can be categorized according to the two analytical dimensions: the level of collaboration and the type of embeddedness.

1.4 Research question and aims

The central aim of this dissertation is to contribute to our current understanding of the public corporate actors' performance by analyzing the institutional and network embeddedness of these actors at different levels of collaboration. This central aim leads to descriptive and explanatory research questions. These research questions can be formulated as follows.

Descriptive research question:
Does the performance of public corporate actors vary at the supranational, national, and local levels of collaboration?

Explanatory research question:
If so, how does the performance of public corporate actors depend on the institutional and network embeddedness of these actors at the supranational, national, and local levels of collaboration?

Many theoretical perspectives in sociology, public administration and organizational science have addressed the relationship between embeddedness and performance. Among the most influential research threads are studies of *collective decision-making* using formal bargaining models (Torenvlied 2000; Stokman 2004; Thomson et al. 2006), *institutional theory* (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), *embeddedness research* (Uzzi 1996; Buskens and Raub 2002; Gulati 2007), *collaborative governance* studies (Freeman and Langbein 2000;

Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; Ansell and Gash 2008), and *public management and performance* studies (Meier and O'Toole 2003; Boyne et al. 2006; Walker, Boyne and Brewer 2010).

This book does not present an exhaustive treatment of this literature. Instead, the four empirical chapters should be read as 'essays' on public corporate actors' performance. The essays build upon and test certain key effects of embeddedness proposed in the literature. In each chapter, we challenge a generally accepted assumption or hypothesis in that specific research context. By distinguishing between institutional and network embeddedness, we can arrive at specific hypotheses regarding embeddedness effects on performance within each chapter. Table 1.1 provides an overview of the chapters in this dissertation.

This dissertation contributes to triangulation by testing similar types of hypotheses in different settings using complementary research designs (Denzin 1978; Scandura and Williams 2000; Raub and Buskens 2008: 716). Repetition in hypothesis testing is useful in itself. In addition, by using complementary research designs, methods, and techniques to test similar hypotheses, we have increased confidence in the robustness of our findings. If the results are similar across the four studies, it is less likely that these results result from particular weaknesses in the research design. Obviously, it is not possible to analyze exactly the same hypotheses with all research designs in all contexts in four chapters. Therefore, this dissertation takes only initial steps towards triangulation. In the concluding chapter (chapter 6), the robustness of the findings across the different chapters is evaluated.

The dissertation approaches triangulation in various ways. Apart from the different levels of collaboration, we make use of a variety of research designs, measurement instruments, and analytical methods. In terms of research design, we analyze both large-scale comparative data (chapters 2 and 4) and more in-depth case studies (chapters 3 and 5). In terms of measurement, we analyze both complete networks (chapters 3 and 5) and ego-networks (chapter 4), which are characterized by different types of content and partners. In terms of measurement instruments, we use expert interviews (chapters 2 and 3) and survey data (chapters 4 and 5) to measure the independent variables, and we use both objective (chapters 2 and 4) and subjective (chapters 3 and 5) measures of performance. Finally, we use various analytical techniques to test the hypotheses (see Table 1.1).

Before proceeding with the introduction of the individual chapters, it is important to note that three issues are beyond the scope of this dissertation. First, the chapters do not address the problem of the optimal internal design of public organizations (Simon 1947; Weber 1947; Coleman 1990). Second, a considerable portion of the literature focuses on inter-organizational relations

and embeddedness as *dependent* variables (see Oliver 1990; Gulati and Gargiulo 1999; Powell et al. 2005). The chapters in this dissertation do not address this issue. Neither do they address potential 'feedback loops' between performance and embeddedness or dynamic networks (Snijders, Van der Bunt and Steglich 2010). Third, the chapters do not address the issue of *whole* network performance (cf. Provan and Milward 1995; Provan, Fish and Sydow 2007: Provan and Kenis 2008), that is, the performance of entire networks as the unit of analysis. The individual public actor is the unit of analysis throughout our study, except in chapter 5, which focuses on dyads.

1.5 Research questions and chapter introductions

1.5.1 The power of the presidency in EU Council decision-making (chapter 2)

The public corporate actors who we study in chapter 2 are member states of the European Union. In this chapter, we investigate whether the presidency of the Council of the European Union has more institutionally endowed power than individual member states. The presidency of the Council is held by a single member state and rotates between the member states every six months. The hypothesis that member states are more powerful when they hold the presidency was developed by Tallberg (2006). In his work, Tallberg challenges the common assumption that member states cannot advance their domestic interests while holding the presidency because of their expected impartiality and brief tenure (Schout 1998). We assume that all member states will attempt to advance their own domestic interests in EU decision-making. That is, their 'performance' is high if they reach collective decision outcomes that are close or identical to their national preferences. The citizens of member states thus constitute the client group in this study. The level of collaboration is *supranational*: the decision-making procedures are intergovernmental, and the interactions take place between nation states.

The key independent variable we study in this chapter is *institutional embeddedness*. Interactions between member states are guided both by formal rules (e.g., the pre-defined number of votes of each member state) and informal rules (e.g., the 'norm of consensus' discussed above). These rules provide member states holding the presidency with certain procedural and informational advantages (e.g., the right to set the agenda) conferred to the presidency to facilitate and coordinate the decision-making process. This arrangement implies that member states holding the presidency are 'embedded' in a different way than member states that do not hold the presidency. The key question in chapter 2 is whether these differences in institutional embedded-

ness cause variations in the performance of member states. In other words, are member states holding the presidency able to exploit their institutional advantages to obtain decision outcomes that are more closely aligned with their domestic preferences than other member states?

In chapter 2, we build on the *collective decision-making* literature (Thomson et al. 2006), particularly the arguments presented by Tallberg (2006). We argue that member states that hold the presidency *are* in fact able to perform better than member states. Furthermore, we argue that the institutional advantages of the presidency vary across the *stages of decision-making*. Thus, we extend the argument by hypothesizing that member states that hold the presidency will perform better but only in the *adoption* and *voting* stages of decision-making. We develop a formal bargaining model (Achen 2006) that assumes that cooperative bargaining takes place among member states in the Council (reflecting the 'norm of consensus').

For the period of EU decision-making that we study, the institutional rules are based on the Maastricht Treaty (1992) and especially the Amsterdam Treaty (1997). Under these treaties, there were 15 member states. The hypotheses are tested using a dataset of 152 controversial policy issues across a wide range of policy areas that were resolved in the period 1999-2001 (Thomson and Stokman 2003). We apply nonlinear regression techniques to analyze these data. Chapter 2 contributes to the *collective decision-making* literature by presenting the first large-scale analysis of presidency effects in the EU, the results of which shed important light on the questions of presidential power.

1.5.2 Network embeddedness and public agency performance: The strength of strong ties in Dutch higher education (chapter 3)

The public corporate actors who we study in chapter 3 are primary-education teacher training colleges (in Dutch: 'Pedagogische Academie Basisonderwijs', PABO) in the Netherlands. We study the performance of these colleges in terms of their graduates' satisfaction with the PABO program they were offered. In this chapter, we ask whether and how the performance of colleges depends on their *network embeddedness.* Thus, we focus on the actual interactions between PABO colleges while assuming that they all operate within the same institutional framework.[1] Although PABO colleges maintain relationships across several levels of collaboration (e.g., collaboration with local pri-

1 This framework is primarily established by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, as well as by European regulations, most importantly the Bologna Declaration of 1999, which introduced the Bachelor-Master system in the Netherlands. PABO colleges are equal under these regulations, for example, in terms of the performance indicators used to evaluate the program.

mary schools), we focus on the inter-organizational network consisting only of the PABO colleges and thus on the *national* level of collaboration.

Current *public management and performance* studies generally report a positive effect of agency network activity in inter-organizational networks on its performance (Meier and O'Toole 2003; Boyne et al. 2006). This 'degree-centrality' hypothesis predicts that the more relationships a PABO college maintains with other colleges, the better it will perform. This finding is expected because these relationships provide the colleges with critical resources and information and enable them to buffer external events, such as in the Hurricane Katrina example presented above. Chapter 3 builds on *embeddedness research* in sociology (Uzzi 1996; Buskens and Raub 2002; Gulati 2007) to present a different hypothesis: the embeddedness of a college in cohesive subgroups positively affects its performance (the 'cohesive subgroup' hypothesis). Cohesive subgroups are defined as groups of colleges in which each college has a strong relationship with each of the other colleges. In chapter 3, we argue that cohesive subgroups facilitate cooperation by increasing mutual understanding, the availability of information (Gulati 2007), and reputation effects (Buskens and Raub 2002).

In terms of network embeddedness, the hypotheses focus both on the elements of *structure* (access to other PABO colleges) and *strength* (the number of shared memberships with other PABO colleges) of network embeddedness. The hypotheses are tested using data on the complete inter-organizational network of all Dutch colleges for the training of primary education teachers (n = 28). The type of relationship (*content*) we study is the joint membership of PABO colleges (constituting the *type of partner*) in formal collaborative affiliations over this period. These data are combined with college-level performance and contextual data for 2002-2005 (n = 90) and with the evaluations of college performance by a large sample of college graduates for the same period (n = 7,119).

Chapter 3 aims to contribute to the *public management and performance literature* by studying the conditions under which access to other actors yields higher performance, emphasizing reputation effects in particular. In addition, earlier studies primarily focused on secondary, college-level, and 'hard' performance indicators (e.g., student pass rates). Methodologically, we improve upon these earlier studies by analyzing performance at the client level using advanced multilevel analyses.

1.5.3 Linking stakeholder involvement to policy performance: Nonlinear effects in Dutch local government policy-making (chapter 4)

Chapters 4 and 5 pertain to the same institutional context, namely the Social Support Act (SSA 2007) in the Netherlands (in Dutch: 'Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning', WMO). The SSA was enacted in 2007 and aims to increase the independent functioning of individuals with mental or physical impediments. At the same time, it transfers financial and statutory responsibility for the formulation and implementation of policy to local governments. These local governments are the public corporate actors analyzed in chapter 4. Their performance is evaluated in terms of how well they are able to attain the general policy goals of the SSA: to increase the independent functioning of individuals with a physical or mental impediments in terms of their 1) physical self-reliance, 2) social contacts, and 3) social participation. These SSA clients comprise the key client group in this study. Their level of independent functioning is affected by many other types of organizations, including welfare organizations, transportation companies, and health care institutions. The central question in chapter 4 is whether local governments that interact with such 'stakeholder' organizations in the SSA policy-making process perform better. This chapter thus focuses on *network embeddedness* at the *local* level of collaboration.

Current *public management and performance* (Meier and O'Toole 2001; Boyne et al. 2006; Akkerman and Torenvlied 2011) and *collaborative governance* (Freeman and Langbein 2000; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; Ansell and Gash 2008) studies hypothesize that the governments' inclusion of external stakeholders positively affects the performance of government policies. Because policies' effectiveness depends on the efforts and cooperation of stakeholder organizations, governments can create access to the professional expertise and resources of these organizations. Governments can also build support for the policies that they formulate by involving stakeholders in the policy-making process. Recent research in these fields, however, has hypothesized that this effect may diminish when *too many* stakeholder organizations are involved, as the benefits of additional expertise decrease while the costs of coordinating collaboration increase. Additionally, it may be more difficult to secure support among many stakeholders. Chapter 4 explores this expectation empirically. We also argue that the relationship between involvement and support differs for different *types* of stakeholder organizations (cf. Walker et al. 2010). In particular, we distinguish between 'professional' and 'client-interest' organizations.

We tested the hypotheses using a unique longitudinal and multi-actor dataset consisting of a nationally representative sample of 69 Dutch local go-

vernments and 3,343 SSA clients. In terms of network embeddedness, the hypotheses test the effects of *structure* (access to stakeholder organizations) as well as the *type of partner* (professional and client-interest organizations). The data do not vary in terms of the *content* (the involvement in the SSA policy-making process) or the *strength* of relationships.

As in chapter 3, a key contribution to the *public management and performance* literature is the analysis of public corporate actors' performance vis-à-vis their client groups (SSA clients in this case) and avoiding common method bias (Spector and Branninck 2010) with outcome measures obtained from the clients rather than from the local government officials. Furthermore, few studies have used representative and longitudinal data to analyze the effects of stakeholder involvement in local settings operating under the same regulatory program (Ansell and Gash 2008: 562; for exceptions, see O'Toole and Meier 1999; Meier and O'Toole 2003). Finally, chapter 4 provides valuable feedback and policy recommendations on the SSA for national and local governments in the Netherlands.

1.5.4 Inter-organizational relations and goal consensus: An exploratory study in two local Dutch service delivery networks (chapter 5)

In the last empirical chapter, we examine one of the Dutch municipalities that implements the SSA, the city of Breda. In Breda, we analyze two complete local inter-organizational networks that are involved in the policy-making process, each of which addresses one particular policy subdomain of the SSA. Thus, as in chapter 4, the level of collaboration is *local*. The local government of Breda is a key actor in both networks, but all organizations in these networks constitute the public corporate actors analyzed in this chapter. The fact that these organizations are not all of the same type presents a problem in terms of comparing their performance: each organization has a somewhat different client group. Although all of the organizations deliver services to SSA clients, for some of them—e.g., housing corporations—these clients comprise a small portion of their total activities. At the same time, because SSA clients receive services from multiple organizations, it is difficult to attribute their well-being and independent functioning to one particular organization.

Therefore, we take a different approach to performance in this chapter, which likewise addresses an important gap in the *public-management and performance* literature. In chapter 5, performance is studied in terms of the degree of *goal consensus.* Goal consensus between organizations in public sector networks is an important *precondition* for performance (De Bruijn and Ten Heuvelhof 2002; Provan and Kenis 2008; Percival 2009). In our case, consensus between organizations in terms of the local SSA's policy goals and

the actions that the members collectively pursue is critical for the effective treatment of SSA clients. Most studies, however, simply assume goal consensus and instead focus on the direct effects of network embeddedness on network performance (O'Toole and Meier 2004: 682). The intermediate effect of network embeddedness on goal consensus has rarely been addressed. In chapter 5, we address this gap in the literature by studying whether and how the characteristics of network embeddedness are related to goal consensus. Because consensus must involve at least two parties, the unit of analysis in chapter 5 is not the organization itself but the *dyad* consisting of two organizations.[2]

Building on *institutional theory* (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) and *embeddedness research* (Uzzi 1996; Gulati 2007), we hypothesize that goal consensus is associated with stronger inter-organizational relations, especially for relationships that involve a great amount of strategic interaction between members of the two organizations, and when the two organizations share a significant number of relationships with third parties in the inter-organizational network.

We use in-depth measures of the relationships between all actors in the two networks (n = 546 directed ties) and apply advanced social network regression techniques to analyze these data. The two networks consist of 18 and 16 organizations. In terms of the elements of network embeddedness, we examine variation in *structure* (both bilateral access and access between partners), four different types of relationship *content* (e.g., managerial interaction and client referrals), and the *strength* of these relations (the interpretation of which depends on the specific content). Although the *type of partner* varies within each network, the two inter-organizational networks are relatively small (n = 18; n = 16), precluding an analysis of actor effects. Compared to chapter 4 then, the measures of the different elements of network embeddedness are more granular. However, this specificity comes at the cost of generalizability, as we cannot compare the networks nationwide.

2 More precisely, the unit of analysis is the *ordered pair*, including the directed ties from one actor to another. There are two possible directed ties in each dyad (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 18).

Table 1.1 Overview of the dissertation chapters.

Chapter	Type of performance	Key independent variable	Level of collaboration	Research design and data	Hypotheses	Analysis
(2) EU	Difference between preferred outcome and collective outcome	Institutional embeddedness	Supranational	15 EU member states, 152 policy issues (1999-2001)	1) Member states holding the presidency perform better than other member states, possibly 2) only in the adoption stage, or 3) only in the decision stage.	Non-linear regression analysis
(3) PABO	Graduate satisfaction	Network embeddedness (structure, strength)	National	28 PABO colleges, 7,119 clients, one type of relationship (joint membership in associations), 2002-2005	Colleges perform better when 1) they have more relations and 2) they are embedded in cohesive subgroups.	Logistic multilevel analysis
(4) SSA (1)	Independent functioning of clients (physical self-reliance, social contacts, and social participation)	Network embeddedness (structure, type of partner)	Local	69 municipalities, 3,343 clients, one type of relationship (involvement in the policy-making process), two types of partners, 2008-2009	1) Local governments perform better when they involve more stakeholders in the policy making process, or 2) there are diminishing returns to involvement, depending on the type of partner.	Multilevel analysis
(5) SSA (2)	Goal consensus on local policy goals	Network embeddedness (structure, content, strength)	Local	Two local networks, 18 and 16 organizations, 4 types of relations, 2008	Organizations achieve higher levels of goal consensus when relations with other organizations are 1) stronger, especially when 2) the relation is based on personal interaction, and 3) relations are embedded in cohesive subgroups.	Multiple regression for network data

Chapter 2

The power of the presidency in EU-Council decision-making

A slightly different version of this chapter has been published as: Schalk, J., R. Torenvlied, J. Weesie and F.N. Stokman (2007). The power of the presidency in EU Council decision-making. *European Union Politics*, 8(2): 229-250. This publication received the SAGE award for best article in *European Union Politics* in 2007.

2.1 Introduction

The academic debate on who is powerful in Brussels concentrates on the relative impact of the European Commission, the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of the European Union (e.g., Tsebelis and Garrett 2000; Selck and Steunenberg 2004) and the impact of member states on policy outcomes (Bindseil and Handke 1997; Lootsma, 2004). Most scholars agree that the Council is the most powerful among the three governmental institutions of the EU (Westlake 1995; Cini 1996; Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1997). At face value, one would thus expect the presidency of the Council to have additional leverage in EU policy making. Nevertheless, the scarce literature addressing the power of the EU presidency suggests that member states at the helm *cannot* exert more influence, or even have less influence, compared to other member states (Schout 1998).

Officially, the presidency is expected to be impartial (Tallberg 2006). Accordingly, the literature emphasizes the presidency's role as a neutral broker and negotiation facilitator. Although authors recognize that member states holding the presidency pursue their domestic agendas, the degree of their success is considered to be low (Bassompierre 1988; Westlake 1995; Cini 1996; Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1997; Sherrington 2000). There are several arguments sustaining this view. First, the relatively short period at the helm narrows the scope of what can be done. Since a member state is only chair for six months and the bargaining process is slow, only a limited number of domestic objectives can be pursued. Second, the lion's share of the presidency's time and resources are spent on administrative tasks - the ongoing Council business. These tasks are not directly related to influencing policy outcomes (Kirchner 1992). Third, the presidency is often faced with external events that require immediate attention. Fourth, the presidency is hampered by policy inheritance: policies that have been set out before a member state's presidency term are hard to reverse. Fifth, the formal powers of the presidency, in terms of agenda setting and veto power, are limited.

A final reason for a toothless presidency is the existing 'culture of consensus' (Van Schendelen 1996; Matttila and Lane 2001). Indeed, decision-making in the European Union is often characterised by intensive negotiations and compromises (Sherrington 2000; Thomson et al. 2006). A culture of consensus constrains presidency behavior, because other member states will keep it to its expected neutrality and its role as a welder of integrationist policy solutions. Thus, presidencies may be forced to spend resources to further Community interests and strengthen their reputation.

One author challenges the well-established view of the toothless presidency. Tallberg (2006) develops a theory of formal leadership and presidency

power, grounded in rational choice institutionalism (Shepsle 1989; Aspinwall and Schneider 2000). His main thesis is that the rules, norms and procedures that constitute the institutional framework, provide the presidency with asymmetric access to information and asymmetric control over the negotiation procedure vis-à-vis other member states. These advantages can and will be brought into play, not only to ensure efficient EU bargaining, but also to advance the presidency's domestic interests. Tallberg (2006) relies on descriptive case studies to support his argument.

In this chapter we will try to shed some light on the puzzle of presidency power. We study the ability of individual member states to influence policy outcomes. We aim at finding out whether member states holding the presidency can exert additional influence on policy outcomes than expected on the basis of their formal voting power. By recognizing that the bargaining process in the EU is a relay race—it typically involves multiple presidencies that hand over leadership over the negotiations every six months—we try to locate the stage in the bargaining process where presidency power is largest.

We apply a cooperative bargaining model and estimate parameters for presidential bargaining strength using the 'Decision making in the European Union' (DEU) dataset (see Thomson et al. 2006). This dataset consists of 162 controversial policy issues, nested in 66 Commission proposals. The issues are selected over various policy areas, such as Agriculture and the Internal Market, and subject to either qualified majority voting (QMV) or unanimity under the co-decision and consultation procedures. The large number of cases used in the dataset allows for more general conclusions about presidency power than has previously been possible.

2.2 Presidency power in different stages of involvement

EU bargaining is a complex process. Before policy proposals become legislation, they go forth and back between the Commission, the Council and the Parliament, which can amend, reject, delay and accept proposals under different institutional procedures and decision rules (Hix 2005: 100-1; Wallace and Wallace 2000: 11-22). It follows that bargaining over a policy proposal is a time consuming and path dependent process, involving multiple presidencies. Hence, we propose a stage model of the EU bargaining process that allows us to discriminate between the different mechanisms behind presidency power. The stage model distinguishes between four stages of presidency involvement, based on two important events in EU decision-making: 1) the adoption of a Commission proposal and 2) the formal decision of the Council.

A schematic representation of the bargaining process is presented in Figure 2.1. The stages represent four intervals that may overlap: for any proposal, the date of adoption and date of the final decision are known, and presidencies are backwardly assigned to intervals around these two reference points. [3] Except for the intermediate presidency stage (I), each interval is maximally six months and involves one presidency. The pre-adoption stage (PA) defines the presidency that was in office before the presidency under which the Commission adopted a proposal. The latter is the adoption stage (A) presidency. Subsequent intermediate stage presidencies (I) have their term(s) between stage A and the final decision stage (D). The presidency in stage D reaches a final decision in the Council.

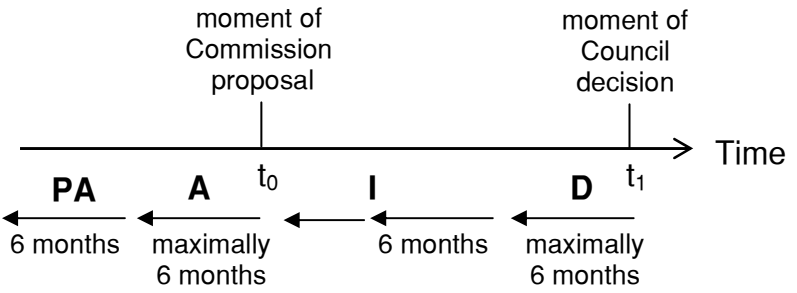


Figure 2.1 Stages of presidency involvement in the EU bargaining process. Notes. PA = Pre-Adoption stage; A = Adoption stage; C = Intermediate stage; D = Voting stage.

We distinguish between two key processes that may yield additional powers to presidencies. The first process concerns the decentralized negotiations in COREPER and the Commission during agenda setting and the adoption of Commission proposals. The second process is centralized bargaining among ministers in the Council during the voting stage. When presidencies have a specific advantage in both processes over other member states to further their domestic goals, the following hypothesis holds.

Hypothesis 1 (presidency effect hypothesis): Member states holding the presidency are better able than other member states to realize policy outcomes close to their policy position.

We now briefly discuss the mechanisms that could account for additional power of presidencies in decentralized agenda setting, centralized bargaining and voting. With respect to decentralized agenda setting, Tallberg (2003;

3 In the data set we find an overlapping presidency for only one case.

2006) argues that presidents are formal leaders in the European Union and able to manage the policy agenda. He distinguishes between three categories of agenda management: agenda setting, agenda structuring and agenda exclusion (Tallberg 2003). *Agenda setting* refers to the right to initiate proposals. Although formal agenda setting power in the EU lies with the Commission, Tallberg argues that the presidency can: 1) raise awareness of problems, and convince the Commission to take action, 2) develop specific proposals for action, and 3) develop policy initiatives in areas where actor configurations are as yet unclear or undefined—for example by drawing up a 'Presidency program' (Tallberg 2003: 7). By adopting a proposal close to the president's position, the Commission maximizes the probability that a proposal will pass, as the presidency is likely not only to put it on the agenda, but also to devote more resources to striking a bargain. Lobbying efforts may thus induce the Commission to adopt proposals that are favorable to the presidency. If these mechanisms are at work, the following hypothesis would hold.

Hypothesis 2 (adoption stage presidency hypothesis): The member state that holds the presidency in the *adoption stage* is better able to realize a policy outcome close to its policy position than member states that hold the presidency in the preceding *pre-adoption stage* and member states that hold the presidency in the subsequent *intermediate stage.*

With respect to centralized bargaining in the Council, the presidency is able to *structure the agenda* of Council meetings. In these meetings, the issues that underlie policy proposals adopted by the Commission are discussed. The presidency determines the sequence in which proposals and issues are discussed and the methods of decision-making, such as competing proposals versus single negotiation texts (Tallberg 2003). In addition, the presidency determines the frequency of Council meetings. Finally, the presidency has the right to exclude unfavorable proposals from the Council agenda—at least for its period at the helm.

In addition to agenda management, the presidency takes initiative in proposing *compromise solutions* to the Council, for example amendments of, or alternatives to the Commission proposal—the so-called 'Presidency compromise' (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1997; Nicoll 1998; Tallberg 2006). It is reasonable to assume that the presidency will propose among those possible compromise solutions the one closest to its own policy position. These mechanisms would lead to the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 (voting stage presidency hypothesis): Member states that hold the presidency in the voting stage are better able to realize a policy outcome close to their policy position than member states that hold the presidency in the intermediate stage.

2.3 A cooperative bargaining model of Council decision-making

Policy outcomes depend on the nature of the bargaining process. We assume that *cooperative* bargaining takes place in the Council. Cooperative bargaining may be promoted by the existence of highly inclusive voting rules. Decisions are often taken unanimously, even when only a qualified majority is needed (Mattila and Lane 2001; Thomson et al. 2006). The norm of consensus is strong among actors in the European Union. Inclusive voting rules and a long shadow of the future could result in tough, non-cooperative bargaining (Fearon 1988; Scharpf 1988). However, if these rules are combined with the existence of a threat point that is undesirable to all member states, these member states have a strong incentive to cooperate (Achen 2006). The existence of an undesirable threat point has been found consistently in case-studies (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace 1997). Finally, cooperative bargaining models are better suitable to study decision-making situations that are highly informal and complex (Achen 2006: 97).[4]

Collective decision-making in the European Union is assumed concentrate on a set of policy proposals. These are negotiation texts adopted by the European Commission, which address a certain topic in a certain policy area. Each proposal comprises j policy *issues* ($j = 1, 2, ..., n$). Each issue consists of a set of policy *alternatives* X_j. A policy alternative of issue j is denoted by a_j ($a_j = 1_j, 2_j, ..., v_j$), where v_j is the number of alternatives of issue j. As is the case in many spatial models of decision-making (e.g., Crombez 2000), it is assumed that these policy alternatives can be ordered on a single dimen-

4 Indeed, empirical studies confirm the absence of stable coalitions in the EU (Thomson et al., 2004) that could consistently beat other member states. Moreover, a cooperative (weighted mean voter) bargaining model has been tested on the DEU data before and has been found to give the most accurate predictions evaluated against a range of other cooperative and non-cooperative decision models (Thomson et al. 2006). For inclusive decision rules, the weighted mean is a better predictor in comparison to the median. Thomson and Torenvlied (2005) tested the predictions of the mean and median voter models over a large pooled dataset of controversial issues – with an over sample of DEU-issues – in various political settings. They found that when the decision rule is qualified majority (QMV), the simple mean is the best predictor, while under unanimity the mean weighted by the power and salience of the actors performs best. Since all decision making in the EU is subject to either QMV or unanimity, the (weighted) mean seems to be appropriate.

sion. In our case, each alternative falls in the interval [0, 100], as a point on a one-dimensional policy scale. Variable $x_j \in [0, 100]$ is a policy scale variable, representing the values of issue *j*'s policy alternatives.

We apply the model to the period 1999-2001, before the accession of ten new member states. Hence, the *actors* include 15 member states, the European Commission and the European Parliament, denoted by *i* ($i = 1, 2, ..., 17$). These actors take *policy positions* on each issue *j*, which is the policy alternative initially most preferred and expressed just after the adoption of a proposal by the European Commission. The policy positions of actors *i* on issues *j* are denoted by $x_{ij} \in X_j$ and are points on the policy scale. Actors are assumed to behave rationally and negotiate a policy *outcome* as close to their policy position as possible. The policy outcome is denoted by O_j, where $O_j \in X_j$. The utility functions of the actors are assumed to be single-peaked and monotonically decreasing, which means that the larger the distance between the outcome and the initially preferred policy position, the more utility loss an actor experiences.

The final policy outcome is supposed to depend on 1) the *power* of actors, 2) their *salience,* and 3) the *nature of the bargaining process.* In this analysis, p*ower* is defined as the sum of resources that can be used by an actor to move the policy outcome on an issue towards the desired outcome. The power of actor *i* on issue *j* is denoted by $w_{ij} \in [0, 1]$. Power plays a central role here, for it is on this concept that we evaluate the presidency against other member states. The basic idea is that the institutional features associated with the presidency may constitute power resources additional to those usually identified, such as formal voting power, reputation and expertise (Torenvlied 2000; Bailer 2004).

The policy outcome will also depend on the relative *salience* a member state attaches to different issues. Given the limited amount of time and resources that can be spent on gathering information and bargaining, member states assign different priorities to issues. Salience is the fraction of the power a member state is willing to utilize to bring the policy outcome closer to its preferred position (Bueno de Mesquita and Stokman 1994; Arregui, Stokman and Thomson 2004). The salience of actor *i* on issue *j* is denoted by $s_{ij} \in [0, 100]$.

The cooperative bargaining model we apply is a weighted version of the mean voter model (Caplin and Nalebuff 1991). The general underlying assumption of the model is that all actors are willing to shift their positions to a policy outcome that takes all their divergent interests into account. The mean policy position weighted by actors' power and salience is a first-order approximation of the Nash bargaining solution (NBS) in cooperative game theory

(Nash 1950).[5] This is only true when the threat point – the policy outcome that prevails when no agreement is reached – is far less desirable than any outcome for all member states (Achen 2006). The NBS predicts pareto optimal outcomes on one-dimensional issues by maximizing the product of the actors' quadratic utility functions.

The weighted mean voter model in equation (1) predicts the outcome on issue *j* (O_j) by the mean of the positions (x_{ij}) of all actors, weighted by the product of their power (w_{ij}) and salience (s_{ij}) (Van den Bos 1991):

$$O_j = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{17} x_{ij}\, s_{ij}\, w_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^{17} s_{ij}\, w_{ij}} \qquad (1)$$

2.4 Testing for presidency power

A starting point for analyzing the power of the presidency is the impact the presidency has on the outcomes of cooperative bargaining. Since we wish to investigate the presidency's power to advance domestic interests, a member states' power should be made conditional upon whether or not it holds the presidency on an issue. We model this by multiplying w_{ij} by a scale factor α_{ij} when member state *i* holds the presidency, and retains w_{ij} as the power score when member state *i* does not hold the presidency. Scale factor α_{ij} represents additional power ($\alpha_{ij} > 1$) or reduction in power ($\alpha_{ij} < 1$) due to the presidency. We will present different models for α_{ij} that differ by the explanatory variables entered in a log-linear model for alpha. A few examples are discussed below. To test the presidency effect hypothesis (hypothesis 1), we include only one unknown parameter β for a dummy variable that indicates whether a member state holds the presidency in the bargaining process or not. Values for all other variables in the model are known, including the outcome O_j. If positive, β indicates that member states holding the presidency have the ability to realize policy outcomes close to their policy position *in addition to* the power they would exercise when they do not hold the presidency. A negative sign of β indicates that the power of member states is reduced during their presidency terms. Hence, β is an overall measure of presidency power. Because negative power has no clear interpretation and member states will not harm

5 The mean voter position weighted by actors' capabilities and salience was first used in an empirical analysis of EU decision making by Van den Bos (1991).

their interests without clear reasons, we assume that w_{ij} is not negative. Thus, we carry out a logistic transformation on α and obtain the following model in equation (2):

$$O_j = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{17} x_{ij}\, s_{ij}\, w_{ij}\, a_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^{17} s_{ij}\, w_{ij}\, a_{ij}} + e_j \qquad (2)$$

where:

$\log(\alpha_{ij}) = \beta\, P_{ij}$

$P_{ij} = 1$ if member state *i* holds the presidency on issue *j*. $P_{ij} = 0$ otherwise

Two interpretable results follow from this model. First, if the presidency is influential, this model should lead to more accurate predictions of the policy outcomes than the weighted mean voter model. Second, at the parameter level, a positive effect of β would indicate that the presidency's policy position has a larger weight in determining the policy outcome. The presidency effect hypothesis (hypothesis 1) can now be restated more formally as follows: H1*:* $\beta > 0$.

The model can be extended to account for the specific presidency power in different stages of the bargaining process:

$$\log(\alpha_{ij}) = \beta_1 P_{ij}^{PA} + \beta_2 P_{ij}^{A} + \beta_3 P_{ij}^{I} + \beta_4 P_{ij}^{D}$$

For each stage, P_{ij}^{PA}, P_{ij}^{A}, P_{ij}^{I}, P_{ij}^{D} = 1 if member state i holds the presidency in the respective stage (the pre-adoption, the adoption, the intermediate, and the final decision stage). P_{ij}^{PA}, P_{ij}^{A}, P_{ij}^{I}, P_{ij}^{D} = 0 otherwise. On the basis of this model, the adoption stage presidency hypothesis (hypothesis 2) can be restated as H2: $\beta_2 > \beta_1, \beta_3$, and the voting stage presidency hypothesis (hypothesis 3) as H3: $\beta_4 > \beta_3$.

2.5 Research design and data

The hypotheses are tested using data on 66 legislative Commission proposals from the first pillar of EU decision-making. This 'Community' pillar covers the larger share of EU policy making, including the Internal Market and Agriculture. The data collection was coordinated by the DEU research team and pu-

blished in several contributions (a.o., Stokman and Thomson 2004; Thomson et al. 2006). The selected proposals are a comprehensive selection of proposals that meet a number of criteria. First, the dataset contains proposals that were subject to the consultation or to the co-decision procedure. Second, it contains proposals discussed in the Council in the period 1999-2000. All final decision outcomes were reached in the period 1999-2001, and the proposals did not change procedure after the Amsterdam Treaty came into effect in 1999 (with one exception that was finalized in the first term of 1998). The time that a proposal is 'pending' between the adoption by the Commission and the final decision outcome varies between 3 and 68 months in the dataset. Third, the proposals were selected on the basis of a certain degree of *controversy*. A random sample of Commission proposals would lead to an overrepresentation of relatively unimportant, technical issues on which member states take similar positions. This would reduce the ability to discriminate between powerful and less powerful actors in the decision-making process. An important condition for controversy of a proposal was that it must have appeared in *Agence Europe*, an independent daily news service covering EU affairs. These criteria resulted in the collection of 66 proposals covering a broad range of policy areas (Thomson et al. 2006).

For each Commission proposal, experts were asked to identify issues around which decision-making took place. An issue could be constructed if at least some of the actors have opposing positions, if the issue represents a one-dimensional continuum and if the points on the continuum represent alternative policy outcomes (Thomson and Stokman 2003). The experts identified 162 issues within the 66 proposals. Of the 162 issues, we exclude four issues that were not yet finalized. In six cases, the presidency in the adoption stage is the same as the presidency in the voting stage, that is, these issues were adopted and decided upon within one presidency term of six months. Because these few cases would (arguably) induce interaction effects between stages, we excluded them from the analyses. Ultimately, 152 issues nested in 61 proposals are included in the following analyses.

The dependent variable in our analyses is the policy outcome on each issue, identified by the experts and assigned a value on the policy scale. If an issue is dichotomous, the policy outcome is either one of the two policy alternatives. The independent variables in the models are actor's initially preferred policy positions, their salience and power, and a variable indicating whether a member state holds the presidency. Initially preferred policy positions and salience are also operationalized by expert judgments. Again, these are congruent with the possible policy alternatives, while salience may take any value between 0 and 100, with higher levels indicating stronger commitment to an issue by a member state.

Retrospective bias in expert judgments was reduced through several procedures (Thomson et al. 2006). First, most of the experts were closely affiliated with the permanent representations of the member states, e.g., desk officers representing their state in Council discussions. Others were affiliated with the Commission, the EP or interest groups. In total 150 interviews were held with 125 experts. These were in-depth interviews lasting for 1 hour and 40 minutes on average, to make it possible to evaluate experts' effort and expertise. Moreover, the experts were asked to consider specific policy issues, rather than abstract dimensions (e.g., pro- and anti-European), which reduces the likelihood that experts use different criteria for their judgments (Budge 2000).

Power is defined as the sum of resources that can be used by an actor to move the policy outcome on an issue towards the desired outcome. Studies on bargaining typically take formal voting power as the cornerstone in their analyses, using a voting power index.[6] The Shapley-Shubik Index (SSI) figures predominantly among these: power is defined by the number of times an actor is pivotal over all permutations of the actor set (Shapley and Shubik 1954). There are doubts about the usefulness of this index. Most importantly, it fails to take into account the preferences of the actors and the impact of certain procedural setting on power (Garrett and Tsebelis 1999; Schneider, Finke and Bailer 2004). The SSI considers all permutations to be equally likely, whereas some coalitions simply cannot be formed due to opposing preferences. The DEU dataset includes SSI scores for four different procedural conditions: the co-decision procedure with either the QMV or unanimity voting rule in the Council, and the consultation procedure with either QMV or unanimity.[7]

The independent variable of central concern is a dummy that indicates whether a member state holds the presidency, and a series of (mutually exclusive) dummies related to the different bargaining stages. Table 2.1 shows the distribution of proposals and issues over the presidency terms in the DEU data. The Commission adopted most proposals in the presidency terms of Austria, Finland, Germany and the United Kingdom, while most were *finalized* by Finland, Portugal, France, Sweden and Belgium.

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6 For an overview of some applications using voting power indices, see Felsenthal and Machover (1995). An application on EU decision making is Kandogan (2000).

7 The Commission is always included as a member of the winning coalition under both the co-decision and the consultation procedures. Under co-decision with QMV voting in the Council, the winning coalition consists of the Commission, a qualified majority of member states and the EP. Under consultation with QMV voting in the Council, the winning coalition consists of the Commission and a qualified majority of member states. In effect, the Parliament's power is zero under consultation, and the Commission's power is largest under QMV in the Council. We emphasize that the approach here would in principle allow us to treat the power w_i of the member states as parameters to be estimated, rather than to be assumed by SSI. Since the amount of data that we have is limited, we abstained from this method.

Table 2.1 Distribution of policy proposals and policy issues (in brackets) over presidencies and bargaining stages.

Year/ half	Presidency	Development stage	Adoption stage	Intermediate stage	Voting stage
1995-2	Spain	6 (17)	0 (0)	0 (0)	(0)
1996-1	Italy	1 (2)	6 (17)	0 (0)	0 (0)
1996-2	Ireland	0 (0)	1 (2)	6 (17)	0 (0)
1997-1	Netherlands	2 (4)	0 (0)	7 (19)	0 (0)
1997-2	Luxembourg	7 (22)	2 (4)	7 (19)	0 (0)
1998-1	United Kingdom	10 (23)	7 (22)	9 (23)	1 (1)
1998-2	Austria	8 (13)	10 (23)	15 (44)	0 (0)
1999-1	Germany	19 (44)	8 (13)	20 (56)	5 (11)
1999-2	Finland	5 (17)	19 (44)	16 (44)	11 (25)
2000-1	Portugal	3 (10)	5 (17)	27 (70)	10 (22)
2000-2	France	0 (0)	3 (10)	17 (50)	14 (33)
2001-1	Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (26)	11 (33)
2001-2	Belgium	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (27)
Total		61 (152)	61 (152)	132 (364)	61 (152)
Number of member states holding the presidency		9	9	10	7

Notes. *Included are 61 selected Commission proposals discussed in the Council in the period 1999-2001. Source: DEU-dataset (Thomson and Stokman 2003).*

2.6 Analysis and results

2.6.1 Policy distances

Table 2.2 displays a first indication of presidency power. For each member state, the mean distance over all issues is calculated between the policy position and 1) the Commission's position, 2) the weighted mean voter prediction, and 3) the actual policy outcome. The distance to the Commission gives an indication of how successful the lobbying efforts of an actor could have been. The closer a member state's policy position to the Commission position, the more the Commission's position reflects the position of the member state. The distance to the weighted mean voter prediction indicates how *central* an actor is in the policy space. It is useful to analyze whether presidencies in one stage or the other have more central positions in the policy space, because centrality enhances their opportunities for success (Bailer 2004). Finally, the distance of an actor's policy position to the policy outcome is a measure of preference loss suffered from the collective outcome (Torenvlied 1996).

There are 152 observations for each actor and 17 actors within each issue, accumulating to 2584 observations (without missing values, and including the Commission). Table 2.2 groups these observations according to the different bargaining stages. The mean distances are calculated for each

Table 2.2 Distances between the policy positions of four types of presidency and non-presidency member states to 1) the Commission's policy position 2) the weighted mean voter prediction of the policy outcome and 3) the policy outcome.

Presidency type	**Commission's position[a]**			**Weighted mean voter prediction of the policy outcome**			**Policy outcome**			**n**
	Mean distance	% Distance (0)	% Distance (100)	Mean distance	% Distance < 10	% Distance > 60	Mean distance	% Distance (0)	% Distance (100)	
Pre-adoption stage presidencies	38.2	36.8	22.1	30.2	23.4	13.9	34.1	27.1	11.7	137
Adoption stage presidencies	39.1	38.2	22.2	29.5	25.3	11.0	33.4	28.8	8.2	146
Intermediate stage presidencies	40.8	40.8	20.1	34.8	15.5	15.8	38.7	23.2	10.4	336
Voting stage presidencies	31.8	47.1	18.6	28.1	24.3	10.0	28.8	30.0	7.9	140
Non-Presidency member states	38.6	39.9	22.1	28.4	27.2	10.6	32.6	30.0	10.2	1468

Notes. *Standardized policy scales [0, 100]. (a) Because the Commission has missing values on some issues, the number of observations differs slightly in this column. The number of observations are: n (Pre-adaption) = 136; n (Adoption) = 144; n (Intermediate) = 333; n (Voting) = 140; n (non-presidency) = 1462.*

presidency group. The percentage of observations for which the distance was minimal (0) and maximal (100) is also displayed. Distributions of distances are highly skewed: many observations have extreme values, with distances being either minimal or maximal.[8]

If lobbying is an important source of power for the presidency, we should observe small distances between the Commission's position and the policy positions of pre-adoption and adoption stage presidencies. Table 2.2 shows that this is not the case: the mean distances are not smaller compared to the mean distance of non-presidency member states. Other member states are equally likely to have their position reflected by the Commission in the pre-adoption and adoption stages.

Turning to the centrality of presidencies in different stages of the bargaining process, Table 2.2 suggests that no group of presidencies is close to the weighted mean voter prediction. The mean distances to the weighted mean voter prediction are considerable for each bargaining stage and not different from the non- presidency group of observations. Hence, we can be confident that a result of presidency power will not be an artifact of centrality in the policy space.

The mean distances to the policy outcome are an indication of the preference loss that presidencies suffer in the different bargaining stages. There are two main conclusions to be drawn here. The mean distances to the policy outcome are largest for presidencies in the intermediate stage, indicating that they are indeed less powerful than adoption and voting stage presidencies. Second, the mean distances to the policy outcome are smallest for voting stage presidencies as compared to both non-presidencies and other presidency types. This suggests that voting stage presidencies are more powerful.

2.6.2 Parameter estimation

We test our three hypotheses by fitting three regression models with the presidency weights as the only unknown parameter. The first regression model is the an empty baseline model, with $\log(\alpha) = 0$, or $\alpha_{ij} = 1$ for all member states in all issues. In the second regression model $\log(\alpha)$ is modeled as a function of dummy predictor *P*, indicating whether a member state holds the presidency in any stage or not at all. Thus, $\beta < 0$ implies that the weight of a member state's position decreases (i.e., $\alpha = e^{(\beta)} < 1$) when it holds the presidency in any stage (the reverse holds when $\beta > 0$). This allows us to test the presidency effect hypothesis. In the third model, four dummy variables are entered into the regression equation, each indicating whether a member state holds the presidency in a specific stage, with P^{PA} for the pre-adoption stage, P^{A} for the

8 This is mainly due to the inclusion of dichotomous issues.

adoption stage, P^I for the intermediate stage and P^D for the voting stage. This model allows us to test the adoption and voting stage hypotheses.

The weighted mean voter model includes the parameters β_m in a non-linear way. We therefore fitted the models using non-linear regression techniques with maximum likelihood estimation. Issues are nested in proposals, and thus we adjusted for the clustering of issues in proposals with the cluster-adjusted sandwich estimates of variance (Rogers 1993). This clustering turns the log-likelihood tests for model comparison inappropriate, since they no longer follow a chi-squared distribution. Hence, we use the Wald test for model comparison, based on the estimated standard error of the residuals. Although not a strong statistical test, a large reduction in the standard error of the residuals implies a better fit of the model. Additionally, we examine the mean errors of the predictions to evaluate the relative accuracy of the models.

Table 2.3 reports the exponents of the regression parameters of the three models. These exponents represent the number by which the weight of a member state's position is multiplied in the specific model. The baseline mean voter model reproduces the results found by Thomson et al. (2006). They report a mean absolute error of 23. We find a mean error of 22.9 and this results from a slight difference in the number of issues (Thomson et al. 2006, used 162).

The presidency model contains a parameter for holding the presidency anywhere in the bargaining process (*P)*, and provides a direct test of the presidency effect hypothesis. The parameter is larger than one, which means that there is additional presidency power, but the effect is not significant. Overall, presidencies do not seem to realize policy outcomes closer to their preferred position than 'ordinary' member states do. The mean error of the predictions is one point smaller than the mean error of the baseline model, indicating a slight improvement in model accuracy.

When we move our analysis to presidencies in different bargaining stages, we observe that voting stage presidencies are significantly more powerful than non-presidency member states. The size of the effect is considerable. The SSI scores have a range of [0,1], and a multiplication of this weight by 4.88 is impressive. The voting stage presidency hypothesis is thus strongly corroborated. Adoption stage presidencies on the other hand, are not significantly more powerful than pre-adoption stage and intermediate stage presidencies. Thus, the adoption stage presidency hypothesis needs to be rejected. The weights for presidencies in the first stages of the bargaining process do not differ from ordinary member states in those stages. This is confirmed by testing the joint significance of the parameters for the first three stages (χ^2(df = 3) = 1.57, p = .67). Overall, model predictions in the presidency stage model are not much more accurate than the baseline predictions. The

Table 2.3 Nonlinear regression analysis of policy outcomes discussed in the Council in the period 1999-2001.

	Baseline model	Presidency model	Presidency stage model
Variable		**$e^{(\beta)}$**	**$e^{(\beta)}$**
Presidencies			
Presidency (P)		1.84 (.84)	
Pre-adoption stage (P^{PA})			1.35 (1.32)
Adoption stage (P^{A})			1.12 (1.91)
Intermediate stage (P^{I})			1.65 (.66)
Voting stage (P^{D})			4.88*** (2.50)
Standard deviation of residuals	30.97	30.90	30.50
Wald test		1.79	10.31**
Mean error	22.9	23.0	22.50
N[a]	152	152	152

Notes. *Sandwich estimates for standard errors, adjusted for clustering of issues in proposals; exponents of parameters and standard errors reported. (a) 152 policy issues are nested in 61 Commission proposals; *p<.10 ** p<.05 *** p<.01 (two-sided).*

inclusion of presidency parameters for the different stages only marginally reduces the model error.

We performed a number of additional analyses to check whether the presidency effects found in the presidency stage model remain stable if we include more complex assumptions about the mechanisms underlying presidency power. First, we investigated for all bargaining stages whether the presidency's power is affected by the degree of salience. Considering the limited amount of time available to a presidency, it can be expected to mobilize its resources specifically on those issues that are more salient. We included parameters for interaction effects between all presidencies and their level of salience. Initially, we found a positive and significant interaction effect for voting

stage presidencies ($e^{(\beta)}$ = 1.06, p = .09), meaning that as salience increases, power increases. However, the effect is oddly large and significant only at the .10 level, probably due to estimation problems. Including only the interaction for voting stage presidencies yielded non-significant results.

Furthermore, we tested whether it is the powerful member states that are responsible for an increase in power when they become president. For all stages we included an interaction effect with the voting weight (w_{ij}). If presidency power increases as voting power increases, we would conclude that powerful member states in particular benefit from holding the presidency office. The opposite may also be true, since powerful member states could be watched more closely by other member states when they hold the presidency. None of the interaction effects for the different bargaining stages were significant.

Finally, we tested whether the distance between the policy position of the president and the Commission's position affects the power of presidencies in the pre-adoption and adoption bargaining stages. The power of *adoption* stage presidencies does not increase or decrease as a result of an increase in the distance to the Commission's position ($e^{(\beta)}$ = 1.03, p = .50), nor does the power of *pre-adoption* stage presidencies ($e^{(\beta)}$ = .98, p = .42). We thus conclude that agreement with the Commission does not reinforce effects of presidency power.[9]

We also tested for robustness of our results. This is important, considering limitations of the dataset in terms of the available distribution of presidencies over the selected issues and the limited time frame of study. It could well be the case that, coincidentally, some tough issues were assigned to a specific presidency. It could also be the case that idiosyncrasies of specific presidencies, for example the personality of the political leader, affected bargaining power rather than the institution of the presidency. Tests for the amount of unexplained variance at the member-state level run into identification problems, as well as regressions that include control variables at the member state. Consequently, we used a more informal test for robustness: we fitted the presidency stage model seven times, each time excluding all issues under the presidency term of one of the seven member states in the voting stage. Most conspicuously, the voting stage presidency effect increases from 4.88 (p < .01; n = 152) to 6.07 (p < .01; n = 119) when the 33 issues for France are excluded. Excluding the issues for the other voting stage presidencies all yielded small increases in power. Only excluding the 32 issues for Sweden yielded a *decrease* in power for voting stage presidencies from 4.88 (p < .01;

9 Table 2 also showed that the distance of voting stage presidencies to the Commission's position was smaller compared to non-presidencies. Adding an interaction parameter for the voting stage to the presidency stage model however also did not show significant results ($e^{(\beta)}$ = 1.02, p = .11).

n = 152) to 2.29 (p = .39; n = 120). Apparently, Sweden was a highly effective voting stage presidency, while France was the least effective for the Council decisions under study.

We ran a number of other checks for robustness of our results. First, we repeated the model estimations for the presidency stage model 61 times, leaving one proposal out of the analysis each time, to test for outliers and idiosyncrasies of issues. It did not change results. We excluded dichotomous issues from the regression analyses because these would arguably violate assumptions of normality and continuous dependent variables. Parameters did not change significance, except for the pre-adoption stage presidencies parameter which turned significant although being smaller than for voting stage presidencies ($e^{(\beta)}$ = 3.47, p < .05). Mean errors of all models decreased.[10] Finally, we used an expert assigned power score of the member states as an alternative to the SSI power indices. The same results were obtained for all parameters.

2.7 Conclusion and discussion

In this chapter, we made a first attempt to examine the power of the presidency of the Council of the European Union with a large-scale quantitative dataset. We tested presidency effects on policy outcomes using a cooperative bargaining model of decision-making. It proved useful to discriminate between the power of presidencies at different stages of the bargaining process. We partly rejected the view of the 'toothless' presidency. We were able to show that it does not pay off to hold the presidency in the earlier stages of bargaining, when decentralized lobbying is the distinguished way of exerting influence on policy outcomes. Instead, our analysis showed that presidencies in the more centralized voting stage can leave a domestic mark on EU policy outcomes. Independent of country size and economic power—on which formal voting power is based—presidencies in the voting stage have additional leverage in EU decision-making compared to other member states.

Our conclusions should be seen as a first starting point in understanding the effects of the EU presidency. Some shortcomings in the data and analysis must be taken into account. Most importantly, the sample of Commission proposals is a selected sample. Statistical generalization to decision-making in the first pillar is not possible. Furthermore, the selection implies that Com-

10 For the baseline, presidency and presidency stage models the mean errors were 20.21, 19.78 and 19.28 respectively. The presidency stage model is still a significant improvement on the baseline model ($Wald(4)$ = 14.51, p<.01).

mission proposals reached a final decision in the period 1999-2001, thereby disregarding those proposals that were never finalized. We do not know anything about the number of proposals that never became legislation and the distribution of these proposals over presidencies. This is of major concern because agenda *exclusion* could be an important power tool for presidencies. If many proposals never become adopted, we may have underestimated the power of adoption stage presidencies vis-à-vis presidencies in later bargaining stages.[11]

There are few more reasons to believe that the additional power of presidencies we found is a conservative estimate. First, the DEU dataset only includes proposals in the first pillar of EU decision-making. One may argue that in the pillars of Common Foreign and Security Policy and Justice and Home Affairs the presidency has more opportunities to influence policy outcomes—particularly because it enjoys formal agenda setting power (Hix 2005). Second, if EU bargaining is characterized less by cooperation and more by tough, non-cooperative bargaining, the presidency can be expected to employ its procedural and informational advantages with even more success. Thus, we have confidence that the presidency effect we report here is a genuine characteristic of EU policy-making.

But the problem of confounding factors that might exist at the level of the member state remains. Size, experience, informal reputation in the Council, level of preparation of the presidency term, or even the personality of political leaders could all account for the effects we found. A proper test for the existence of such effects would require larger, longitudinal datasets that also incorporate precise information about the agenda-setting process. That would be the avenue for further quantitative research.

11 This is also under the assumption that the presidency's policy positions on the issues in these proposals are far away from the expected policy outcome.

Chapter 3

Network embeddedness and public agency performance: The strength of strong ties in Dutch higher education

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3.1 Introduction

Research in public management shows that inter-organizational networks are important determinants of the performance of public agencies and policies (Bardach 1998; Agranoff and O'Toole 1997; McGuire 2003). The body of research on inter-organizational networks is growing rapidly (Klijn and Koppenjan 2000), and studies of agency performance (Rethemeyer 2007) as well as network performance (Knoke et al. 1996; Provan, Fish and Sydow 2007) have become available. Recent empirical studies on agency performance report that the *network activity* of public agencies explains organizational performance (Nicholson-Crotty and O'Toole 2004; O'Toole and Meier 2004; Andrews et al. 2005). For example, analyses of the 'Texas public school district data' consistently reveal significant positive effects of the network activity of directors of Texas school districts on various indicators of performance of their district, such as pass rates and dropout rates (O'Toole and Meier 2004).[12] Effects of organizational network activity are also reported for firm performance, measured by increased survival rates, economic output, and innovativeness (Zaheer, McEvily, and Perrone 1998; Smith-Doerr and Powell 2005;).

In an inter-organizational network, network activity is captured by the concept of *degree centrality*: the most active agencies are those who have the most network ties to other agencies in the network (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 178). The present chapter analyzes how an agency's network activity—in terms of degree centrality—affects its performance. On the basis of current research in public administration and organizational sociology, the chapter argues that agencies with a high degree centrality in the inter-organizational network have ample access to resources and a potential for learning and cooperation. Access to resources and information enables agencies to exploit their environment and buffer environmental shocks—such as changes in political, economic, and technical demands (O'Toole 1997; Meier and O'Toole 2003). Consequently, agencies with high levels of network activity are expected to perform better.

Subsequently, the present chapter proposes an additional (or further) network effect on agency performance: that of the *embeddedness* of agency relations in the inter-organizational network (Granovetter 1985). In terms of network analysis, network embeddedness is captured by the concept of organizational membership of a cohesive subgroup. The most embedded agencies are those who are a member of a cohesive subgroup of agencies in the

12 Studies at the level of the *network* report that the structure of network relations explains performance of the network in terms of the aggregate post-hoc satisfaction of network members (Klijn and Koppenjan 2000), or in terms of policy effectiveness and problem-solving capacity (Provan and Milward 1995, 2001; Provan and Kenis 2008).

network, all tied together by strong relations (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 251-2). The chapter argues that cohesive subgroup membership in the network positively affects performance (Borgatti and Foster 2003; Brass et al. 2004). The mechanism of network embeddedness is different from the mechanism of network activity: an agency's access to more, and more diverse, resources (as expressed by degree centrality) is neither necessary nor sufficient for it to perform well. In order for an agency to perform well, resources must be delivered with the quality agreed upon. The likelihood that resources are delivered to an agency with the quality agreed upon, is greatly enhanced by the building of inter-agency trust. The building of mutual trust is promoted by strong and cohesive relations in subgroups in the inter-organizational network (Provan and Sebastian 1998; Schneider et al. 2003). In strong and cohesive subgroups, information about the (non-compliant) behavior of an agency comes readily available to all agencies, which affects the agency's reputation, and its potential benefits from future cooperation (Raub and Weesie 1990).

An important aim of the present chapter concerns the dependent variable: to analyze agency performance at the level of the *client population*. Most studies define performance indicators at the organizational level, often developed to quantify the monitoring and control of agencies (Boyne et al. 2006). Examples of performance indicators at the level of the organization are the number of criminals arrested as a performance measure for police departments, or dropout rates as a performance measure for schools (Propper and Wilson 2003). However, public agencies deliver services at the individual level and need to satisfy the demands of clients. Provan and Milward (1995) argue that client satisfaction is a more appropriate performance measure because public agencies are much less driven by profit maximizing incentives than firms.

Finally, the present chapter applies *multilevel analysis*, which is the proper statistical design to account for simultaneous variation at the level of the public agency and the level of individual clients. Because data must be available with a relatively large number of cases at each level, scholars in public administration seldom apply multilevel analysis and focus instead on performance measures at the organizational level (Brewer and Seldon 2000). However, if we do not analyze organizational and client-level variation simultaneously, it is not possible to validly estimate the effects of variables at the agency level and at the client level. An additional advantage of multilevel analysis is that we are able to control for selection effects at the level of the client. Although it is not immediately obvious whether more innately talented graduates would evaluate their college more positively or more negatively than their less talented peers, it is important to be able to control for this.

For the present study, we compiled a unique dataset which provides enough statistical power to apply a multilevel design to study organizational

network effects on the satisfaction of clients of public agencies with the services provided. Data were collected in the field of Dutch higher education: the inter-organizational affiliation network of 28 Dutch primary education teacher training colleges. We selected this sector for two main reasons. First, the student population is relatively large. Second, the training program is largely standardized for all the colleges, so that the content of the educational programs offered is held more or less constant. Performance was measured as the satisfaction of a large number of graduates (n = 7,119) with their study program for four cohorts in the period 2002-2005. In order to assess how the colleges are embedded in the affiliation network, data were collected on the network relations between *all* network members. This is seldom done in the field of public administration, where the standard approach is to measure the 'ego-networks' of agencies (e.g., Agranoff and McGuire 2003; O'Toole and Meier 2004), partly because of the difficulty of obtaining data on complete inter-organizational networks. On the basis of these data, the chapter demonstrates that an empirical link exists between graduate satisfaction and the embeddedness of their colleges in the inter-organizational network. An exploration of all potential mediating and moderating mechanisms that may explain this link–such as teacher motivation or the design of study programs–is beyond the scope of the present chapter.

3.2 Research context: colleges for primary education teacher training

The object of study in the present chapter is the network of 28 primary education teacher training colleges (in Dutch: 'Pedagogische Academie Basisonderwijs', PABO) in the Netherlands. These colleges form part of the Dutch system of universities of applied sciences (HBO), which offers more applied studies as compared to the research-oriented system of Dutch universities.[13] PABOs typically prepare students for a bachelors degree—although recently two inter-college masters programs have been established. Within the universities of applied sciences, these colleges offer a specific, four-year bachelor

13 Whereas the Dutch system of higher education in general is believed to have shifted from bureaucratic control to a networked system (De Boer et al. 2007), the specific sector of primary education teacher training still is subjected to strong regulatory control by parliament, ministers, and the Department of Education. Currently, major reforms are being implemented in Dutch higher education. These reforms are the result of the Bologna Declaration of 1999, promoting Europe-wide student mobility, access to higher education, and comparability of degrees. The Bologna Declaration led to the introduction of bachelors, masters, and doctorate degrees in Dutch higher education. The universities of applied sciences seized the opportunity to develop masters programs in addition to their four-year bachelors programs.

program to train teachers in primary education. They are the largest colleges within the system of universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands (in 2006 total enrollment amounted to 35,000 students). A PABO can be either part of a larger multisectoral general university of applied sciences, or constitute a single monosectoral college by itself. There are 20 multisectoral and eight monosectoral colleges in the Netherlands. In contrast to the large general multisectoral colleges (in 2006 enrollment ranged between 1,500 and 40,000), the monosectoral colleges are relatively small (in 2006 enrollment ranged between 500 and 1,500 students). Differences in size between the PABOs themselves are less pronounced. Due to the particular history of Dutch education, colleges can be public, catholic, or protestant, and this still plays a role in the identity of the college and its training program.

Because the average PABO is dependent on the central government for about 65 per cent of its funding, the most important external partner for these organizations is the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Funding is based primarily on total student enrollment, but also includes a 'dynamic demand factor' which incorporates performance measures such as dropout rates in the previous year, and enrollment in the present year (Kaiser, Vossensteyn and Koelman 2001). Thus, these colleges have to compete for students and resources. However, the colleges also have common interests. For example, the reputation of the whole sector was damaged when heated political debate and media attention focused on the poor math and language skills of PABO students. The minister of Education, Science and Culture personally intervened in their programs. The PABOs are not only embedded in their sector, but also in local networks. These networks include the local authority, (boards of) local primary schools, and local regulatory agencies.

The inter-organizational network of the colleges for primary school teacher training is characterized by: 1) participation in institutions or associations and 2) informal, bilateral relationships between their directors and managers. The focus of the present chapter is on the first aspect (cf., Kraatz 1998). The most important formal institution is the 'Dutch Association of Universities of Applied Sciences' (in Dutch: 'HBO-raad').[14] The *HBO-raad* has one central board of directors and two different advisory boards: a general advisory board for all universities of applied sciences, and a specific advisory board for the PABOs. Participation of colleges in the general advisory board comprises direct participation by directors of monosectoral colleges and representation of PABOs within general multisectoral colleges by a college board member.

14 This council could be described as a 'network administrative organization' (Provan and Kenis 2008) because it coordinates activities between universities of applied sciences and is the primary lobby institution for the sector.

The *HBO-raad* is also responsible for special committees, which monitor the implementation of government regulations into the training programs, and in which some of the colleges are involved. In addition to the *HBO-raad*, other institutions have developed in the past. For example, all college managers meet in a consultation platform to discuss operational matters. This platform has grown into a lobby network alternative to the PABO board of the *HBO-raad*. Within the sector, two cooperation networks of smaller colleges emerged. In addition, two inter-college masters programs have been developed in which a subset of the colleges collaborate. In each of these affiliations, PABOs develop common policies, set the agenda for specific problems and exchange vital information about standards, program innovations, and resources. The joint activities and information exchange have spin-off for the internal organization, and affect the cross-fertilization of information and resources across different colleges.

3.3 Theoretical background

3.3.1 Degree centrality and college performance

The public management literature stresses that the network activity of public agencies enhances their performance. Systematic empirical evidence however, is relatively scarce (Boyne et al. 2006). A seminal work in this field is the model of Meier and O'Toole is, which relates different types of management activities of agencies to their performance (Meier and O'Toole 2003; O'Toole and Meier 2004). In the Meier-O'Toole model, agency performance is determined by the agency's past performance, its environment, and network management. The environment represents structural opportunities (e.g., funding possibilities) and constraints (e.g., a high proportion of students from poor families) an actor faces. In the model, the agency's ability to yield a surplus value from environmental forces is a function of 'network management'. Two types of network management are distinguished: 1) management that exploits resources in the agency's environment and 2) management that buffers environmental shocks, such as political, economic, and technical demands (O'Toole 1997).

Meier and O'Toole test different variants of their model on the performance of Texas school districts. In the empirical application to the Texas school districts, network management is defined in terms of *network activity*. District superintendents are asked to indicate how frequently they interact with different categories of actors, such as school board members, the Texas education agency, other superintendents, state legislators, or local business leaders (Meier and O'Toole 2003: 692). In social network analysis, these are

so-called 'ego-centered' network data. Meier and O'Toole (2003: 692) report that network activity highly correlates across the different categories of actors, distinguishing the less active from the more active managers. Many different tests of the model on the Texas school district data consistently show positive effects of network activity of superintendents on the performance of their district—conditional upon a certain degree of homogeneity of resources, and environmental stability (O'Toole and Meier 2004).

The present chapter studies a complete network of PABO colleges, which is a stable inter-organizational structure of public agencies voluntarily participating in formal collaborative platforms. The PABO network is a fixed set of agencies (a complete inter-organizational network), in which all organizations are individually identified. For such networks, network activity is captured by the concept of *degree centrality*, which is the number of network ties to other agencies in the network (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 178).[15] Isolated agencies have a degree centrality of zero, whereas the maximum possible value is *n*-1 relations, where *n* is the number of agencies in the network. The concept of degree centrality is narrower than the intensity of relations to an undefined number of actors within a broad category, for which the assumption is that higher intensity implies interaction with more actors.

PABO colleges enter the inter-organizational platforms to extract resources from each other and to share vital information about their environment, for example about accreditation, fund raising, learning practices, or other methodical expertise. In addition, the PABO colleges coordinate lobby activities and develop joint programs, such as master programs. Thus, for PABOs, network activity has the same implication as for Texas school districts. It yields a surplus value from organizational and environmental resources. High levels of activity in the inter-organizational network provide a PABO with access to many other PABOs—and hence to more, and more diverse, resources and information. Consequently, PABOs learn and make use of new educational practices, technologies, and management innovations (Mizruchi 1994; Kraatz 1998; Stuart and Podolny 1999; Tsai 2001; Brass et al. 2004). PABOs with high levels of degree centrality in the inter-organizational network are more likely to join strategic alliances, which often have a positive effect on performance, as research in R&D shows (Powell and Brantley 1992; Powell et al. 2005). Because the exploitation of resources and information, and the buffer to environmental shocks are expected to contribute to the performance of

15 In the present study we focus on degree centrality as the standard indicator for network activity in a complete network. There are other, rival notions of centrality in network analysis which capture other network characteristics. For example, betweenness centrality captures the control of an actor over the interactions between other actors.

PABOs, we specify the relation between degree centrality and performance as follows.

Hypothesis 1 (college degree centrality): The degree centrality of a college for primary teacher training (PABO) in the inter-organizational college network positively affects its performance.

3.3.2 Cohesive subgroups and college performance

In inter-organizational networks the exchange of resources and information, and cooperation in joint programs and activities, is not always straightforward. Resources obtained must have some quality in order to contribute to the performance of the agency. Information must be reliable and correct in order to stimulate learning. Likewise, the commitment of agencies to cooperate in joint programs and actions—such as lobby activities—must be credible in order to yield a surplus value from the agency's environment (Coleman 1990). Investments in time (Agranoff 2007) or contracts ensure that exchanges of resources and information, and cooperation in joint programs are not frustrated by opportunistic behavior of partners (Williamson 1991).

An important mechanism to reduce transaction costs and nevertheless ensure agencies' credibility and reliability is the building of mutual trust. The existence of mutual trust between agencies reduces transaction costs and stimulates their cooperation, because agencies adjust their beliefs about the likelihood that a network partner will 'defect' or instead act in accordance with the agreements made. Thus, performance is expected to be better for agencies with *trustworthy* network relations (Provan and Sebastian 1998: 460).

In inter-organizational networks, trust between agencies is promoted by network *embeddedness*, and not by network activity. An agency's network relations are defined as 'embedded' when they are simultaneously strong and 'closed'. A *strong* network relation between agencies stimulates the availability of information (Uzzi 1996) and the understanding of mutual needs and interests (Schneider et al. 2003; Gulati 2007). A *closed* network relation implies that the two agencies share a link with other agencies (Coleman 1990). In closed network relations information about the behavior of agencies becomes available to third parties. Consequently, an agency's reputation can be easily damaged when it provides incorrect information, insufficient resources, or withdraws from cooperation (Raub and Weesie 1990). The agency's reputation affects the likelihood of receiving valuable information and resources in the future, from *all* parties involved in the closed subnetwork (Buskens and Raub 2002).

In the complete network of PABO colleges, the appropriate indicator for network embeddedness is *cohesive subgroup membership*. Network analysis defines a 'cohesive subgroup' as a set of actors who all are strongly tied to

each other by a relation with a specified strength (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 254; 277-282). Sociological studies find support for the idea that cohesive subgroup membership improves performance (Uzzi 1997; Gulati 2007), especially in relatively stable contexts (Rowley, Behrens and Krackhardt 2000). In the field of public management research, Provan and Sebastian (1998) report that a clique of mental health service organizations with overlapping activities (which can be interpreted as an indicator of strength) positively affects client satisfaction. For the PABO colleges we thus arrive at the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 (college cohesive subgroups): Colleges for primary teacher training (PABO) that form cohesive subgroups within the inter-organizational college network perform better than weakly integrated colleges, or isolated colleges.

3.3.3 Contextual effects

Inter-organizational networks do not develop independently (Mizruchi 1994) from the broader institutional context and organizational characteristics. Peng and Luo (2000) control for industrial growth rate and firm size when analyzing effects of managerial networking on returns on assets and market shares. O'Toole and Meier (2004) identify and model contextual effects on the performance of Texas high school districts. Because we evaluate agency performance through client satisfaction, contextual factors include variables at the level of the agency as well as variables at the level of clients.

It is obvious that PABO colleges with limited access to financial means are expected to perform worse, controlling for size of the student population. Although state funding of universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands is equally distributed (Boezerooy 2003), some of the parameters that determine funding are subject to fluctuations in student enrollment or dropout rates. Some colleges also raise additional resources through contract activities. Other factors at the level of the college may also determine performance. O'Toole and Meier (2004) mention stability in personnel, mission or program stability, production process, and procedures. For the present study of colleges for training primary school teachers we take into account the variability in a number of college characteristics for the period 2002-2005. In the Netherlands wages are not under direct managerial control and wage changes affect all colleges in a similar way. Consequently, we do not include them as contextual variables at the level of the colleges.

The composition of the student population also affects the performance of colleges. Most importantly, students will differ in their capabilities and motivation due to selection effects. Such selection effects should be accounted for if the dependent variable is at the individual level (which is the case in the

present study). It is not immediately obvious what effect innate abilities and motivation would be likely to have on satisfaction with the chosen college. On one hand, such students might attribute achievements that are due to their own personal characteristics in part to the college, resulting in a higher level of satisfaction. On the other hand, gifted and/or motivated students may have higher expectations, and report lower levels of satisfaction for a given level of college performance. In either case, if networking colleges differ from non-networking colleges in their ability to attract the most intelligent and diligent students in the population, it is important to control for this.

3.4 Research design and data

To test the hypotheses, we focused on the performance of colleges for the training of primary education teachers in the period between 2002 and 2005. The motivation for the selection of primary education teacher training is two-fold. Firstly, the student population is relatively large, and thus we can expect that the sample sizes for college-year combinations are large enough to allow for statistical testing. Secondly, the training program is largely standardized for all PABOs. The selection of years was motivated by the availability of data.

We constructed one large dataset from three different sources. The first data source is a number of qualitative interviews and document analyses, which—combined with some of the tools of social network analysis—enabled us to make a reconstruction of the *inter-organizational PABO network* over the last years. The second data-source is the management information system of the universities of applied sciences, which is publicly accessible (www.hbo-raad.nl) and provides, among others, all available facts and figures on *PABO characteristics*. The third data source is the 'HBO-monitor', coordinated by the Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (in Dutch: 'Research-centrum voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt', ROA). This monitor is a yearly survey among a large sample of all graduates of universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands. We selected the subset of all graduates in the sample who graduated at a PABO between 2002 and 2005. The HBO-monitor contains several questions about a graduate's evaluation of PABO performance. More specifically, we use g*raduate satisfaction* with the PABO study program as our dependent variable and main indicator for PABO performance. The years reflect evaluations by separate groups of individual graduates, who are also nested in the PABOs. Changes over time thus refer to differences between cohorts, not changes within individuals.

In this way, we created a multilevel dataset, in which graduates are nested in years (of graduation) and PABOs. In total 28 cases are available at the

highest, PABO level.[16] At the PABO by year level 90 cases are available.[17] At the level of individual graduates there are 9,146 cases, of which 7,119 have no missing value on any of the variables used in our analyses. These 7,119 cases are used to test for effects of all variables at the different levels on graduate satisfaction. Obviously, our research design does not permit us to generalize beyond the sector of PABOs, since this would require a comparative study of more inter-organizational networks in a similar fashion.

3.4.1 The inter-organizational PABO network

There are many different ways to define relations in a 'total', or 'whole' inter-organizational network. Examples are interlocks between managers, information exchange networks, task-dependency relations, trust relations, or authority relations. For the present study, we studied the network which develops from multiple 'affiliations' of (representatives of) organizations. Organizations are affiliated with more or less formal institutions, cooperative networks, joint-programs, and so forth. Data on the affiliations of PABOs were collected using structured interviews with in total three key-informants who are experts in the domain of higher education. In addition, an extensive analysis of documents and reports was performed. We analyzed annual PABO reports, reports from the *HBO-raad*, accreditation reports and minutes of meetings for indications of membership to in collaborative bodies or alliances and joint projects (for an overview of the methodology used see Marsden 2005; Torenvlied and Van Schuur 1994). Informants were selected on the basis of their long experience in the PABO field and complementary competences (in policy-making, management and inter-PABO collaborative bodies). One informant has been director of a large PABO college for more than fifteen years and involved in top managerial activities in the field. Two informants are management assistants to a collaborative body. Two interviews were held face to face and one by telephone. All interviews were held in February 2008 and lasted for over two hours. We cross-validated the information of all sources to rule out potential retrospective biases (Torenvlied 2000). The informants were asked which affiliations existed in which at least two PABOs cooperated at the managerial level on either policy formulation or joint program development.

It appears that in the Netherlands, colleges for training primary education teachers participate in eight different affiliations. These include three formal in-

16 In total, there are 28 PABOs in the Netherlands. The dataset contains 24 PABOs , of which two have multiple locations (four and two). In the analyses, these locations are treated as separate colleges.

17 Potentially, 28 x 4 = 112 cases are available, but the sample of graduates is empty for some PABO-year combinations.

stitutions (three subcouncils of the *HBO-raad*), a platform for smaller colleges, two cooperative networks of smaller PABOs, and two inter-PABO masters programs.[18] In six of these affiliations, multiple PABO colleges participate, indicating joint affiliation. We assigned a PABO to an affiliation only if it is directly represented in the affiliation by a director or board member of the PABO.

Under the assumption that organizations have stronger (cooperative) relations if their representatives meet more often, we collapsed the *N* x *A* affiliation matrix into an *N* x *N* network matrix, with the number of mutual affiliations as entries. We used UCINET (Borgatti, Everett and Freeman 1999) to perform these operations. The inter-organizational network relations are valued, indicating the strength of the tie in the affiliation network (by the number of mutual affiliations). From the network, we computed two measures, corresponding to the theoretical concepts of college centrality and cohesive subgroups. With respect to college centrality, we define *degree centrality* of a focal PABO as the total number of other PABOs it is linked to. We define *cohesive subgroups* as cliques of actors tied together with relations of some minimal strength (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 278-8).

3.4.2 Context variables and other PABO characteristics

Theoretically, we assume that network embeddedness complements the effects of context variables on organizational performance. We therefore add a number of control variables that provide alternative explanations for network effects on organizational performance. We distinguish between two types of context variables: environmental variables, and organizational variables. With respect to environmental context variables, we follow O'Toole and Meier (2004) who distinguish between: 1) dependence upon state funding and 2) diversity of funding. We define *dependence on state funding* as the percentage of a PABOs total budget funded by government. We define *diversity of funding* as a fractionalization measure of four sources of funding: 1) government funding, 2) tuition fees, 3) contract activities, and 4) other funds. We computed an inverse Hirschman-Herfindahl concentration index, that is:

$$1 - \sum_{s=1}^{S} x_s^2$$

where *s* denotes the source of funding, *S* denotes the total number of sources, and x_s denotes the fraction of the PABO budget funded by the source. Both

18 The full names are: the HBO General Council, the HBO sectoral advisory committee for the educational sector, an HBO steering committee for the educational policy agenda and monitoring of the quality of study programs, the so-called 'Ede-Beraad', 'Interactum' and 'ZEG' (Zwolle, Ede, Gouda), and development of master programs 'Magistrum' and 'Octaaf'.

measures refer to each specific year of graduation.

With respect to organizational characteristics, we distinguish between: 1) organizational stability, 2) the availability of resources, and 3) college performance. We include two measures for organizational stability. The first measure is the *change in student enrolment*, defined as the mean yearly absolute change in student enrolment over the five years preceding graduation. The second measure is the *change in personnel costs*, defined as mean yearly absolute change in total costs for one fte. per student over the five years preceding graduation in thousands of euro's. We also include two variables for the availability of resources. The first measure is the *student-personnel ratio*, defined as total student enrollment divided by the total fte. for staff in the year of graduation. The second measure is the *solvency* of the college. Personnel costs, student-personnel ratio, and solvency are measured for the universities of applied sciences as a whole and refer to the year of graduation. In the case of multisectoral colleges, we assume that these measures are distributed equally across different programs.

Graduate satisfaction could be affected by the performance of the college in the year of graduation.[19] To control for some indicators of college performance in the year of graduation we applied two measures: 1) the diploma rate and 2) the student dropout rate.[20] The *diploma rate* is defined as the number of graduates in a given year divided by the mean of yearly total enrolment in the PABO over the period 1996-2005. We take the number of graduates relative to the mean enrolment for a long period to rule out short-term fluctuations in enrolment. Freshmen enrollment affects diploma rates (even though it also could be interpreted as an indicator for good performance). When freshmen enrollment increases, it also causes diploma rates to go down, and is highly confounded with size of the college. The student *dropout rate* is defined as the number of freshmen dropouts as a proportion of the total freshmen student enrolment for a given year. High dropout rates are indicators for bad performance because colleges are assumed to motivate their students.[21] Finally, we added the important control variable *enrolment in the PABO college*. This variable is defined as the total student enrolment for the given year of graduation and is an indicator for the size of the organization. Organization size provides

19 We expect that significant events in a student's last year are primarily affected by college performance in the same year and not in preceding years. Tests for effects of college performance in the years preceding graduation did not change results.

20 Correlations are: $\rho_{\text{diploma rate, dropout rate}} = -0.05$ ($p > .05$); $\rho_{\text{diploma rate, graduate satisfaction}} = -0.07$ ($p > .05$); $\rho_{\text{dropout rate, graduate satisfaction}} = -0.21$ ($p < .05$), the unit being school by year ($n = 90$).

21 Some colleges may apply binding recommendations regarding the continuation of studies in the first year. This could be an alternative explanation for high dropout rates.

information about the ability to buffer shocks, such as employee illness. At the same time, graduates tend to evaluate smaller colleges more positively than larger ones.

3.4.3 Graduate satisfaction and graduate-level control measures

At the level of the graduates, we make use of the data provided by the 'HBO-monitor'. Over 85 percent of all colleges participate in the survey. Items are included that measure graduates' perceptions of the educational program in which they were enrolled. Data are collected between one year and one-and-a-half years after graduation, and the average response rates are about 40-45 percent for PABO graduates (and a similar response rate for all college graduates). Data for the period between 2002 and 2005 indicate that 90 percent of the graduates found a job within one year: 85 percent as a primary school teacher and 5 percent as a teacher in a different field.

Organizational performance is a multifaceted concept, especially in the public sector, where organizational goals are multidimensional (Provan and Milward 2001; Boyne 2003). Objective measures of performance ('hard' indicators) are often used to monitor performance and figure predominantly in research on organizational effectiveness. However, there is growing consensus that hard indicators by themselves are insufficient for evaluating agency performance, and need to be supplemented by 'soft' indicators, such as perceived program quality (Bouckaert and Van de Walle 2003; Andrews, Boyne and Walker 2006). Subjective measures of agency performance are sometimes criticized because clients would be ill-informed about policies (Brown and Coulter 1983). Such concerns are raised primarily with respect local municipal services (Kelly and Swindell 2002). In contrast, it can be assumed that college graduates possess accurate and detailed knowledge of their past study program.

We measured the dependent variable *graduate satisfaction* using an item that confronted graduates with the question whether they would choose the same program *at the same institution* again. If not, the graduate could indicate whether: 1) she would choose the same program at a different institution, 2) she would choose a different program altogether, or 3) she would choose not to study again at all. We collapsed the last three categories, creating a dummy variable for graduate satisfaction with the PABO college.[22] The variable could

22 Some colleagues pointed out that there may be important differences between the three categories of graduates who would not do the same study program at the same institution again. For the present study, we assume that a graduate who would opt to do the same study program at a different institution, and another graduate who would opt to do a different study program both base their choice upon the basis of the same criterion: their satisfaction with the study program at their institution. Students' assessments of various dimension of PABO

capture many things, varying from satisfaction with teachers to the evaluation of facilities, or traineeships. However, the measure is a simple and attractive indicator for the evaluation of PABO performance by graduates. Furthermore, this dummy variable has been used in other studies on program performance as well (Allen and Ramaekers 1999), and it is a core measure used in government study program evaluations and college benchmarking.

Of all 8,050 PABO graduates in the dataset who answered this question, 6,089 responded positively — which is about 75 percent. We also included control variables at the level of the graduates. We include *gender* and *age* as standard control variables. Gender is heavily skewed: in the dataset, 89 percent being female. Age ranges from 18 to 62, with a mean of 29. In addition, we included a proxy for ability: a dummy variable *level of secondary education* to single out those students whose enrollment was based on *academic* secondary education, which is the usual entry qualification for research-oriented Dutch universities, as opposed to *general* secondary, which is the usual entry qualification for universities of *applied* science (including PABOs). Descriptive statistics for all the independent variables used are given in the Appendix 3.1.

3.5 Analysis and results

3.5.1 The inter-organizational network structure

The network of affiliation relations between the 28 PABOs is presented in Figure 3.1 as a valued graph. Each node in the graph represents a college and each line represents the existence of at least one overlapping affiliation. We did not insert labels since we were required to ensure the anonymity of the colleges. The graph is valued, that is: the thickness of a line indicates the number of overlapping affiliations. Of the 28 PABOs, 13 are isolates. Their director or board member is not directly involved in any of the affiliations. For the

quality, such as practical relevance and coherence of the program and quality of teachers, differs far more strongly between the first and the latter three categories than between each pair of the three contrast categories. Nonetheless, it is possible that the choice for another study program altogether could be based upon a mismatch between the student's preferences and the specific content of the PABO-study program, regardless of the institution offering the program. To check for such effects, we performed our analyses presented in the results section also without graduates who would opt for a different study program altogether (n decreases to 6,535). We still included those graduates who would opt not to study again (n = 77), because they did not differ systematically from the other graduates with respect to their satisfaction across PABO-colleges. The effects for all cohesive subgroup dummies are stable across the different multilevel models (in fact they even become stronger). The effect of degree centrality in the network model disappears. This indicates that for graduates who would choose a different study program the network effects are weaker, though still present. Hence, dissatisfaction with the specific college remains the primary determinant for choosing another study program.

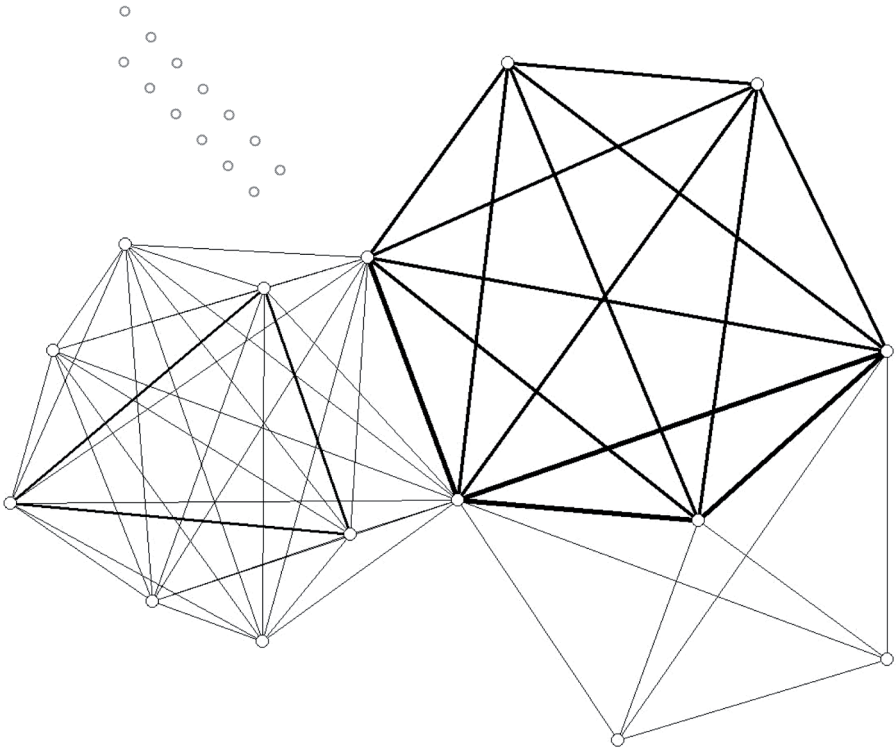


Figure 3.1 The inter-organizational PABO network.

15 PABOs with relations in the inter-organizational network, degree centrality varies between four contacts and 14 contacts.
When we increase a threshold value for strength of relations, two cohesive subgroups emerge. The first, *cohesive subgroup* emerges at strength > 1, and is clearly visible within the left subgraph of the inter-organizational network. It is a clique of three PABOs, which are embedded in a broader cohesive network of weak relations. The second, *highly cohesive subgroup* remains at strength > 2, and dominates the right subgraph. It is a clique of six PABOs, not well-embedded in the total inter-organizational network. In addition to the two cohesive subgroups we observe a subgroup of *networking colleges*. These have ties with other PABOs, but never stronger than one joint affiliation. Finally, the 13 *isolated colleges* form a distinct, non-cohesive subgroup within the inter-organizational network. In Figure 3.1, these colleges are represented by unconnected dots.

Before testing the hypotheses on network activity and cohesive subgroups, we must first inspect whether degree centrality is associated with the subgroups in the inter-organizational network. If such an association exists, both network variables measure the same phenomenon—a common pro-

blem in the analysis of small networks. Table 3.1 shows how the colleges are distributed for degree centrality and cohesiveness. From the table we can conclude that the two network measures partition the PABOs differently. The mean degree centrality does not differ between the groups of highly cohesive, cohesive and networking colleges, and highly cohesive subgroups do not necessarily have more ties than colleges in the other groups. However, there is a strong association between degree centrality and cohesiveness, which is obviously driven by the isolated colleges that are neither member of a subgroup, nor have any ties. The fact that there is a strong association for our data implies that we must test the two variables separately in the multilevel analysis.

Table 3.1 Association between cohesiveness and degree centrality of PABOs in the inter-organizational network.

	Degree centrality		
Cohesiveness	Mean	Range	n
Highly cohesive subgroup	8	5-14	6
Cohesive subgroup	8	8-8	3
Networking colleges	7	4-8	6
Isolated colleges	0	0	13

3.5.2 Test of hypotheses for graduate satisfaction

In order to test the effect of network centrality of PABOs (hypothesis 1) and the embeddedness of PABOs in cohesive subgroups (hypothesis 2) on individual evaluations of their graduates, we estimated as series of multilevel generalized linear models (Bryk and Raudenbusch 1992; Hox 2002). The dependent variable (the satisfaction measure) indicates whether or not a graduate would in retrospect choose the same PABO if given the chance to choose again. Since this variable is dichotomous, we apply a logit function, and link the linear multilevel predictions to probabilities. The nested models contain three levels of analysis: graduates (level 1) are nested in years (level 2), which are nested in PABOs (level 3). The statistical multilevel approach allows us to explicitly incorporate the dependencies between graduates that result from being enrolled in a particular PABO in a particular year. Thus, we are able to partition the variance in graduate satisfaction between the three levels (a PABO component, a year component, and a graduate component).

The three-level logistic model has the following form. Assume we have a number of explanatory variables (X_p, … X_P) at the *graduate level* (level 1), a number of explanatory variables (Z_q, … Z_Q) at the *year level* (level 2), and a number of explanatory variables (G_r, … G_R) at the *PABO level* (level 3). The probability that graduate *i,* who graduated in year *j* at PABO *k* would choose for the same PABO again is given by π_{ijk}. Now, the prediction model can be written as follows:

$$\text{logit}(\pi_{ijk}) = \beta_{0jk} + \beta_{p00} X_{ijk} \quad (1)$$

where:

$$\beta_{0jk} = \delta_{00k} + \beta_{0q0} Z_{0jk} + u_{0jk} \quad (2)$$

$$\delta_{00k} = \gamma_{000} + \beta_{00r} G_{00k} + v_{00k} \quad (3)$$

This is a random intercept model for a binary response variable. The individual error distribution var(e_{ijk}) is fixed at $\frac{1}{3}\pi^2$, and hence no error term is specified at the graduate level (because it is already part of this specification of the error distribution, see Snijders and Bosker 1999). The intercept β_{0jk} is assumed to vary across years and across PABOs. This effectively implies that we expect the average graduate satisfaction score to vary across both levels. Variation in β_{0jk} is explained by year variables Z_{0q0} and PABO variables G_{00k}. The terms u_{0j} and v_{0k} are the year level and PABO level variance terms respectively. Thus, we focus on the estimation of effects of network variables G_{00k} – those that vary only between PABOs – on average graduate satisfaction, controlling for contextual factors that may vary both at the year and PABO level, as well as control variables that vary at the graduate level. To test hypothesis 1, (the positive effect of network activity on performance) we include *degree centrality*. To test hypothesis 2 (the positive effect of membership of a cohesive subgroup), we include three dummy variables to capture the different subgroups.

One cautionary remark must be made with respect to the estimation of the model. The statistical power for parametric tests of effects of variables at the PABO level is limited, since we only have 28 cases in the dataset. Therefore, we cannot test for cross-level interactions, such as the moderating effects of network characteristics (for example that degree centrality particularly affects the evaluations of motivated students). The limited statistical power at the PABO level also implies that we can introduce only few control variables in each model.

We first fit an empty model to find out how much variance in graduate satisfaction is to be found at the different levels of analysis. Subsequently, we fit five different models for each hypothesis. The *network model* includes only the independent network variables at the PABO level. The other four models also include these network variables, and control successively for four different groups of control variables at the PABO-year level. The *performance model* includes the PABO 'diploma rate' and 'dropout rate'. The *environment model* includes the environmental factors 'diversity of funding' and 'dependen-

ce on state funding'. The *stability model* includes the organizational stability factors 'fluctuation in personnel costs' and 'fluctuation in student enrolment'. Finally, the *resources model* includes the effects of 'student-personnel ratio' and 'PABO solvency'. 'Enrolment in the PABO college' is included as a variable in all models.[23] In addition, we include age, gender and level of secondary education as controls in all five models at the graduate level.

Table 3.2a shows the results of the multilevel analyses with *degree centrality*. The empty model informs us about how much of the total variance in graduate evaluations can be attributed to the graduate level, the year level, and the PABO level. The proportion of variance in graduate evaluations attributed to a specific level is computed by dividing the variance at the specific level by the sum of the three different variance components. In general, the explained variance in any logistic regression is considerably lower than the standard R^2 for continuous dependent variables. Of the total variance in graduate evaluations, 6.29 percent can be attributed to the PABO level, and 4.89 percent to the year level. These numbers are still considerable, taking into account the many factors that could play a role at the individual level.

The results of the analyses for all five models clearly show that graduates of the actively networking PABOs are not significantly more likely to have a positive view of their past education at the college. The second column of table 3.2a shows a weakly significant effect of PABO degree centrality at $p < 0.10$ in the expected direction (more ties lead to more graduate satisfaction). However, when controlling for general college performance or contextual factors, this effect disappears. Hence, we must reject hypothesis 1 for graduate satisfaction. A possible explanation for the weak effect of PABO degree centrality found, is that ties do not only yield benefits (of learning, joint problem solving and coordination), but also costs (for example opportunistic behavior by partners). Such costs could be lower for more stable contexts, which may explain the slightly significant effects in the network model and the environment model.

Hypothesis 2 stated that cohesive subgroups within the inter-organizational network perform better than weakly integrated colleges, or isolated colleges. We introduced three dummy variables identifying these different subgroups, with the subgroup of isolated PABOs as a reference category. Table 3.2b shows the results of the multilevel analyses with *cohesive subgroups* as the independent network variables at the PABO level. All models show that, in contrast with network activity, subgroup cohesion and tie strength at the PABO level have strong and robust effects on individual graduates' satisfaction.

23 We truncated the variables 'enrolment PABO-college' and 'diversity of funding' by 1,000.

Table 3.2a Degree centrality: Multilevel logistic regression of PABO graduate satisfaction 2002-2005 (n = 7,119).

	Empty Model	Network model	Models with control variables at the PABO-year level			
			Performance variables	Environment variables	Stability variables	Resources variables
Network activity						
Degree centrality		0.035 (0.025)*	0.027 (0.026)	0.036 (0.025)*	0.029 (0.024)	0.032 (0.026)
PABO–year level						
Diploma rate			-0.090 (1.835)			
Dropout rate			-2.018 (1.395)*			
Diversity of funding				0.128 (0.129)		
Dependence state funding				-0.882 (0.868)		
Change in personnel costs					1.223 (0.469)##	
Change in enrolment					-0.002 (0.002)	
Student / personnel ratio						-0.008 (0.057)
Solvency						1.107 (0.614)**
Enrolment PABO college			0.018 (0.149)	-0.009 (0.150)	0.168 (0.175)	0.035 (0.153)
Graduate level						
Female		0.263 (0.001)***	0.264 (0.001)***	0.262 (0.001)***	0.265 (0.001)***	0.267 (0.001)***
Age		0.027 (0.000)***	0.027 (0.000)***	0.027 (0.000)***	0.027 (0.000)***	0.027 (0.000)***
Level of sec. ed.		-0.125 (0.001)***	-0.125 (0.001)***	-0.124 (0.001)***	-0.125 (0.001)***	-0.126 (0.001)***
Intercept	1.109 (0.103)###	0.016 (0.146)	0.550 (0.570)	-0.030 (0.948)	-0.369 (0.266)#	-0.300 (0.826)
Variance components						
σ^2_e (scale factor)	3.29	3.29	3.29	3.29	3.29	3.29
σ^2_{u0} (year)	0.181 (0.032)###	0.173 (0.031)###	0.171 (0.031)###	0.167 (0.030)###	0.167 (0.029)###	0.179 (0.032)###
σ^2_{v0} (PABO)	0.233 (0.080)###	0.248 (0.083)###	0.237 (0.080)###	0.241 (0.081)###	0.205 (0.070)###	0.251 (0.085)###

Notes. ** p<.10 (one-sided); ** p<.05 (one-sided); *** p<.01 (one-sided); # p<.10 (two-sided); ## p<.05 (two-sided); ### p<.01 (two-sided).*

Table 3.2b Cohesive subgroups: Multilevel logistic regression of PABO graduate satisfaction 2002-2005 (n = 7,119).

	Network model	Models with control variables at the PABO-year level			
		Performance variables	Environment variables	Stability variables	Resources variables
Cohesive subgroups[a]					
Networking colleges	-0.236 (0.220)	-0.315 (0.231)	-0.304 (0.227)	-0.309 (0.216)	-0.366 (0.229)
Cohesive Subgroup	0.742 (0.280)***	0.730 (0.309)***	0.745 (0.275)***	0.507 (0.280)**	0.737 (0.284)***
Highly Cohesive Subgroup	0.747 (0.230)***	0.730 (0.230)***	0.852 (0.242)***	0.738 (0.212)***	0.705 (0.234)***
PABO–year level					
Diploma rate		-0.734 (1.741)			
Dropout rate		-0.662 (1.368)			
Diversity of funding			0.200 (0.121)**		
Dependence state funding			0.061 (0.750)		
Change in personnel costs				1.111 (0.443)**	
Change in enrolment				-0.002 (0.002)	
Student / personnel ratio					-0.037 (0.050)
Solvency					0.973 (0.529)**
Enrolment PABO-college		0.150 (0.132)	0.113 (0.130)	0.285 (0.158)	0.173 (0.130)
Graduate level					
Female	0.268 (0.001)***	0.269 (0.001)***	0.269 (0.001)***	0.270 (0.001)***	0.270 (0.001)***
Age	0.027 (0.000)***	0.027 (0.000)***	0.027 (0.000)***	0.027 (0.000)***	0.027 (0.000)***
Level of sec. ed.	-0.128 (0.001)***	-0.128 (0.000)***	-0.128 (0.000)***	-0.128 (0.000)***	-0.128 (0.000)***
Intercept	0.002 (0.124)	0.184 (0.546)	-1.165 (0.855)	-0.480 (0.225)##	-1.013 (0.724)
Variance components					
σ^2_e (scale factor)	3.29	3.29	3.29	3.29	3.29
σ^2_{u0} (year)	0.167 (0.030)###	0.164 (0.029)###	0.158 (0.028)###	0.157 (0.028)###	0.168 (0.030)###
σ^2_{v0} (PABO)	0.143 (0.055)###	0.140 (0.053)###	0.129 (0.050)###	0.116 (0.046)##	0.134 (0.052)###

Notes. *(a) Reference category = isolated PABOs; * p<.10 (one-sided); ** p<.05 (one-sided); *** p<.01 (one-sided); #p<.10 (two-sided); ## p<.05 (two-sided); ### p<.01 (two-sided).*

With respect to the direction of the effects, Table 3.2b clearly shows that the graduates of colleges in both the cohesive and highly cohesive subgroups have a significantly higher likelihood of having a favorable opinion about their past education. Interestingly, graduate satisfaction is not higher for PABOs that have only weak ties in the inter-organizational network. Their average satisfaction is even lower than that of the reference group of isolated colleges, although the difference is not statistically significant. The effect of the two cohesive subgroups on satisfaction remains in all models, controlling for college performance and for different contextual variables. Hence, the analyses on graduate satisfaction firmly corroborate hypothesis 2. The direction of the effects of the independent variables at the PABO-year level (college performance and contextual variables) is comparable with those in the previous analyses (network centrality). The results become even more convincing if we consider the fact that the average satisfaction level in the data is high (.75). Because the distribution in the model is binomial or S-shaped, it is more difficult to detect significant differences in probabilities between schools around a high mean.

We add a final analysis to our test of the different multilevel models. The interpretation of estimates becomes quite complex in a multilevel analysis with a binary outcome variable and multiple levels of analysis. To explore effect sizes, let us concentrate on the *network model* from table 3.2b and conduct an analysis of explained variance of the estimated dummy coefficients for each of the two cohesive subgroups in the inter-organizational network. Explained variance in multilevel logistic regression models can be computed by dividing the variance of the linear predictor by the total variance (Snijders and Bosker 1999).[24] In addition, for all four subgroups we computed the mean and range of the predicted probabilities that a graduate would positively evaluate the past education. This gives an idea of the variation in mean graduate satisfaction between the different subgroups of PABOs in the inter-organizational network. Table 3.3 shows the results.

As we would expect, Table 3.3 shows that the PABO dummies explain a small portion of the total variation in graduate satisfaction at the individual level. In general, the explained variance in any logistic regression model is considerably lower than the standard R^2 for continuous dependent variables. However, at the PABO level, the dummy variables explain 17.53 and 13.19 percent of the variation in graduate satisfaction. In total, the network model

24 The explained variance for each dummy is computed by subtracting the total explained variance of the linear predictor without the estimated coefficient from total explained variance with the estimated coefficient, taking into account the scaling of graduate-level variance. The percentage variance explained is the additive variance to all the other variables in the network model, which contains all PABO-dummies and the graduate–level controls.

Table 3.3 Network model. Differences between subgroups of PABOs in the inter-organizational network in 1) percentages variance explained of graduate satisfaction and 2) predicted probabilities of graduates to positively evaluate their past study.

	% Variance explained		Predicted probabilities		
	PABO level	Total	Mean	Range	n
Highly cohesive subgroup	17.53	2.15	0.84	0.65 – 0.96	972
Cohesive subgroup	13.19	1.27	0.83	0.69 – 0.94	671
Networking colleges	n.s	n.s	0.72	0.27 – 0.91	2,842
Isolated colleges[a]	ref.	ref.	0.73	0.25 – 0.94	2,634

Note. *(a) Reference category in the network model.*

explains 41 percent of the PABO level variance (not reported in Table 3.3). In addition, we observe a marked difference in predicted probabilities between the two cohesive subgroups on the one hand, and the networking colleges and isolated colleges at the other hand. To start with, if we look at the range of predicted probabilities, no graduate in either of the cohesive subgroups has a predicted probability lower than 0.65, which means that they are always more likely to be satisfied than not. The mean predicted probability of graduates to have a positive opinion about their past education is about 85 percent for these groups. In comparison to the other colleges, this yields an increase of about 10 percent. This result is somewhat stronger than the five percent increase in aggregate performance of school districts due to the network management activities of superintendents (Meier and O'Toole 2004: 472).[25]

3.6 Conclusion and discussion

This chapter systematically examined the effects of network activity and network embeddedness of 28 Dutch colleges for the training of primary education teachers on their performance. The chapter first tested the effect of network activity of colleges on the satisfaction of their graduates with the program offered. The results show that having more network relations *per se* is not sufficient to perform well. A weak effect of degree centrality of colleges in the inter-organizational network on graduate satisfaction disappeared when con-

25 Studies of graduate satisfaction typically focus on moderating variables between network characteristics and graduate satisfaction. For Dutch universities of applied sciences, programs that were strongly related to occupational practice and programs that were regarded as challenging were favorably evaluated (Allen and Ramaekers 1999). It was also found that a longer study duration was associated with a lower level of satisfaction. It seems likely that any effect of network characteristics of PABOs would work through improved implementation of program characteristics such as those mentioned above, and through the provision of study facilities that allow a maximum number of students to complete the program with a minimum of delay.

trolling for organizational stability, access to resources, and organizational-level performance. Hence, network activity of the Dutch colleges does not affect graduate satisfaction, whereas the network activity of Texas superintendents strongly contributes to their pupils' achievements (Meier and O'Toole 2003; O'Toole and Meier 2004).

The difference in results found can be attributed to a number of factors. In the first place, the context of a Dutch inter-organizational network of colleges in higher education is different from the context of Texan public school districts. In the second place, the indicator of network activity in the present chapter (degree centrality) is different from the contact frequency of individual superintendents. The contact frequency of individual superintendents with broad categories of other actors has a wider scope than degree centrality within an inter-organizational network. Further research should reveal whether contact frequencies of colleges in a wider environment also affect their performance. In the third place, the graduate satisfaction is a different indicator for performance than pupil achievements, which the Texas school studies explain (Meier and O'Toole 2003; O'Toole and Meier 2004).

The analyses show that graduates' satisfaction is consistently and significantly higher for colleges that are member of strong, cohesive subgroups in the inter-organizational network, which was a different hypothesis in the present study. Our results confirm previous studies (Uzzi 1996; Provan and Sebastian 1998) on network embeddedness and performance. Thus, in the context of the college affiliation networks in higher education, maintaining strong and closed relations positively affects graduate satisfaction. Indeed, based on a study of three mental health care networks, Provan and Sebastian (1998: 461) conclude that 'at least in certain contexts, strong, multiplex, reciprocal ties among small network subgroups can be particularly effective'. We demonstrated that significant network effects exist that justify further investigation, in particular for contexts different from Dutch higher education.

The chapter contributes to the scarce research about network effects on subjective client evaluation (Provan and Milward 1995; Provan and Sebastian 1998; Andrews, Boyne and Walker 2006). Client evaluations are a crucial aspect of public service performance (Provan and Milward 2001), but seldom integrated as individual cases in one analysis (Forbes and Lynn 2005: 569). The present chapter studied the satisfaction of college graduates in a European setting, taking into account the complex nesting structure of graduates in years (cohorts), and in colleges. Although a full explanation of performance at the client level was not the aim of the present chapter, we integrated agency network data, agency performance data, and client evaluations of agency performance into one statistical design.

The chapter did not intend to reveal all possible mechanisms that may underlie a systematic association between agency network embeddedness and client satisfaction. Hence, many routes for future research exist. Firstly, theoretical research should focus more in-depth on the mechanisms that relate network activity and network embeddedness to performance. Secondly, it is necessary to further investigate whether cohesive subgroups indeed benefit from higher levels of inter-organizational trust, as postulated. Because inter-organizational trust is so crucial in the literature, future research should focus more in-depth on the mechanisms that link network embeddedness and inter-organizational trust to performance. Thirdly, the multilevel analysis shows that much of the variation in graduates' evaluations is attributable to mechanisms at the client level. This suggests that future research must ultimately incorporate large-*n* data on the interactions between 'street-level' officers (teachers) and clients (students) to explain client satisfaction.

Given the relatively small number of cases at the level of colleges for the training of primary teachers ($n = 28$), and the fact that effects of network embeddedness remained while controlling for important environmental and organizational context variables, the effects found could be considered to be an underestimation. Hence, further research should extend the present study to other contexts than one sector of Dutch higher education. A comparative analysis of multiple sectors offers the possibility to increase the power of the test while still including evaluations of graduates as performance measures at the client level.

Appendix 3.1 *Descriptive statistics for the independent variables in the analysis.*

	2002-2005 collapsed					2002					2003				
Variables	n	Mean	SD	Min	Max	n	Mean	SD	Min	Max	n	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Network-level variables															
Degree centrality	90 (28)	4.1	4.3	0	14	24	4.04	4.21	0	14	23	3.48	4.02	0	12
Cohesiveness	90 (28)	2.0	1.0	1	4	24	2	1.14	1	4	23	1.87	1.10	1	4
PABO–year level variables															
Diploma rate	90	0.23	0.03	0.14	0.32	24	0.20	0.03	0.14	0.25	23	0.22	0.02	18.53	26.32
Dropout rate	90	0.25	0.05	0.10	0.43	24	0.26	0.05	0.15	0.36	23	0.23	0.04	0.11	0.32
Diversity of funding	90	4959.24	562.41	2784	6570	24	4883.17	461.31	3898	6249	23	5063.22	475.06	4011	6417
Dependence state funding	90	0.66	0.09	0.12	0.76	24	0.68	0.04	0.55	0.76	23	0.67	0.04	0.53	0.75
Change in personnel costs	90	0.29	0.16	0.13	0.95	24	0.29	0.16	0.14	0.92	23	0.26	0.13	0.13	0.77
Change in enrolment	90	68.96	45.29	21.43	253.40	24	77.17	51.05	26.32	247.00	23	72.71	50.15	21.43	253.40
Student / personnel ratio	90	13.93	1.47	11.4	17.1	24	13.57	1.43	11.60	16.80	23	13.76	1.37	11.60	16.50
Solvency	90	0.37	0.15	0.16	0.75	24	0.36	0.15	0.16	0.68	23	0.37	0.16	0.18	0.72
Enrolment PABO college	90	1195.72	712.30	333	3991	24	1058.13	651.25	348	3284	23	1090.94	718.96	333	3598
Graduate- level variables															
Female	7119	0.89	0.31	0	1	1228	0.90	0.31	0	1	1640	0.90	0.30	0	1
Age	7119	29.13	9.20	18	62	1228	29.13	9.20	18	62	1640	27.12	7.63	18	57
Level of secondary education	7119	0.12	0.33	0	1	1228	0.14	0.35	0	1	1640	0.13	0.34	0	1

Appendix 3.1 *(continued).*

	2004					2005				
Variables	n	Mean	SD	Min	Max	n	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Network-level variables										
Degree centrality	21	4.05	3.97	0	12	22	3.5	3.94	0	12
Cohesiveness	21	2.10	1.18	1	4	22	1.95	1.17	1	4
PABO–year level variables										
Diploma rate	21	0.24	0.03	0.18	0.32	22	0.24	0.03	0.20	0.32
Dropout rate	21	0.24	0.05	0.10	0.32	22	0.26	0.07	0.10	0.43
Diversity of funding	21	4906.76	668.44	2784	6485	22	4983.64	650.10	3198	6570
Dependence state funding	21	0.64	0.13	0.12	0.72	22	0.64	0.12	0.15	0.74
Change in personnel costs	21	0.29	0.17	0.13	0.81	22	0.32	0.21	0.13	0.95
Change in enrolment	21	65.01	42.84	27.60	221.20	22	59.80	35.48	22.80	182.20
Student / personnel ratio	21	14.12	1.67	11.5	17.1	22	14.28	1.40	11.40	16.70
Solvency	21	0.38	0.16	0.17	0.71	22	0.39	0.15	0.20	0.75
Enrolment PABO college	21	1232.76	748.82	564	3849	22	1272.75	757.98	602	3991
Graduate-level variables										
Female	1924	0.89	0.32	0	1	2327	0.89	0.31	0	1
Age	1924	30.75	10.31	18	62	2327	30.60	9.72	20	60
Level of secondary education	1924	0.11	0.32	0	1	2327	0.12	0.32	0	1

Chapter 4

Linking stakeholder involvement to policy performance: Nonlinear effects in Dutch local government policy-making

This chapter is currently under review (submitted as: Schalk, J. Linking stakeholder involvement to policy performance: Nonlinear effects in Dutch local government policy making). The data used in this chapter were made available by The Netherlands Institute of Social Research (in Dutch: 'Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau', SCP).

4.1 Introduction

The past two decades of public management research have shown that a great degree of interdependence exists among local governments and nongovernmental actors in the provision of public services (Agranoff 2003). Local governments increasingly engage in interactive policy-making activities to enable non-governmental stakeholders to voice their opinions and concerns in the decision-making process (Denters et al. 2003; Edelenbos and Klijn 2006) and to coordinate their activities in inter-organizational service delivery (Agranoff 2003; O'Toole 1997; Walker et al. 2007; Thomas, Poister and Ertas 2010). This chapter examines whether and how stakeholder involvement in local governments' policy-making affects the performance of local policies.

Stakeholder involvement by governments and public agencies has been referred to as 'collaborative governance' (Huxham and Vangen 2000), 'public participation' (Rydin and Pennington 2000), 'deliberative democracy'(Feldman et al. 2006) or 'interactive decision-making' (Edelenbos and Klijn 2006). Its practice has been documented in various policy sectors, such as environmental policy (Flynn and Kroeger 2003), transportation (Thomas and Poister 2009), and urban development (Agranoff 2003). 'Stakeholders' are nongovernmental actors who can affect, and who are affected by, the performance of policies (Scholl 2001). They include nonprofit and private sector organizations, interest groups, other governments, or individual citizens. Stakeholder involvement is typically government-initiated, consensus-based, and collectively organized, and it offers stakeholders the opportunity to influence policies (Ansell and Gash 2008). The process itself may take on formalized arrangements, in which stakeholders obtain actual procedural or legislative power, e.g., through official committees in negotiated rulemaking (Lavertu and Weimer 2010). The process can also be organized more informally, e.g., through the use of open-access platforms, study groups, citizen panels, or professional focus groups (Bingham, Nabatchi and O'Leary 2005; Tatenhove, Edelenbos and Klok 2010).

The goal of stakeholder involvement is to increase policies' performance in terms of the service outputs and outcomes for the client population whose conditions these policies target, such as mental health patients (Provan and Milward 1995), drug abusers (Percival 2009), or veterans (Keiser and Miller 2010). By involving stakeholders, governments and public agencies create *access to information and resources* that stakeholder organizations possess and *build support* for their policies. The majority of empirical studies find a positive effect on performance (Freeman and Langbein 2000).

However, the effects of stakeholder involvement on policy performance studied in the empirical literature primarily focus on *process*-oriented indica-

tors, such as litigation rates and the duration of rulemaking (Coglianese 1997) or the satisfaction of stakeholders with the policy-making process (Gilliam et al. 2002; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004). Alternatively, a growing literature on performance management in the public sector studies stakeholder involvement in terms of the effectiveness of public programs, as measured by service *outputs* and *outcomes*—for example, client satisfaction or the speed and reliability of service delivery (O'Toole and Meier 1999; Meier and O'Toole 2003; Goerdel 2006; Boyne and Walker 2010; Schalk, Torenvlied and Allen 2010). Although the majority of these empirical studies find a positive link between stakeholder involvement and performance, the evidence is inconsistent.

In particular, recent research has drawn attention to the costs that may condition any positive effect of stakeholder involvement on service outputs and outcomes. There are costs involved in maintaining relationships with stakeholders (Provan and Sydow 2008), including time and opportunity costs, as well as the increased decision-making time needed to reach agreements (Coglianese 1997; Agranoff 2006). These costs may increase at higher levels of stakeholder involvement, while the benefits of accessing valuable resources and building policy support may, in contrast, diminish. Indeed, O'Toole, Hicklin and Meier (2008) find evidence for diminishing returns of managerial networking on Texas school districts' performance. Thus, although stakeholder involvement may benefit policy performance, the returns may diminish, or even become negative, at higher levels of involvement.

The effect of stakeholder involvement on policy performance may be different for different *types* of stakeholders due to differences in their access to information and resources, their power, and their specific interests (Moynihan and Pandey 2005; Torenvlied et al. 2010; Walker et al. 2010; Akkerman and Torenvlied 2011). Walker et al. (2010), for example, find no overall effect of external networking on local government performance, but they do find differential effects when examining political officials (negative effect), user groups (positive effect), and professional organizations (no effect) separately. Thus, it appears that the effect of stakeholder involvement on policy performance may be nonlinear and stakeholder-specific.

In this chapter, we explore whether nonlinear and partner-specific effects of stakeholder involvement on policy performance, in terms of client outcomes, exist. Our research context is the implementation of the Social Support Act (SSA 2007) in the Netherlands (in Dutch: 'Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning', WMO). The SSA context offers a unique testing ground to examine the relationship between involvement and performance in a systematic and comparative way (cf. Ansell and Gash 2008: 562) by combining two important features. First, all local governments are required to attain the same general SSA goals, which relate to increasing their citizens' level of *independent func-*

tioning, in particular those with physical or mental impediments. Second, local governments have been assigned financial and statutory responsibility for the formulation and implementation of local policies to attain these SSA goals. As a consequence, policy performance—in terms of attaining SSA goals—is comparable across local governments, while local discretion in policy-making will likely cause variation in the degree to which local governments involve stakeholders in the process.

For the SSA context, we identify two types of stakeholders that are likewise perceived as separate categories by public managers in the SSA context (De Klerk et al. 2010). First, *professional organizations* are those partner organizations that do not represent the interests of the target population but deliver services to them, e.g., house-cleaning services or transportation. Professional organizations are legal entities and may be for-profit, nonprofit, or semipublic. Second, *client-interest organizations* are those organizations that represent the target population. These organizations may or may not be legal entities, but they are always nonprofit. Their primary interest is in representing their clients by influencing policies, although they have become increasingly involved in delivering services as well through coproduction arrangements (Bovaird 2007). Examples in the present context are interest groups for the elderly and for informal care-givers.

The following sections draw on the literature to derive hypotheses regarding the effects of stakeholder involvement on policy performance at the level of the SSA clients. Empirically, we test our hypotheses by conducting multilevel analyses on a unique longitudinal and multi-actor dataset consisting of a representative sample of 69 key public managers in Dutch local governments, as well as an additional representative sample of 3,343 individual SSA clients. This dataset allows us to evaluate policy performance in terms of actual client outcomes (cf. Boyne 2003) that are directly related to SSA goals. With clients' evaluations of their own conditions, we prevent same-source and social-desirability bias compared to policy performance as perceived by governments and stakeholder participants (cf. Freeman and Langbein 2000; Lubell 2004; Klijn, Steijn, and Edelenbos 2010).

4.2 Stakeholder involvement in policy-making

The public administration literature offers two dominant theoretical mechanisms that positively relate stakeholder involvement to policy performance: access to information and resources as well as building policy support. We will discuss these mechanisms in turn.

The first mechanism, *access to information and resources,* is a key motive for governments to involve stakeholders in the policy-making process. This mechanism has been studied from two perspectives. From the perspective of the public manager, stakeholder involvement constitutes a key managerial task that critically affects program performance. An important branch of the performance-management literature (Nicholson-Crotty and O'Toole 2004; O'Toole and Meier 2004; Hill and Lynn 2005; Boyne et al. 2006) focuses on stakeholder involvement as the individual networking behavior of public managers. The core explanation underlying the positive association between managerial networking and performance is that public managers who maintain more frequent contact with key stakeholders are better able to acquire resources for the public agency, to reduce informational uncertainties related to political, economic and technical demands and to manage unexpected external events (O'Toole and Meier 1999).

From the perspective of collaborative governance in policy-making (Huxham and Vangen 2000; Furlong and Kerwin 2005; Keiser and Miller 2005; Edelenbos and Klijn 2006; Ansell and Gash 2008; Lavertu and Weimer 2010), access to information and resources likewise links stakeholder involvement to improved performance. This literature argues that—in addition to bilateral information exchange—the *collective* nature of stakeholder involvement implies that governments and stakeholders may simultaneously collect, analyze and combine information from different sources in a process that further facilitates learning (Lipshitz, Popper and Oz 1996; Moynihan 2005; Damgaard and Torfing 2010). The collective nature of involvement has the additional advantage that new information can be instantly evaluated, cross-checked and supplemented by all of the actors involved, thus increasing the likelihood of identifying effective, innovative solutions to policy problems (Koppenjan and Klijn 2004).

Stakeholders possess different types of information that governments are not likely to possess, a fact that may improve policy performance. First, stakeholders may provide evidence-based information (Head 2008) derived from their specific core tasks (e.g., health care or social work). This evidence may include performance data for intervention methods and programs related to a policy's target population, general trends in socio-demographic and economic conditions, or information on 'best practices' (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002; Nutley, Walter and Davies 2007). Second, stakeholders may sound an alert when programs fail or problems occur during service delivery, and they can provide performance feedback (Walker et al. 2010). Finally, by providing information on their daily operations, tasks, goals and competencies, stakeholder organizations enable governments to improve the inter-organizational

coordination of service delivery, particularly by reducing the likelihood of blind spots (a lack of needed client services) and duplication of services (Provan and Milward 1995).

In addition to greater access to information and resources, building *policy support* is a second key motive for governments to involve stakeholders in their policy-making processes. Governments are dependent on stakeholder organizations because the performance of policies depends on stakeholders'-cooperation and contribution to policy design and implementation. Such cooperation is not self-evident. Although all stakeholders benefit from effective policies (e.g., through improved client services), stakeholder organizations have their own priorities in pursuing various policy options. These priorities derive from their particular understanding of the problem at hand, their perceived need to cooperate, their trust in other participants, their willingness to invest resources, etc. (Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; Head 2008). These differing interests may hamper policy performance (Lundin 2007). Stakeholder involvement offers governments the opportunity to build policy support through interest mediation (Provan and Kenis 2008). Although core differences in organizational interests—i.e., related to budget allocations—may always persist (Sabatier 1998), providing stakeholder organizations with a forum to express their interests helps to reduce possible opposition to policies, to find compromise solutions, and to create mutual understanding and goal consensus among the organizations involved (Freeman and Langbein 2000; Nutt and Backoff 2002). Even when policies do not reflect stakeholders' interests, the perception of being taken seriously is likely to enhance policy support (Newig and Fritsch 2009). Hence, stakeholder involvement can be expected to positively affect policy performance through policy support. Taken together, the advantages associated with access to information and resources, along with policy support, lead to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The involvement of stakeholder organizations in local policy-making has a positive effect on policy performance.

4.2.1 A nonlinear effect of professional organizations' involvement on policy performance

Although few would argue that there are no benefits to stakeholder involvement, and empirical studies on balance find a positive linear effect on performance, students of stakeholder involvement have identified various barriers that must be overcome to make such collaboration effective. These barriers include increased decision-making time, potential past disagreements (Andranovich 1995), the difficulty in establishing effective leadership (Vangen and Huxham 2000), the need to build trust among participants (Koppenjan

and Klijn 2004), etc. (cf. Ansell and Gash 2008). It can be argued that such barriers are more likely to render stakeholder involvement ineffective when *too many* stakeholders are involved. Hence, returns of involvement on performance may initially be positive, but they may diminish when the number of stakeholders reaches a certain threshold.

Several arguments underlie this expectation. First, the benefits of access to information and resources are likely to decrease with the involvement of additional stakeholders, as limits are reached in terms of the usefulness of information and resources that can be obtained from additional partners (Hicklin, O'Toole and Meier 2008).[26] Duplicity of information becomes more likely, or new information may add unnecessary complexity. At the same time, there are limits to the time, energy, and financial resources of the public managers who organize stakeholder involvement (Provan and Sydow 2008). Public managers must divide their attention across all of their relationships. Thus, the marginal cost of an additional tie may be the improved functioning of the existing ties (Burger and Buskens 2009), and the quality of the relationship with each individual partner may diminish. Opportunity costs exist as well because investments in external networking divert time and resources away from other important managerial tasks related, for instance, to the internal management of the governmental organization. This cost is especially problematic at higher levels of involvement, where organizing and coordinating collective negotiation becomes increasingly difficult (Agranoff 2006).

Moreover, additional involvement can negatively affect policy support. Reaching compromises and accounting for a wider variety of interests is more difficult when a large number of stakeholders is involved. At the same time, partners can become frustrated with the process (Freeman and Langbein 2000), and trust is likely to diminish (Berardo 2009). Likewise, innovative solutions are harder to achieve between many partners, as innovations are typically radical deviations from the status quo that are unlikely to elicit general support (Coglianese 1997). Thus, based on these arguments, we may expect that the positive effect of stakeholder involvement will decrease at higher levels of involvement.

However, we argue that a nonlinear effect of stakeholder involvement will only be observed for professional organizations rather than for client-interest organizations. Consequently, we formulate a second hypothesis regarding diminishing returns for professional organizations only. Professional and client-interest organizations are characterized by different core tasks, resources,

26 More specifically, Hicklin, O'Toole and Meier's measure of managerial networking refers to the frequency of contact as well as to the number of partners (combined in a single measure). Our measure refers only to the number of partners.

and incentives to participate in collaborative local policy-making. We expect that the mechanisms that lead to diminishing returns of involvement will only be present for professional organizations.

Professional organizations provide governments with access to specialized expertise related to their core organizational tasks (e.g., intramural health care, transportation services, education) as well as to financial or other resources to deliver organization-specific services. In terms of valuable information, they possess performance feedback from their own clientele and evidence-based information on their own methods and best practices. In addition, they have the professional expertise to develop and propose new intervention methods and programs based on their own experiences. Likewise, because professional organizations play an active role in the actual implementation process, generating policy support among these organizations in the early stages of the policy-making process should facilitate their cooperation and coordination.

However, potential barriers are also likely to be present. With the involvement of many professional organizations, decision-making time may increase disproportionately and coordination may become increasingly difficult exactly because their input in the policy-making process not only refers to advice but also to the mutual adjustment of service delivery processes. In terms of policy support, interests among professional organizations are likely to be heterogeneous due to their particular specializations, and each will likely place a strong emphasis on its own self-interest and survival. For example, organizations that are satisfied with the status quo are unlikely to be willing to innovate. Thus, failure to reach compromises, deteriorating relationship quality, and frustration with the collaborative process will likely cause diminishing returns of the professional organizations' involvement on performance.

On the other hand, we expect that there are no diminishing returns of the involvement of *client-interest organizations* on policy performance. The valuable information that these organizations possess primarily refers to performance feedback in terms of alerting governments when problems occur. Their performance feedback is expected to be relevant and focused on the client population as group (rather than on a specific service provided to them), as client-interest organizations often maintain strong contacts with the bureaucrats and service providers who work with the clients (Needham 2008; Lipsky 2010). These alarms and performance feedback should positively affect performance.

At the same time, the barriers of client-interest organizations to effective collaboration are low. The lack of a need to coordinate service delivery processes among client-interest organizations implies that their involvement need not consume a great amount of local governments' time and energy. In

terms of policy support, client-interest organizations can be assumed to behave idealistically (Freeman and Reed 1983), meaning that their interests are likely more homogeneous and thus easier to align. In addition, client-interest organizations have limited power in terms of non-compliance. Indeed, empirical evidence for the positive effect of client-interest organization involvement has been found in many studies (Needham 2008; Keiser and Miller 2010), though not all of them (Moynihan and Pandey 2005).

Our second hypothesis thus refines hypothesis 1 for professional organizations by taking into account the diminishing returns of involvement on performance for this type of stakeholder.

Hypothesis 2: The positive effect of professional organizations' involvement on policy performance decreases with the involvement of additional organizations.

4.3 Research context: the Social Support Act

Over the last decade, the Netherlands has seen major decentralization in a number of policy areas (Gilsing 2007). One of the most recent shifts in central-to-local authority is marked by the Social Support Act (SSA). The SSA is an example of so-called 'framework settings' that are gaining momentum in the Netherlands (Koppenjan, Kars and Van der Voort 2009). In this system, the central government establishes the goals and the desired social effects of a policy, while local authorities and their administrations enjoy considerable freedom in formulating and applying the policy.[27]

The principal aim of the SSA is to facilitate the independent functioning of individuals, in particular those who experience physical or mental impediments.[28] These individuals constitute the client population in the present study. Independent functioning is understood according to three key criteria: being able to manage a household and perform daily routines such as grocery shopping (*physical self-reliance*), maintaining a personal social network

27 Local policy-making in the Netherlands can be characterized as democratic self-government within a multi-level governance system (Denters et al. 2003). Local governments hold a politically autonomous position within an essentially parliamentary structure. Citizens directly elect their local representatives in the municipal council every four years, after which an executive body consisting of a mayor and alderman is formed.

28 Although the SSA in principle relates to everyone and covers multiple client groups (e.g., drug abusers) the focus in both local policy-making and research on the SSA's effectiveness has focused on the client group with mental or physical impediments in the period that we study (De Klerk, Gilsing and Timmermans 2010). Hence, this is also the client group that we examine.

of friends and family (*social contacts*), and engaging actively in social activities such as volunteering or sports (*social participation*) (Gilsing et al. 2010: 58).[29] These three subgoals of the SSA constitute the dependent variables in our analysis.

In this chapter, we focus on the direct relationship between stakeholder involvement and policy performance. We do not attempt to analyze in detail how the involvement of stakeholders affects the development and provision of specific types of services. Considering the wide scope of the SSA, this would be a nearly impossible task. The SSA covers many different subdomains of social policy and a wide range of services. SSA clients characteristically face problems that are complex and multifaceted. For instance, clients who are physically disabled are less able to run a household but are also more likely to be socially isolated and have a lower income as a consequence of being unemployed. The types of services provided under the umbrella of 'social support' are therefore manifold. They include household services, informal care, transportation, social activities, adapted housing for disabled individuals, etc.

Addressing the needs of SSA clients and providing a wide range of services requires the coordination of different types of organizations in multidisciplinary diagnostic teams, coordinating platforms, or case-centered projects (Schalk 2011; cf. Alter 1990). The SSA encourages, but does not formally require, local governments to develop and maintain relations with local actors at all stages of policy-making, assuming that stakeholder involvement will increase policy performance. Specifically, the SSA envisages local governments as policy brokers or 'lead organizations' (Provan and Kenis 2008) that facilitate the exchange of expertise and coordinate interaction.

The specific way in which local governments organize the interactive process of stakeholder involvement in practice can be characterized by an intermediate level of formality (Van Houten, Schalk and Tuynman 2010). That is, stakeholder organizations do not have actual political decision-making power, such as veto rights or voting power, but local governments establish official and long-term forums of negotiation as well as roundtables. Representatives from a variety of stakeholder organizations participate in these forums. The responsible public manager organizes and presides over the forum and enjoys discretion in developing policies and managing the process of inter-organizational service delivery. Nevertheless, the local Council must eventually ratify policies and budget plans.

Thus, stakeholder involvement in local SSA policy-making is typically

29 In addition, the law aims to increase 'active citizenship' in terms of the political participation of all citizens and informal care to people who are unable to function independently. Because we focus on individuals who experience physical or mental impediments as the main client group, those goals are beyond the scope of this chapter.

collective, consultative, and organized by public managers. In addition, the involvement of professional and client-interest organizations are largely separate processes: in 95 percent of all municipalities, local governments have established a separate platform for client-interest organizations, in which *only* these organizations participate (without professional organizations' involvement).

4.4 Research design and data

To test the hypotheses, we use a unique multi-actor and multi-level dataset. The combined dataset consists of two nationally representative samples of 1) local governments and 2) SSA clients nested within local governments. The data were collected by the Netherlands Institute of Social Research (in Dutch: 'Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau', SCP) in 2008 and 2009 as part of a multi-million-euro evaluation project commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports. The goal of these extensive surveys was to evaluate the SSA both in terms of its governance by local governments and the attainment of its social goals at the client level (De Klerk, Gilsing and Timmermans 2010).

The first sample is a full population sample of local public managers. For each municipality in the Netherlands ($N = 443$), the public manager who is the key coordinator of the local SSA policy-making process was sent a written or internet questionnaire. These questionnaires were sent in the first quarter of 2008 and addressed the process of SSA policy-making for the year 2007. Of the 443 public managers contacted, 383 responded, constituting a response rate of 83 per cent. The questionnaire inquired into collaborative practices as well as the content of policies, local SSA goals, and various municipal characteristics.

The second sample is a stratified random sample of SSA clients conducted in the first quarter of 2009. The sample was stratified to ensure that a sufficient number of 'G31' municipalities, i.e., the 31 largest municipalities in the Netherlands, would be included.[30] Respondents were sampled from the total population of individuals who applied for individual SSA services in the first quarter of 2008. Of the 5,535 clients in 81 municipalities who were contacted, responses were obtained for 4,055, a response rate of 73 percent. The surveys were conducted through extensive 45-minute personal interviews that addressed the health and health-related problems of SSA clients, social networks, and general socio-economic conditions.

30 Specifically, 100 municipalities were contacted, of which 25 were G31 municipalities.

An important advantage of the sample is that the data on the independent and dependent variables were obtained from different sources: public managers and SSA clients. Therefore, same-source and social-desirability bias is avoided (Spector and Branninck 2010). Furthermore, the data are longitudinal though not panel data: stakeholder involvement (the public manager sample) is measured for the year 2007, while client outcomes (the SSA client sample) are measured for the year 2008, but client conditions were not measured for 2007. The actual *change* in client conditions therefore cannot be assessed. Nevertheless, the time lapse between the stakeholder-involvement variables (2007) and the actual performance variables (2008) accounts for the risk of reversed causality for these variables and constitutes a significant improvement on cross-sectional studies of stakeholder involvement and performance (cf. Walker et al. 2010). A related characteristic of the sample is that there are no past-performance indicators against which client outcomes in 2008 can be evaluated because the goals of the SSA were finalized in 2007.[31]

4.4.1 The independent functioning of SSA clients

The SSA aims to improve the level of independent functioning of clients who experience physical or mental impediments in terms of their physical self-reliance, social contacts, and social participation. We operationalize these three social subgoals of the SSA using three different sum scales. The first, *physical self-reliance,* is a sum scale among several items that refer to two key dimensions of independent functioning described in the SSA legal document (TK 2004/2005). These items relate strictly to an individual's physical ability to 1) run a household and 2) to move in and around the house to perform daily tasks (see Appendix 4.1.1; Cronbach's α =.72). The two other dependent variables relate to two different aspects of what the SSA regards as the 'social' aspect of independent functioning, namely 1) maintaining an extensive personal network of family and friends and 2) participating in social activities and being an active member of society. We operationalized *social contacts* as a sum scale among items that measure how often a client has contact with different types of social groups. In addition, we operationalized *social participation* as a sum scale among different social activities, such as cultural activities (e.g., going to the theater) and participation in voluntary associations (e.g., sports clubs).

31 Past performance is an important control variable in performance-management research on stakeholder involvement (cf. O'Toole and Meier 2004; Walker et al. 2010).

Appendix 4.1 lists the items used for the different variable constructs at the individual level.[32] Tables 4.1 and 4.2 present the descriptive statistics and correlations for all variables used in the analysis.[33] Table 4.1 demonstrates that the degree of physical self-reliance among SSA clients is high, whereas the levels of social contacts and especially social participation are much lower (when comparing the mean values relative to the scale maximum).

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics for municipal-level and client-level variables. Public manager (2008) and SSA client (2009) samples, Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP).

	Variables	n	Mean	SD	Min	Max
	Municipal level					
(1)	Professional involvement	69	14.8	5.2	0.0	20.0
(2)	Client-interest involvement	69	5.9	2.4	0.0	11.0
(3)	Political support[a]	69	35.8	9.6	20.0	59.5
(4)	SSA budget (per capita)	69	70.7	17.7	45.1	124.7
(5)	Goal specificity	69	11.3	6.2	0.0	21.0
	Client level					
(6)	Physical self-reliance	3,340	8.1	2.0	0.0	12.0
(7)	Social contacts	3,343	12.2	4.6	0.0	24.0
(8)	Social participation	3,343	4.2	3.4	0.0	18.0
(9)	Education	3,343	3.6	1.8	1.0	8.0
(10)	Household income	3,343	2.3	1.0	1.0	5.0
(11)	Living alone	3,343	0.5		0.0	1.0
(12)	Age	3,343	68.0	17.4	2.0	105.0
(13)	Physical difficulty	3,343	6.0	4.7	0.0	16.0
(14)	Gender (1= male)	3,343	0.3		0.0	1.0
(15)	Informal care	3,343	0.6		0.0	1.0
(16)	Perceived meeting opportunities	3,343	3.0	0.6	1.0	4.0

Note. *(a) Data obtained from the Electoral Council (in Dutch: 'Kiesraad').*

32 The Cronbach's α's for social contacts and social participation are not reported because the sum scales measure the *degree* of contact and participation. We do not expect the items to correlate necessarily, as contact with one type of social group can be independent of contact with another group, while the same holds true for social activities.

33 All descriptive statistics refer to the sample and are therefore not corrected for stratification.

Table 4.2 Correlations for municipal-level and client-level variables. Public manager (2008) and SSA client (2009) samples, Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP).

	Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
	Municipal level															
(1)	Professional involvement	1.00														
(2)	Client interest involvement	.35*	1.00													
(3)	Political support[a]	-.22	-.15	1.00												
(4)	SSA budget (per capita)	.21	.06	-.47*	1.00											
(5)	Goal specificity	.35*	.42*	-.24*	.11	1.00										
	Client level															
(6)	Self help	.05	.06	-.03	-.25*	.07	1.00									
(7)	Social contacts	.00	.00	.06	-.27*	.08	.17*	1.00								
(8)	Social participation	-.24*	-.08	.03	-.42*	.02	,22*	.44*	1.00							
(9)	Education	-.05	-.17	-.15	-.02	-.11	.09*	.09*	.17*	1.00						
(10)	Household income	-.11	-.13	.00	-.17	-.15	.04	.11*	.11*	.33*	1.00					
(11)	Living alone	.13	.07	-.19	.19	.21	.08*[c]	-.04*[c]	.06*[c]	-.04[c]	-.40*[c]	1.00				
(12)	Age	-.19	-.01	.23	-.01	.09	.05*	.04*	-.05*	-.11*	-.14*	.29*[c]	1.00			
(13)	Physical difficulty	.11	.10	.14	.19	.00	-.40*	-.15*	-.28*	-.07*	-.01	-.11*[c]	-.01	1.00		
(14)	Gender (1= male)	-.06	.24*	-.02	.03	.16	.03[c]	-.02[c]	-.04*[c]	.12*[c]	.13*[c]	-.14*[b]	-.02	.07*	1.00	
(15)	Informal care	-.09	-.12	.06	-.15	-.15	-.14*[c]	.09*[c]	-.07*[c]	-.04*[c]	.11*[c]	-.21*[b]	-.09*[c]	.27*[c]	.01[b]	1.00
(16)	Perceived meeting opportunities	-.08	-.12	.05	-.17	.08	.34*	.32*	.28*	.04*	0.09*	-.02[c]	.07*	-.20*	.00[c]	-.04*[c]

Notes. *Mean value of client-level variables used for correlations with municipal-level variables. (a) Source: The Electoral Council (in Dutch: 'Kiesraad'); (b) phi-correlation for dichotomous variables; (c) point-biserial correlation for dichotomous and interval variables. * p<.05.*

4.4.2 Professional and client-interest involvement

In the public manager questionnaire, public managers were asked whether each of 20 different functional types of *professional organizations* and 11 different functional types of *client-interest organizations* were involved in the local SSA policy-making process. Much care was taken in constructing the list of organizations. Many roundtable sessions were conducted with representatives from stakeholder organizations in the field across the Netherlands: local governments, professional organizations, and client-interest organizations. The information obtained from these sessions resulted in two lists of organizations that are 1) exhaustive in the sense that all relevant functional organizations are represented and 2) meaningful to public managers in terms of the categorization of these organizations. Furthermore, the lists were cross-validated with the organizations mentioned in the documents issued by the ministry of VWS, which were designed to advise local governments and their partners regarding different aspects of the SSA.

Table 4.3 displays the percentage of public managers who indicate that they have a relationship with each type of organization. In the analyses below, we use a sum variable for both types of stakeholders, *professional involvement* and *client-interest involvement*. Most types of professional organizations are nonprofits or semi-public organizations that fall under different levels of government. The list also includes private-sector organizations (e.g., transportation companies and home-care organizations). From Tables 4.1 and 4.3, it can be concluded that local governments are generally active in terms of stakeholder involvement but more so with respect to professional organizations: Table 4.1 indicates that local governments on average involve nearly 15 out of 20 different types of professional organizations and nearly six out of 11 types of client-interest organizations. Table 4.3 shows that local governments in particular involve home-care organizations (which typically provide household services), welfare, voluntary work, and informal-care professional organizations. The client-interest organizations that are most involved represent the elderly and disabled SSA clients. Arguably, these types of organizations' greater degree of involvement reflects local governments' perceived importance of their expertise and resources for successful local implementation of the SSA.

Table 4.3 Percentage of public managers indicating the involvement of professional and client-interest organizations in local SSA policy-making (n=69). Public manager sample (2008), Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP).

Professional organizations	%	Client-interest organizations	%
Regional governments	38	Informal care clients	62
Transportation companies	33	Voluntary work clients	65
Housing corporations	87	Disabled clients	91
Health care service coordination office	70	Social security clients	52
CIZ, SSA client eligibility indication office	71	Elderly clients	91
Home care organizations	91	Patient associations	58
GGD, primary health care	87	Local neighborhood platforms	42
Residential care homes	84	Homeless, disabled and clients suffering from domestic violence	26
GGZ, primary health care	86	Migrant associations	19
Organizations for disabled clients	87	Individual citizens	42
Financial-aid organizations (excluding banks)	49	Youth associations	36
Welfare organizations	93		
Community shelters	70		
BJZ, youth health care coordination office	75		
Schools	62		
Police departments	51		
Religious organizations	72		
Informal care organizations	94		
Voluntary work organizations	93		
MEE, administrative aid office	87		

4.4.3 Political support

The literature suggests various factors that constitute opportunities for, and constraints on, stakeholder involvement and its effectiveness (Ansell and Gash 2008). We incorporate three key control variables at the municipal level. First, the support of elected officials is imperative to the effective management of stakeholder involvement. Empirical studies have demonstrated the positive effect of political support on performance (Moynihan and Pandey 2005).

To capture *political support*, we use a measure that defines the percentage of center-right to right-wing party votes as a share of total votes for the municipal Council, which is the local legislative body in the Netherlands. In general, right-wing parties favor the reduction of social security and welfare expenditures. The relative dominance of right-wing parties in local politics should therefore be an indication of the difficulty that public managers experience in designing effective SSA policies and establishing trust and support vis-à-vis local stakeholders.

In the Netherlands, local elections for the municipal council are held every four years. The 2006 elections determined the distribution of seats in the municipal councils responsible for developing SSA policies. Local election data were obtained from the Electoral Council (in Dutch: 'Kiesraad'), which is the government agency responsible for the election process at all levels of Dutch government. Per municipality, the number of votes is available for each political party. Eight political parties that also participate in the national elections were identified.[34] These parties can be classified on a left to right scale, the most important dimensions of which are redistribution and welfare-state issues (Aarts and Van der Kolk 2006).[35] On average, center-right to right-wing parties comprise 35.8 percent of the municipal council seats in the sample (see Table 4.1).[36]

4.4.4 SSA budget

Our second control variable captures the financial resources of local governments. As O'Toole and Meier (2004) argue, any study on public performance should control for resource capacity. A higher resource capacity is generally assumed to positively affect performance. Additional personnel and monetary resources enable local communities to develop and provide more effective (although not necessarily more efficient) services (Turrini et al. 2010). Resource capacity has been operationalized in various ways, such as per capita mental health spending (Provan and Milward 1995), state government funding (Meier and O'Toole 2003), and other indicators, depending on the specific policy context.

In the Netherlands, local governments are financially dependent upon the national government. Local taxes account for only a small portion of total municipal income (6.7 percent in both 2007 and 2008 [Kuhry, Jonker and Torre 2010]), while the vast majority of municipal income is derived from task-specific and general central government funding. Thus, in the present research context, the key indicator for local resource capacity is the funding that the national government specifically provides to local governments for SSA implementation. The variable *SSA budget* captures this source of funding, measured in euros per citizen per year for 2008. Importantly, this budget was established using a formula based on numerous general socio-economic,

34 The number of political parties that take part in local elections varies across municipalities because of the existence of local parties, which comprise approximately 25 percent of all council seats. Municipal councils vary in size from nine members for the smallest municipalities (<3,000 citizen) to 45 for the largest (>200,000 citizens).

35 The parties are, from left to right, SP, GL, Pvda, D'66, CU, CDA, VVD, and SGP.

36 The center-right to right-wing parties are CDA, VVD, and SGP.

financial and demographic factors, e.g., the percentage of low-income households. In general, the SSA budget is lower when municipalities as a whole are characterized by more resources and fewer constraints. Thus, a *low* SSA budget is in fact an indicator of *high* community resource capacity.

4.4.5 Goal specificity

A final important control variable at the municipal level concerns the specificity of SSA policy goals in local implementation programs. These local policy goals are instrumental in attaining the ultimate policy goal of independent functioning. They may refer to budget allocations, eligibility criteria, program development, etc. Local governments that have clearly defined goals are assumed to be more motivated to perform well (Wright 2001) and to be able to cooperate more effectively, as their goals and tasks can be more easily communicated and synchronized (Moynihan and Pandey 2005). The variable *goal specificity* is a sum scale that captures the extent to which specific goals (both qualitative and quantitative) have been formulated for different subdomains of the SSA (see Appendix 4.1.4; Cronbach's α =.88).

4.4.6 Client-level control variables

Apart from the factors that potentially condition the effectiveness of stakeholder involvement at the municipal level, it is important to take into account individual, client-level characteristics that relate to policy performance. Most studies on public performance account for variations in client characteristics that indicate the difficulty of service delivery (Provan and Milward 1995; Meier and O'Toole 2004; Andrews and Entwistle 2009). Specifically, some SSA clients may find independent functioning to be more difficult than others. If the individual-level factors that stimulate or inhibit independent functioning are systematic across municipalities, these factors constitute composition effects that must be controlled for in our analysis.

In the present context, we control for a number of client-level characteristics that are expected to relate to policy performance in terms of independent functioning. The three performance indicators are expected to be positively related to *education* (ranging from 1 = no education to 8 = a university degree), *household income* (ranging from 1 = less than 1,000 euros net per month to 5 = over 3,000 euros net per month), *informal care* (a dummy variable indicating whether or not a client receives non-professional help from family, friends, etc. to facilitate their independent functioning), and *perceived meeting opportunities* (a 4-point variable indicating whether a client judges the opportunities to meet other people and maintain social contacts as 1 = highly inadequate to 4 = highly adequate). The variable *perceived meeting opportunities* also captures the perceived personal need to engage in social activities to some

extent. In addition, all indicators of independent functioning are expected to be negatively related to *living alone, age*, and *physical difficulty.* The variable *physical difficulty* captures the degree to which clients experience physical difficulties in performing daily tasks. It is a client-level sum variable of eight three-category items that ask whether an SSA client is physically able—prior to any service delivery and without help from others—to perform a certain activity related to independent functioning (see Appendix 4.1.5; Cronbach's α=.91). Finally, *gender* is incorporated as a control variable with no expected direction in its effect.

4.5 Analysis and results

Below, we test hypothesis 1 (a positive effect of stakeholder involvement on policy performance) and hypothesis 2 (diminishing returns of professional involvement on policy performance). We test the two hypotheses separately for professional and client-interest organizations and for three separate indicators of independent functioning: physical self-reliance, social contacts and social participation.

The hypotheses are tested by evaluating three multilevel generalized linear models for each dependent variable. The multilevel design offers two distinct advantages. First, it allows for an assessment of the extent to which individual SSA clients' independent functioning is correlated with the fact that they live in the same municipality (as characterized by the degree of stakeholder involvement, among other municipal-level factors) as compared to the myriad individual-level factors that may likewise affect their level of independent functioning. Second, multilevel models allow for more statistically efficient models compared to ordinary regression with aggregated client-level variables because of their enhanced power and reduced likelihood of producing biased standard errors (Hox 2002).

A methodological complication of the analysis concerns the stratification of the SSA client sample on G31 municipalities. To account for the unequal selection probability of G31 municipalities (municipal level) and of SSA clients living in G31 municipalities (client level), the estimates are corrected with two-level sampling weights with a finite population correction for a maximum of 443 municipalities that exist in the Netherlands (Asparouhov 2004). This method implies that we do not include municipality size (i.e., the number of inhabitants) as a separate control variable in the multivariate analyses (municipal size is strongly correlated with the G31 variable (ρ_{pb} =.88; p<.05). All variables except dummy variables were grand-mean centered to facilitate the interpretation of coefficients (Snijders and Bosker 1999).

4.5.1 Multivariate results

Table 4.4 shows the results of the multilevel analyses. A first observation is that the intraclass correlations (not shown in Table 4.4) are significant for all three dependent variables: 11.1 percent for physical self-reliance, 4.5 percent for social contacts, and 11.5 percent for social participation.[37] These findings indicate that there is a significant amount of between-municipality variation in independent functioning that can be attributed to municipal-level factors. The three different models in Table 4.4 test hypotheses 1 and 2 and demonstrate whether and to what extent these inter-municipality differences in independent functioning can be attributed to stakeholders' involvement in policy-making. The *main effects model* includes only the main effects of professional and client-interest organizations' involvement and the client-level controls. Second, the *diminishing returns model* adds a quadratic term for each type of stakeholder to test for diminishing returns. Finally, the *full model* adds the municipal-level control variables to either the main effects model or the diminishing returns model, depending on which model best fits the data.

Hypothesis 1 stated that the involvement of professional and client-interest organizations in local policy-making positively affects policy performance. Hypothesis 1 is only corroborated for policy performance in terms of physical self-reliance, as indicated by a weakly significant and positive main effect in the full model (β =.023; p<.10). This positive effect exists only for professional organizations. Although we expected client-interest organizations in particular to exert a positive influence, their inclusion by local public managers has *no* effect on policy performance in terms of the three indicators of independent functioning.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there exist diminishing returns of professional involvement on policy performance. Table 4.4 only confirms this hypothesis for social contacts: the interaction term is negative and significant in the full model (β = -.013; p<.05). This finding indicates that at higher levels of professional involvement, the effect diminishes, whereas it is positive at lower levels. However, the effect on physical self-reliance is linear and positive, and the effect on social participation is linear and negative, refuting hypothesis 2. Interestingly, the full models for social contacts and social participation show that the returns of professional organizations' involvement for performance are not only diminishing but even *negative* at higher levels of involvement.

37 The variance components (municipal level/client level) are .430/3.441, 2.432/18.754, and .540/11.342, respectively.

Table 4.4 Multilevel regression analysis of the independent functioning of SSA clients in Dutch municipalities. Public manager (2008) and SSA client (2009) samples, Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP). Unstandardized coefficients (standard errors) reported.

	Dependent variables								
	Physical self-reliance			**Social contacts**			**Social participation**		
	Main effects model	Diminishing returns model	Full model	Main effects model	Diminishing returns model	Full model	Main effects model	Diminishing returns model	Full model
Municipal level									
Professional involvement	.021* (.013)	-.008 (.025)	.023* (.013)	.007 (.044)	-.108* (.066)	-.106 (.070)	-.040* (.021)	-.070** (.036)	-.034* (.019)
Client-interest involvement	.020 (.020)	.027 (.023)	.002 (.020)	.040 (.079)	.050 (.076)	-.011 (.070)	.040 (.035)	.042 (.039)	.008 (.032)
Political support			-.003 (.008)			-.000 (.024)			-.008 (.012)
SSA budget (per capita)			-.009** (.004)			-.018 (.012)			-.020*** (.006)
Goal specificity			.011 (.013)			.052 (.045)			.016 (.019)
Professional involvement squared		-.003* (.002)			-.013** (.006)	-.013** (.006)		-.003 (.004)	
Client interest involvement squared		.002 (.006)			-.007 (.019)	-.005 (.018)		-.002 (.010)	
Client level									
Education	.037* (.022)	.037* (.022)	.038* (.022)	.151*** (.052)	.150*** (.052)	.151*** (.052)	.240*** (.035)	.240*** (.035)	.241*** (.035)
Household income	.029 (.036)	.028 (.036)	.028 (.036)	.299*** (.075)	.297*** (.075)	.296*** (.075)	.228*** (.072)	.227** (.072)	.224*** (.072)
Living alone	.154** (.077)	.154** (.077)	.154** (.077)	-.097 (.145)	-.096 (.145)	-.095 (.145)	.521*** (.162)	.524*** (.162)	.524*** (.162)
Age	.003 (.002)	.003 (.002)	.003 (.002)	.017*** (.007)	.017*** (.007)	.017*** (.007)	-.014*** (.004)	-.014*** (.004)	-.014*** (.004)
Physical difficulty	-.148*** (.013)	-.148*** (.013)	-.147*** (.012)	-.122*** (.018)	-.123*** (.018)	-.122*** (.018)	-.166*** (.015)	-.167*** (.015)	-.164*** (.015)
Gender (1= male)	.183*** (.064)	.184*** (.064)	.184*** (.064)	-.396** (.176)	-.393** (.176)	-.394** (.176)	-.431*** (.103)	-.428*** (.103)	-.428*** (.103)
Informal care	-.071 (.077)	-.068 (.077)	-.075 (.077)	1.117*** (.163)	1.129*** (.163)	1.126*** (.164)	-.057 (.125)	-.049 (.125)	-.064 (.125)
Perceived meeting opportunities	.740*** (.081)	.740*** (.081)	.740*** (.081)	2.074*** (.145)	2.071*** (.145)	2.068*** (.144)	1.244*** (.098)	1.243*** (.098)	1.240*** (.098)
Constant	8.000*** (.105)	8.083*** (.127)	8.004*** (.102)	11.704*** (.223)	12.113*** (.321)	12.087*** (.321)	4.114*** (.189)	4.218*** (.244)	4.120*** (.179)
Variance components									
Municipal-level residual variance	0.260*** (.058)	.249*** (.054)	.240*** (.056)	2.104*** (.444)	1.956*** (.459)	1.800*** (.430)	.484*** (.121)	.471*** (.113)	.385*** (.097)
Client-level residual variance	2.625*** (.148)	2.625*** (.148)	2.625*** (.148)	16.052*** (.587)	16.052*** (.587)	16.052*** (.587)	9.405*** (.297)	9.405*** (.297)	9.404*** (.297)
n (municipal level)	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69
n (client level)	3,340	3,340	3,340	3,343	3,343	3,343	3,343	3,343	3,343
Model deviance (df)	917.8(10) (a)***	2.4(2) (b)	4.6(3) (b)	528.6(10) (a)***	5.2(3) (b)	4.8(3) (c)	622.2(10) (a)***	1.2(2) (b)	11.4(3) (b)***

Notes. *All variables except dichotomous variables were grand-mean centered. Estimates were adjusted for stratification on G31 membership. * p<.10 **p<.05 ***p<.01; (a) compared to empty model; (b) compared to main effects model; (c) compared to diminishing returns model.*

To illustrate the interpretation of effects, let us consider the effect of professional involvement on social contacts in the full model. The slope for the effect can be computed for any value by taking the first derivative of the equation and substituting values. Because the estimates reported in Table 4.4 are grand-mean centered, and the average for professional involvement is 14.8 (see Table 4.1), the estimates in the full model show that at the average level of professional involvement, the one-unit increase (i.e., one additional type of organization involved in local policy-making) is associated with a decrease in the average level of social contacts of (-.108 -.026*14.8 =) -.49. This finding is substantial given the 20-point maximum range in professional involvement.

The negative main effect of professional involvement on social participation in the full model (β = -.034; p<.10) likewise demonstrates negative returns for performance at higher levels but shows that professional involvement has only a direct linear effect. This finding suggests that public managers should not involve professional organizations in the policy-making process at all. To draw this emphatic conclusion, however, would be ill-advised. Figure 4.1 illustrates the reason by indicating the bivariate relationship between professional involvement and the three indicators of independent functioning based on the significant effects in the full models. In Figure 4.1, the professional-involvement variable is skewed, with many local public managers involving many local professional organizations in policy-making. This finding means that with so few cases at the lower end of the involvement scale, the relationship depicted in this area of the graph is ambiguous, and thus we are hesitant to draw strong conclusions. The relationship is only indicative. A more robust conclusion is that for social contacts and social participation, performance returns become negative at higher levels of professional involvement. To illustrate the robustness of this result even further, we fitted a regression line in Figure 4.1 for only those municipalities that included more than 10 types of organizations (the scale median) based on the full model. With even less statistical power, the coefficients were negative and significant in both cases.

A final observation is that the effect sizes of professional involvement are modest: the variances explained by the professional-involvement coefficient at the municipal level are 4.8 percent for physical self-reliance, 8.0 percent for social contacts, and 6.3 percent for social participation.[38] We know of no other study that has reported explained variances for policy performance in terms of

38 The percentage of explained variance reported here is the additive variance of professional stakeholder involvement to all other variables in the *full model*. The explained variance is computed by subtracting the total explained variance of the linear predictor without the estimated coefficient for professional stakeholder involvement from the total explained variance with the estimated coefficient (Snijders and Bosker 1999).

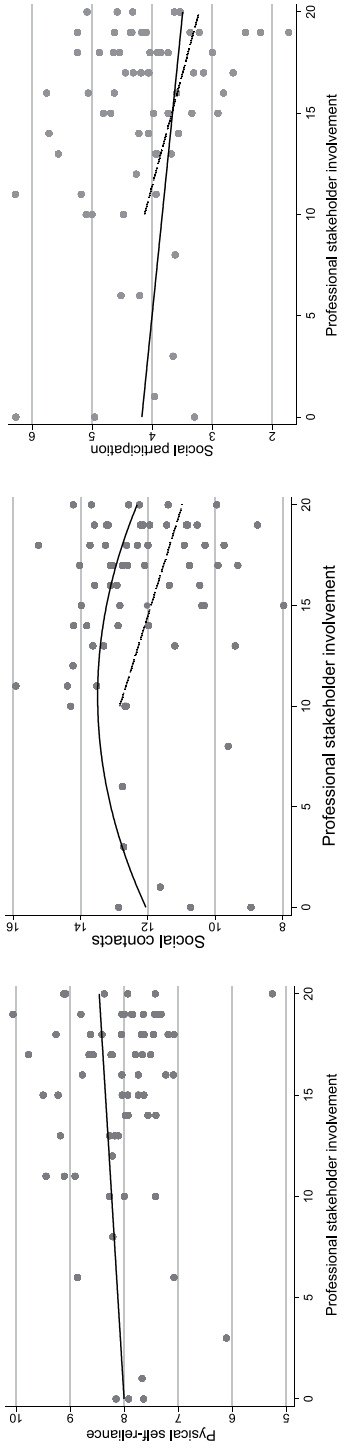


Figure 4.1 *The independent functioning of SSA clients in terms of their 1) physical self-reliance, 2) social contacts, and 3) social participation as a function of the Dutch local governments' involvement of professional organizations.*

Notes. *Regression lines based on full models (corrected for stratification on G31 membership). Solid lines are based on all local governments; dashed lines are based on a selection of high-networking governments (local governments with values for professional involvement above the scale median).*

client outcomes due to local governments' stakeholder involvement.[39] In the literature on the networking behavior of managers in terms of the performance of public agencies (Hicklin, O'Toole and Meier 2008: 264; Schalk, Torenvlied and Allen 2010: 647), explained variances of approximately 13-18 percent are observed, which are somewhat higher than our results at the municipal level. The full models in total explain 44.2 percent, 26.0 percent, and 28.7 percent of the total variance at the municipal level.

4.6 Conclusion and discussion

The preceding sections presented a systematic analysis of policy performance—in terms of client outcomes—in Dutch local government policy-making. The hypotheses predicted 1) a positive effect of stakeholder involvement on policy performance and 2) a positive effect with diminishing returns for the involvement of professional organizations on policy performance. Based on the analysis, we can draw a number of conclusions. First, the results indicate that the involvement of professional organizations is related to policy performance, whereas the involvement of client-interest organizations is not.[40] A possible explanation for the absence of an effect for client-interest involvement is that the separate platform for client-interest organizations has primarily been established by local governments to legitimize the local SSA policy-making process (cf., Pierre 2000; Edelenbos and Klijn 2006). However, the impact of client-interest organizations on actual policy change and their involvement in service delivery remain limited (Tatenhove, Edelenbos and Klok 2010).

Second, there is a consistent observation across the two different 'social' indicators of independent functioning, i.e., the social contacts and social participation of SSA clients: too much involvement of professional organizations *negatively* affects policy performance. This observation is confirmed by the presence of a negative interaction effect on social contacts and a negative main effect on social participation. This negative effect of professional involvement at higher levels of involvement indicates that Dutch local governments

39 Walker et al. (2010) found explained variances of approximately 50 percent for English local government performance. These explained variances are based on full models and not solely on client-level performance indicators.

40 We estimated an interaction effect between the professional and client stakeholder involvement variables in the *full model* to test for the robustness of this effect. The interaction terms were not significant, confirming that the effect of stakeholder involvement for professional stakeholder organizations is independent of the involvement of client stakeholder organizations and vice versa.

currently engage in *too much* involvement, given the high average level of professional involvement (see Table 4.1). One cautionary note must be made with respect to this conclusion. Because the data are not true panel data, it is possible that the unobserved client conditions of 2007 caused local governments to increase stakeholder involvement in the same year. Although we can reasonably assume that the client-level control variables account for these prior conditions to some extent, only true panel data can exclude this type of reversed causality.

Third, the effect of professional involvement differs somewhat across different indicators of policy performance. The results suggest that professional involvement *positively* affects the 'physical' conditions of SSA clients (although the effect is weak), while it *negatively* affects their 'social' conditions at higher levels of involvement. The simplest explanation for this difference is that social problems are more complex, while solutions and interventions are presumably more numerous and ambiguous, thus leaving more room for dispute among stakeholders and local governments. Another explanation may be that the policy problems addressed in the local collaborative platforms first addressed the physical conditions of SSA clients, leaving social problems to be addressed later in the process. The SCP's general evaluation of the SSA concludes that the social contacts of SSA clients are an underdeveloped area of local policy-making (De Klerk et al. 2010: 18).

In summary, the analysis presented here contributes to the current debate over stakeholder involvement by providing empirical evidence for 1) the theoretical expectation of decreasing returns for stakeholder involvement at higher levels of involvement (Hicklin, O'Toole and Meier 2008) and 2) the dependency of the effect of stakeholder involvement on the types of stakeholder organizations involved (cf. Walker et al. 2010). This chapter likewise makes two methodological contributions. It is one of the few studies that uses representative, longitudinal data to analyze the effects of stakeholder involvement on policy performance across local settings that operate under the same regulatory program (Ansell and Gash 2008: 562; for exceptions, see O'Toole and Meier 1999; Meier and O'Toole 2003). Moreover, the analysis moves beyond process indicators of policy performance—e.g., decision-making time and stakeholder satisfaction (Langbein and Kerwin 2000)—to addressing the actual impact on the conditions of clients who are targeted by local policies (Alter 1990). For process-related performance indicators, effect sizes are typically greater than the effect sizes observed at the client level in this study (cf. Langbein and Kerwin 2000; Lubell 2004). An indicator for this finding is that goal specificity—a characteristic of the actual content of local SSA policy—is strongly correlated with professional and client-interest involvement (see Table 4.2). Such differences in effects are to be expected because much

happens between the policy deliberations and implementation issues on the one hand and the eventual outcomes for those individuals targeted by local policies on the other. Moving beyond government and stakeholder evaluations of policies, this study demonstrates that 1) stakeholder involvement in policy-making affects client outcomes, while at the same time, 2) we should not overestimate its impact.

This chapter did not intend to reveal all possible mechanisms that may underlie a systematic analysis of stakeholder involvement and policy performance. An important avenue for future research is to study possible factors that may mediate or moderate the relationship between stakeholder involvement and policy performance. These factors include the managerial strategies of participating organizations (Walker, O'Toole and Meier 2007), the behavior of local employees responsible for the actual delivery of services (Lipsky 2010), prior cooperation and conflict between partners (Ansell and Gash 2008), and leadership strategies (Huxham and Vangen 2000). To incorporate these factors into systematic empirical designs, policy-performance research would benefit from larger-n studies at the level of governments or public agencies.

Finally, the results have practical implications for public managers. The enduring emphasis that researchers and practitioners have placed on the benefits of networking with external partner organizations (Hicklin, O'Toole and Meier 2008) may have prompted managers to become overly focused on managing their relationships with external organizations. In the case of the SSA, the central government's encouragement (De Klerk, Gilsing and Timmermans 2010) to include as many stakeholders as possible in the SSA policy-making process may be ill-advised. The analysis presented here suggests that there are limits to the effectiveness of professional involvement, while the involvement of client-interest organizations may have no effect on policy performance at all.

Appendix 4.1 *Variable construction.*

4.1.1 Physical self-reliance (dependent variable).

Item	Range	n	Mean	Cronbach's α
Total scale (sum)	0 - 12	3,340	8.1	.72
	Categories			
1. To what extent are you able to run a household?	1. Highly insufficiently 2. Insufficiently 3. Sufficiently 4. Highly sufficiently			
2. To what extent are you able to take care of yourself?				
3. To what extent are you able to move in and around your house?				
4. To what extent are you able to move around in your neighborhood?				

4.1.2 Social contacts (dependent variable).

Item	Range	n	Mean
Total scale (sum)	0 - 24	3,343	12.2
The following questions concern your social contacts. Could you please indicate how often you have contact with the following groups?	*Categories*		
1. Your children or grandchildren (who do not live at home)	1. Never 2. Almost never 3. Less than once per two weeks 4. Once every two weeks 5. Once a week or more		
2. Your family or in-laws			
3. Friends or good acquaintances			
4. Neighbors			
5. Colleagues or fellow students			
6. People from voluntary associations or clubs that you are a member of			

4.1.3 Social participation (dependent variable).

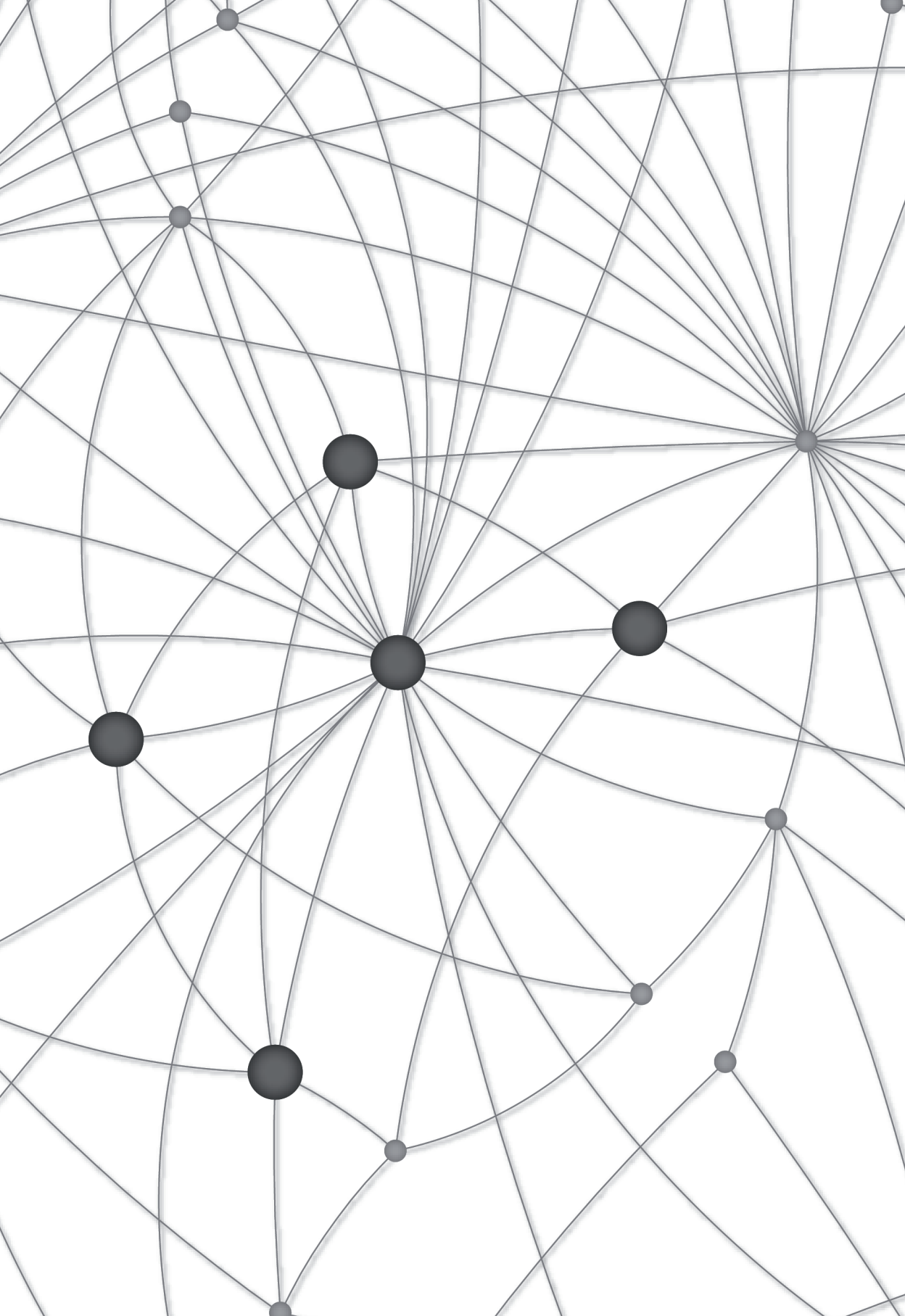
Item	Range	n	Mean
Total scale (sum)	0 - 18	3,343	4.2
Could you please indicate how often you engage in each of the following activities?	*Categories*		
1. Visit a church, synagogue or mosque	1. Never 2. Less than once a month 3. At least once a month 4. At least once a week		
2. Visit voluntary associations where you can meet other people (e.g., related to sports, singing, music, theater, hobbies).			
3. Cultural activities like visiting a theater, a performance, a concert, a movie, a lecture, an exhibition.			
4. Going out to a bar or restaurant			
5. Visit a community center in your neighborhood			
6. Follow a course (which requires attendance)			
7. Volunteering			

4.1.4 Goal specificity (independent variable).

Item	Range	n	Mean	Cronbach's α
Total scale (sum)	0 - 21	69	11.3	.88
For each of the following subdomains of the SSA, can you indicate whether specific goals have been formulated in your municipality and whether these goals are qualitative or quantitative?	*Categories*			
1. Livability	1. No goals specified 2. Only qualitative goals specified 3. Only quantitative goals specified 4. Both qualitative and quantitative goals specified			
2. Child-rearing support				
3. Information and Advice				
4. Volunteering and informal care				
5. People with disabilities				
6. Vulnerable citizens				
7. Citizen involvement in policy-making				

4.1.5 Physical difficulty (independent variable).

Item	Range	n	Mean	Cronbach's α
Total scale (sum)	0 - 16	3,343	6.0	.91
Can you say for each of the following activities whether you are physically able—without help—to perform them without difficulty, with some difficulty, or not at all?	*Categories*			
1. Dressing, putting on shoes	1. No difficulty 2. Some difficulty 3. Not at all			
2. Washing yourself				
3. Using the lavatory				
4. Going from one room to another on the same floor				
5. Climbing the stairs				
6. Leaving your home				
7. Moving around outside your house				
8. Walking for 10 minutes at a time				



Chapter 5

Inter-organizational relations and goal consensus: An exploratory study in two local Dutch service delivery networks

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5.1 Introduction

Inter-organizational networks for service delivery have become a focus of current policy research (Goldsmith and Eggers 2004; Hall and O'Toole 2004; Geddes, Davies and Fuller 2007; Klijn 2008). Such networks can be defined insofar as they indicate relatively stable patterns of relations between autonomous governmental and non-governmental organizations jointly involved in decision-making and implementation of public policy at the local level with respect to a specific client population. The implicit assumption in most research is that network member organizations agree on the goals that a network should pursue (Agranoff and McGuire 2003; Rethemeyer and Hatmaker 2008). Members of service delivery networks share the ultimate goal of effective and efficient service delivery to their common client population, for example individuals with mental health problems (Provan and Milward 2001).

However, agreement on the objective of satisfying client needs does not imply that member organizations always agree on the most appropriate course of action to attain this common objective. For example, a local government and a social work organization may disagree on the responsibilities of professional staff versus family members in programs aimed at signaling health problems among the elderly. Nevertheless, network studies in the public administration literature have generally neglected potential disagreements between organizations. The main focus in this literature has been on organizing inter-organizational networks for service delivery so as to optimize their performance. This focus implies that network structure is a key condition for network performance (Meier and O'Toole 2003; Provan, Fish and Sydow 2007). Thus, as O'Toole and Meier (2004: 682) have noted, the 'production-focused and partnership-framed' character of current network research has led to an excessive emphasis on coordination problems, while assuming goal consensus between organizations. Although a number of studies stress the importance of goal consensus for network performance (De Buijn and Ten Heuvelhof 2002; Provan and Kenis 2008; Percival 2009), the question of how to establish it has largely been understudied.

Organizations join networks only when they expect that their membership will allow them to be better able to attain their organizational goals, including those related to survival, reputation and the satisfaction of external stakeholders (Torenvlied 2000; Markham. Johnson and Bonjean 2001). It is not very plausible that fundamental organizational goals are affected by relations with other organizations. However, it is quite plausible that organizations in (service delivery) networks can affect each other's subjective perception of *how* organizational goals can be attained best through inter-organizational collaboration. The reason is that uncertainty exists about the costs and consequen-

ces of different programs, collective strategies and intervention methods. Discussions between organizations may, for example, revolve around issues of coordination, finance, expertise, evaluation criteria and time frames. Network member *organizations* thus have their own preferences for possible courses of action that the *network* should pursue (Klijn and Koppenjan 2000; Stokman 2004). We define these different possible courses of action for a service delivery network as a whole as *network goals*. Thus, the need for cooperation, combined with variations in organizational preferences for what network-level cooperation should look like, results in a process of 'pushing and pulling' that takes place between organizations in service delivery networks with regard to the prioritization of different strategies and intervention methods (Koppenjan and Klijn 2004).

The key question in the present study is to what extent increased interaction between organizations in a service delivery network is associated with similarity in organizational preferences for *network* goals, more briefly: *goal consensus.* The first aim of the study is to describe the degree of goal consensus that exists between organizations in two local service delivery networks. The public, nonprofit, and for-profit organizations in these networks are jointly responsible for the implementation of parts of a new law on social support in a medium-sized city in the Netherlands.

The second aim of the study is to explore how goal consensus between any two organizations in these two networks is associated with the intensity of different types of bilateral relations, such as client referrals or the financial dependence between two organizations. Agranoff (2006: 57) distinguishes between such bilateral inter-organizational relations on the one hand, and network-level inter-organizational coordination on the other. Whereas bilateral relations refer to ongoing operational ties in the service delivery process, network-level coordination refers to general policy making and coordination by all network members collectively (Agranoff and McGuire 2003). We study opinion formation about network goals primarily from the perspective of the ongoing bilateral interactions between network member organizations. Theoretically, we argue that more intensive interaction between two organizations furthers mimetic pressure and persuasion (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) – especially when the interaction involves strategic communication between members of the organizations that is specifically aimed at discussing network goals and resolving possible conflicts.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, we review the relevant literature on goal consensus and formulate hypotheses. Subsequently, we describe the two case studies of local service delivery networks in the Dutch city of Breda. Both service delivery networks are developing policy strategies at the local level in response to the 'Social Support Act' (SSA). This national law, which

came into force in 2007, aims to increase the social participation and self-help of disadvantaged social groups (TK 2004). The SSA has relocated the responsibility for providing social support from the national level to the level of local authorities. For both service delivery networks, we surveyed all organizations in 2008 (eighteen and sixteen organizations respectively), providing data on 546 inter-organizational relations in total. We perform a social network analysis to test the hypotheses.

5.2 *A theoretical framework for analyzing goal consensus in service delivery networks*

Discussions of network goals between organizations typically occur in response to changes and external pressures. New laws or central government initiatives change the institutional framework in which organizations affected by these laws are embedded (Percival 2009). Organizations are faced with new role expectations, new rules and regulations, evaluations and new fiscal structures. Such institutional changes increase uncertainty: existing strategies and practices may no longer be effective in the new situation. In service delivery networks, the main sources of uncertainty pertain to the questions of 1) which new strategies and concrete intervention methods might actually be possible and 2) how effective and efficient each of these methods may be (Koppenjan and Klijn 2004).

Institutional theorists (Scott 1991) see mimicry and persuasion as key organizational responses to uncertainty. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), an organization models itself on another organization, as a straightforward and legitimate strategy to address the increased external pressures. By implication, it may be expected that organizations in service delivery networks turn to their partner organizations in the existing service delivery process to discuss and adopt network goals. A critical question then is under which conditions organizations will in fact develop similar preferences. Specifically, we expect two organizations to have more similar preferences when: 1) they have stronger relations, that are 2) characterized by a higher degree of strategic information exchange implied in the content of these relations, and when 3) these relations are more embedded in the larger network structure. We elaborate on each of these points below.

First of all, a stronger relation between two organizations in a network increases the *awareness* of the other organization's preferences and organizational processes (Gulati, 2007). Also, it increases opportunities to spot new intervention methods that a partner organization knows about (e.g., innovative health care practices). Moreover, strongly intertwined and interdependent organizational processes in a service delivery chain increase the *willingness* to arrive at common goals and to avoid goal conflict in the future. This is because

the absence of goal consensus may threaten existing shared investments of time, personnel and funds within existing arrangements (Molnar and Rogers 1979). We thus formulate the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: The strength of a relation between two organizations in a service delivery network is positively related to goal consensus.

However, this main effect depends on the actual content of relations between organizations, or what is being exchanged. Although interdependence of any content is expected to be positively related to goal consensus, the effect is likely to be stronger for those types of relations that imply information exchange that is directly relevant for the formation of network goals. The 'relevance' of information depends on the degree to which it may affect perceptions of the main criteria on the basis of which preferences for network goals are formed. These criteria include for example the existence and perceived effectiveness of different client treatment methods, information on the (often multifaceted) problems and conditions of clients, the division of tasks in inter-organizational coordination, preferences of other organizations, expected future developments, competition, and so on. We will refer to this type of information as *strategic* information.

Strategic information is often tacit, and thus more likely to surface and be transmitted through personal contact between members of the two organizations. Intensive personal interaction creates a tendency toward affect and uniformity of opinions (Festinger 1954; Granovetter 1985; 2005). It increases the predictability of a partner, which is an important element of trust (Ring and Van de Ven 1994; Ratnasingam 2003). As one manager in our study noted:

> 'I maintain good relations with my local partners, and frequently discuss ongoing business with them. In this way, I can easily contact them when a new problem with our clientele arises, and understand where they are coming from.'

It is important then to discriminate between different types of relations between organizations, according to their strategic content and degree of personal interaction. Inter-organizational service delivery is multidimensional, involving substantively different types of relations (Hjern and Porter 1981; Oliver and Ebers 1998). In the present study, we focus on four commonly-identified types. First of all, we include *financial dependence* (Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan 1997). Organizations mobilize financial resources from other organizations around their own objectives. In service delivery networks, the most important financial resources are subsidies provided by local government. *Monitoring*

relations with the organization providing these financial means are usually established. These typically include periodic process and performance reports. Some personal, mainly managerial, interaction is of course necessary to initiate financial and monitoring relations. Importantly however, financial exchanges and monitoring activities are not expected to strongly convey strategic information once in place, regardless of their strength.

A third type of relation is *client referrals* (Provan and Milward 1995). Information on clients is often needed with respect to their progress, medication, treatment methods and so on. Professionals and 'street-level' employees of network member organizations often discuss treatment methods and reinterpret individual client cases. As opposed to financial transactions and progress reports, client referrals may thus involve a higher degree of strategic information exchange and personal contact (Van de Ven and Walker 1984). Inter-organizational case coordination requires at least some understanding of the partner organization's core processes. Likewise, problems inevitably occur in some client cases, which necessitate an analysis of what went wrong and how problems may be avoided in the future. However, not all referrals involve such information exchange. Clients may also simply be referred to another organization without any contact between the organizations at all.

Finally, *managerial interaction* is a type of relation that also involves a high degree of personal involvement between organizational members and strategic information exchange (Meier and O'Toole, 2003). Importantly, such information exchange does not revolve around actual client cases and treatment methods, but occurs at the more abstract, strategic level. Managers discuss possibilities for cooperation and decide on future action, given their core organizational tasks, processes and available information. Importantly, this information exchange includes issues referring to network goals and the respective roles of the two organizations in the network as a whole. Indeed, McGuire (2002) argues that achieving goal consensus is often a pivotal motivation for public managers to increase interaction with partners, anticipating on the positive effect it has on eventual network performance. This implies that managerial interaction should have a stronger association with goal consensus than client referrals, in which strategic communication revolves more around individual client cases rather than network goals.

Empirical studies in the public administration literature indeed suggest a positive effect of intensive inter-organizational interaction on goal consensus, although most of these studies are thick descriptions and do not attempt to actually measure goal consensus. In a study on the implementation of labor market policies in Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany, O'Toole (1983) found that intensive collaboration among local actors was associated with perceived common interests. Nyseth and Ringholm (2008) specifically

acknowledge the importance of personal relationships between stakeholders in inter-organizational problem solving in Norwegian local communities. Koppenjan and Klijn (2004), in an analysis of the Dutch debate on zinc emissions, found that a lack of managerial interaction strongly inhibited a common perception of the problem situation and possible policy solutions.

Distinguishing between different types of inter-organizational relations according to their degree of strategic information exchange, we can now formulate the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: The positive association between the strength of an inter-organizational relation and goal consensus is strongest for managerial interaction, weaker for client referrals, and weakest for financial dependence and monitoring.

So far, we have only discussed direct relations between two organizations. However, these dyadic relations are embedded in the overall network structure. By *structural embeddedness* in this chapter, we mean that two organizations share ties with other organizations in the service delivery network (thus referring to the *structure* element of network embeddedness involving (access between) third parties). These indirect relations can have important consequences for goal consensus. Specifically, we expect that structural embeddedness is positively associated with goal consensus. The mechanism is basically a generalization of the first hypothesis. First of all, the willingness of an organization to cooperate and arrive at common positions increases with third parties, as the interdependence of organizational processes increases (Schalk, Torenvlied and Allen 2010). Also, an organization's communicated policy interests and intentions can be validated through third party experiences with that organization (Uzzi 1996; Podolny and Page 1998). Both arguments imply that organizations stand to lose from non-cooperative behavior. Thus, we formulate the second hypothesis as follows.

Hypothesis 3: The number of shared partner organizations is positively associated with goal consensus between two organizations in a service delivery network.

Figure 5.1 summarizes the theoretical framework.[41] The next sections describe the Dutch service delivery context in which the hypotheses are tested.

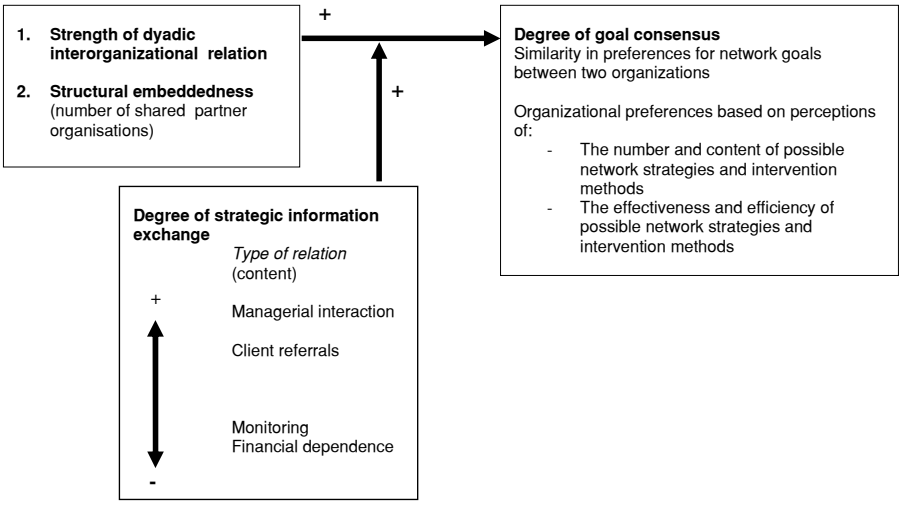

Figure 5.1 A theoretical framework for analyzing goal consensus between organizations in service delivery networks.

5.3 Research design and data

5.3.1 Research context: two SSA service delivery networks in Breda

Over the last decades, the Netherlands has seen major decentralization operations take place in a number of policy areas (De Klerk, Gilsing and Timmermans 2010). The introduction of the Social Support Act in 2007 marked a new stage in this development. The SSA relocates the responsibility for providing social support to the municipal level. Principal aim is to facilitate the social participation and self-help or independent functioning of citizens. SSA clients apply for services to be obtained directly from local government and its local

41 It is important to note that this study addresses the association between interorganizational relations and goal consensus, rather than causation. Because there is only one point in time, the possibility of reverse causality cannot be excluded, an issue common in network research (Brass et al. 2004). One problem is that it may well be possible that organizations establish relations with other organizations that have similar preferences for network goals. A second problem is that novel complementary needs may emerge after the enactment of a new law that can be a reason to establish new service delivery relations. Such relations then develop simultaneously with the discussion of network goals and the direction of effects cannot be disentangled.

partners. In this study, we focus on the implementation of the SSA in Breda, a medium-sized municipality in the Netherlands with about 170,000 inhabitants. The main reason for selecting Breda is that the city is large enough to allow for variation in inter-organizational relations given the number of agencies involved in service provision, while the city is small enough to be able to generalize the results to other cities to some extent.[42]

To test our hypotheses, we study two local service delivery networks that are each responsible for service provision to SSA clients in a specific policy subdomain of the SSA. One network is concerned with the promotion of social participation of the elderly and people with a physical or mental impairment. The types of services provided by organizations in this network include intra- and extramural health care, social work (including social activities and legal advice), household services and facilitating movement in and around the house. For convenience, we call this the 'elderly policy' network. The second network is concerned with preventing problems for young people and their parents experiencing problems growing up. In this network, the types of services provided include support for parents, signaling problem behavior and youth education. For convenience, we call this the 'youth policy' network.

We follow Agranoff (2006) in making a distinction between bilateral service delivery relations and a network as a whole. On the one hand, there are those bilateral relations between local organizations that include the types of links we have discussed in the theory section, such as financial arrangements and managerial interaction. We expect that the strength of these relations is associated with goal consensus. However, speaking of a 'network' assumes that the member organizations share a common interest that reaches beyond their direct partners, and perceive themselves to be part of the network. In Breda, a so-called 'consultative round table' exists, where organizations discuss policy issues for the respective policy domains. We used these round tables to identify network members.[43] Organizations were invited to join these round tables by the local government, or could do so on their own initiative. These consultative round tables thus consist of organizations that are geographically concentrated and deal with a well-defined policy domain. Also, the round tables address policy issues concerning identifiable SSA clients, in whose social participation and self-help all member organizations perceive to

42 Analyzing one city has the advantage of holding constant contextual characteristics in comparing the two networks, but of course, such an approach also limits the extent to which results can be generalized to other contexts.

43 We thus applied a nominal approach to selecting network members (Marsden 2005), based on criteria set by the researchers, rather than a relational or 'snowball' approach, in which network members identify other members (Provan and Milward 1995).

have a stake (otherwise they would not join the table). Member organizations are thus expected to have a concrete perception of what the 'network' is and, thus, what 'network goals' are.

The organizations in the two networks are interdependent because the quality of service provision by other local providers affects their own effectiveness. For instance, an SSA client with a physical impairment is better able to attend social activities organized by a social work organization when he or she is more mobile as a result of obtaining an electric wheelchair from a health care organization. Importantly, the fundamental organizational goals of each member organization at least partly concern the attainment of SSA goals for the designated policy domain. Therefore, organizations stand to gain from collectively coordinating service delivery.

Because there is only one time point, this study is exploratory. However, our research design makes it plausible that the causal direction of effects is from inter-organizational relations to goal consensus. First of all, we asked organizations specifically about goal consensus with respect to network goals that were discussed in response to the Social Support Act (SSA). Because SSA goals are new, there are no well established prior organizational preferences for network goals. Instead, organizations must define their positions in this new institutional context. This enhanced uncertainty is exactly the situation in which inter-organizational influence is most likely to be observed.

Second, it is unlikely that many new relations developed as a consequence of the SSA. Although the goals of the SSA are new, programs and intervention methods aimed at attaining these goals can be implemented within existing inter-organizational service delivery chains. This is typically less costly than complete restructuring. In that case however, inter-organizational relations must already be well established. We have qualitative evidence to suggest that in both networks we study, this is the case. For example, a large-scale municipal report that evaluated human and social service delivery in Breda for the period 2002-2006 (Breda City Council 2007: 41) stated the following:

> 'In the period 2002-2006, …, service delivery has shifted from sectoral to integral cooperation. … In this process, many inter-organizational relations have been established. These relations are often aimed at better reaching clients, and increased service quality and efficiency.'

Likewise, a recent large-scale government evaluation of the SSA also confirms that in Dutch municipalities in general, programs aimed at attaining SSA goals are typically executed within existing operational arrangements (De Klerk, Gilsing and Timmermans 2010: 103).

5.3.2 Data collection

We collected both quantitative and qualitative data on inter-organizational relations. For each organization, we approached the representative (who, in most cases, was the executive director or manager or for some larger organizations, a lower-level manager) in March 2008. We personally asked this person to identify the key informant the organization who was most knowledgeable about and responsible for the relations with other organizations in the specific policy domain. After a general description of the research by telephone, these informants were sent a questionnaire. Of the thirty-five organizations, thirty-four responded. In total, eighteen organizations in the elderly policy service delivery network and sixteen in the youth policy service delivery network are included in this study. We cross-validated measures on inter-organizational relations from the questionnaires with existing policy evaluation reports (Torenvlied and Van Schuur 1994) and held interviews with six experts (that is, three per service delivery network), each of which lasted for over two hours.

In both networks, organizations involved in service delivery include local government itself, as well as nonprofit and for-profit organizations specializing in one or more types of services. In the elderly policy network, health care organizations are more prominent, while unique organizations in the youth policy network include educational institutions and the police department. In both networks, the organizations vary considerably in size. Appendices 5.1 and 5.2 provide a full list of participating organizations and descriptive characteristics.[44]

The Appendices also provide examples of network goals as identified by the experts.

5.3.3 Operationalization of the dependent and independent variables

Each respondent was asked to evaluate the relation of its organization with each of the other organizations in the service delivery network. This was done for different types of relations (e.g., financial dependence). Each type of relation thus constitutes a *dyadic* variable for which a single value represents the evaluation of a respondent of the relation with a particular other organization in the network. For a network of eighteen organizations, we thus have eighteen times seventeen equals 306 values for one type of relation, or variable. For a network of sixteen organizations, we have sixteen times fifteen equals 240 values.[45]

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44 Because we ensured anonymity, we cannot provide full names. We list the main organizational goals and types of organizations based on year reports and expert judgments.

45 Technically, we applied a complete roster rating technique (Wasserman and Faust 1994),

As is typical in network analyses, each variable was measured by a single network question (Ibarra 1992). These measures are largely reliable when the topic is meaningful to respondents and relations refer to long-term interactions (Borgatti and Cross 2003). In our study, the SSA and the associated round tables are a priority for the organizations involved, while relations between organizations are relatively stable. Nevertheless, subjective judgments may to some extent be biased as a result of respondents' unobserved personal tendencies to over- or understate relations (Bollen and Paxton 1998).

5.3.1.1 Goal consensus

Although the network goals we study refer to the network as a whole, goal consensus is defined at the dyadic level, because we are interested in how bilateral service delivery relations affect *bilateral* consensus with respect to what the network should pursue. Goal consensus was measured by the question '*To what degree does your organization have the same policy preferences as [other organization]?'* Respondents were told that all questions referred only to activities in the specified policy domain. It was further explained that 'policy preferences' refer to the preferred strategies and intervention methods for the network concerning the specific policy problems in the policy domain. The values ranged from one ('highly dissimilar') to six ('highly similar').

For this and all other relations, an explicit 'don't know' category was included to allow for greater certainty about the reliability of the observations that are not missing. For missing values on goal consensus, we imputed the judgment of the other organization in the dyad.[46] The idea behind this is that consensus in our case refers to two parties, and each respondent is assumed to have considered the standpoint of the other organization in the dyad in making his or her judgment. But although imputation of the other value in the dyad is a common practice in social network research, we might overstate the relationship between inter-organizational relations and goal consensus in doing so. Yet, the data largely justify this method. For the dyads in which *both* organizations reported on goal consensus, the correlation between their judgments is positive and significant for both networks ($\rho = 0.31$; $p < 0.01$ for the elderly network; $\rho = 0.35$; $p < 0.01$ for the youth network). Moreover, the analysis presented here is robust in the sense that the imputation of the over-

resulting in a square matrix for each type of relation and cells to represent the strength of an interorganizational relation, or ordered pair.

46 This meant that for the organizations in the elderly service delivery network 18 per cent of the judgments were missing, while for the youth policy network, 23 per cent were missing. For dyads that had two missing values (seven in the elderly policy network and thirteen in the youth policy network), we imputed the scale mean (3.5) to represent neutrality.

all mean or overall median value of goal consensus – instead of the judgment of the other organization – yields the same results.

Although there is thus considerable agreement on goal consensus, the issue remains of what to do when the judgments on similarity in preferences for network goals are indeed different for two organizations in a dyad. In the literature, there exists some debate regarding such cases. Often, the two judgments are constrained to be equal, for instance by taking the minimum value or the mean (Provan and Milward 1995). In this case, the most reasonable way to constrain judgments is to take the judgment of the most conservative organization in order to measure the minimum amount of similarity in preferences for network goals. Others however argue that it is important to maintain dissimilarities in judgments, because relations can be conceived of as 'intermediary states' in a process moving toward an equilibrium state in which both actors agree (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 510). Hence, perceptions should be analyzed as they are observed. Isset and Provan (2005), for example, argued that perceived ties should be analyzed as observed in evolving service delivery networks. In the following analysis, we have estimated effects for both ways of conceptualizing goal consensus. Because the main conclusions did not differ across these two approaches, we only report the results for the unconstrained data.

5.3.1.2 Financial dependence

This variable measures the extent to which an organization is dependent on each of the other organizations in the network through the question '*To what extent is your organization financially dependent on [other organization] to perform its functions?'* This question provides an insight about relative dependence; to the degree that an organization is financially *in*dependent, this variable is a measure of the availability of alternative resources (Cook 1977). Values ranged from one ('not dependent') to six ('strongly dependent').

5.3.1.3 Being monitored

The following question was asked to capture the degree of monitoring: *'To what extent is your organization being monitored by [other organization]?'* Informants were told that 'being monitored' means that the organization is formally required to report to the other organization about its activities through written progress reports. Values ranged from one ('not at all') to six ('strongly').

5.3.1.4 Client referrals

This variable was operationalised by the question '*How often does your orga-*

nization refer clients to [other organization]?' Answer categories for this variable ranged from one ('never') to six ('daily').

5.3.1.5 Managerial iInteraction

The question measuring this variable was '*How often do managers of your organization exchange information with managers of [other organization]?*' Values ranged from one ('never') to six ('daily').[47]

5.3.1.6 Structural embeddedness

We calculated structural embeddedness by determining the number of other organizations in the network to which both organizations have a tie in terms of managerial interaction. We look at managerial interaction because we expect cohesion effects to be strongest for the type of relations that most involve personal interaction and strategic information exchange. Because managerial interaction was measured as an interval variable, we counted relations when the value was greater than one. Each value for this variable is thus a count of the shared ties with a particular other organization.

5.3.1.7 Control variables

Much of the network literature in organization research supposes homophily effects (Powell et al. 2005). Organizations that are similar may both 1) be inclined to establish relations and 2) have similar preferences for network goals. In our analysis, we control for three such homophily variables that may have confounding effects. First, we include *domain similarity*. We characterize two organizations as domain similar if they have the same client population. Because the number of organizations in the study is small and distributions are highly skewed, we created a dichotomous variable indicating for each pair of organizations whether all of their activities are directed at the client population of the network.[48] *Type similarity* is a dichotomous relation indicating whether two organizations are of the same type. Finally, *size similarity* is a dichotomous relation indicating whether two organizations are of similar size. We distinguished between small (1-100), medium-sized (100-500) and large (>500) organizations. All three control variables are based on the Appendices 1 and 2.

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47 For managerial interaction, we again imputed symmetric counterparts for missing values. For financial dependence and monitoring, we assumed that missing values represented no dependence. For client referrals, we imputed counterparts because the great majority of observed directed relations in both networks were reciprocal.

48 We counted the values of 95 per cent for two health organizations in the elderly network as 100 per cent.

5.4 Analysis and results

In the next sections, we first describe the degree of goal consensus that exists in both service delivery networks. Subsequently, descriptive statistics and correlations between goal consensus and the inter-organizational relations are analyzed. Finally, we test hypotheses 1 and 2 by investigating whether goal consensus is associated with the strength of different types of inter-organizational relations in a multivariate analysis, controlling for other factors.

Importantly, the assumption of independence of observations used in traditional regression techniques is violated for network data.[49] In the statistical analyses below, we use a 'quadratic assignment procedure' (QAP) to describe the association between dyadic variables to account for this problem (Kilduff and Krackhardt 1994).[50] For the multivariate analysis, we use a multivariate extension of the QAP procedure.[51] In both cases, the interpretation of coefficients is comparable to the interpretation of ordinary correlations and regression coefficients. All analyses were performed using UCINET VI (Borgatti, Everett and Freeman 2002).

5.4.1 Description of the inter-organizational relations in the SSA service delivery networks

A first question we ask is how much consensus actually exists. Table 5.1 summarizes the degree of goal consensus in the two service delivery networks. There are three main observations. First, both service delivery networks display an equal level of goal consensus within pairs of organizations. Second, organizations in both networks on average perceive their preferences for network goals to be more similar than dissimilar. But although there is more agreement than disagreement within pairs of organizations on what the goals of the network should be, the average level of goal consensus is far below the

49 Technically, the observations in the cells of the n x n actor matrix are dependent and cause structural autocorrelation, which indicates a lack of independence between observations within the rows or within the columns.

50 In essence, the QAP procedure corrects standard errors for dependence of observations. A (multiple regression) QAP analysis proceeds in two steps. In the first step, the Pearson correlation (or some other statistic of association) is calculated by correlating all cells between all organizations in one matrix (e.g., goal consensus), with the corresponding cells in the second matrix (e.g., managerial interaction). In the second step, the rows and columns in one of the matrices are randomly permuted a large number of times (5,000 permutations in our analyses), and the correlations are recalculated. Standard errors and significances are then determined by comparing the observed correlations with those obtained from the population of permuted matrices.

51 Specifically, we use the Double-Dekker Semi-Partialling MRQAP procedure (Dekker, Krackhardt and Snijders 2007).

maximum level possible (and just above the scale mean of 3.5), suggesting that a high level of goal consensus can certainly not be taken for granted. And finally, there is considerable *variation* around the average level of consensus, which allows for a further investigation into the factors associated with higher or lower consensus.

Table 5.1 Goal consensus in the elderly and youth policy service delivery networks at the dyad level (ordered pairs). Breda, 2008.

Perceived degree of similarity in preferences for network goals (1 'highly dissimilar' – 6 'highly similar')	**Elderly policy network** (*n* = 306)	**Youth policy network** (*n* = 240)
Mean	3.6	3.6
Standard deviation	1.0	1.3
% More similar than dissimilar[a]	55.8	58.2

Note. *(a) Calculated as the percentage of (directed) ties with a value greater than 3 (more similar than dissimilar preferences for network goals), excluding dyads for which both values are missing.*

Next, we turn to a description of the explanatory variables. Table 5.2 provides descriptive statistics and summarizes the association between the independent variables used in the analyses. The interpretation is again at the dyad level. For example, the positive correlation ($\rho = 0.36$; $p < 0.01$) between goal consensus and client referrals in the elderly policy network implies that if the sender organization refers more clients to the other organization, this sender organization perceives its network goals to be more similar to those of the recipient organization. Table 5.2 shows that goal consensus is positively associated with client referrals, and with managerial interaction in the elderly network. In the youth network, goal consensus is also strongly associated with managerial interaction and client referrals, but also with financial dependence and being monitored. Interestingly, the embeddedness of dyads in the larger network structure is not related to goal consensus in either network. And finally, as expected, correlations between relations are positive in both networks.

Table 5.2 Descriptive statistics for the independent variables for the elderly and youth policy service delivery networks at the dyad level (ordered pairs). Breda, 2008.

Variable	**Elderly policy network** (*n* = 306)				**Correlations (QAP)**								**Youth policy network** (*n* = 240)				**Correlations (QAP)**							
	M	SD	Min	Max	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	M	SD	Min	Max	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Goal consensus	3.6	1.0	2	6	.12	.09	.36*	.42*	.24	.11	.03	-.08	3.6	1.3	1	6	.27*	.35*	.31*	.51*	.02	.02	-.22*	.05
Independent variables (types of relations 1-4)																								
1. Financial dependence	1.18	.78	1	6									1.30	.93	1	6								
2. Being monitored	1.85	1.34	1	6	.42*								2.25	1.79	1	6	.38*							
3. Client referrals	2.47	1.49	1	6	.17	.30*							3.08	1.72	1	6	.14	.31*						
4. Managerial interaction	2.52	1.44	1	6	.26*	.43*	.53*						2.94	1.64	1	6	.35*	.65*	.62*					
5. Structural embeddedness	5.24	2.61	1	14	.20	.30*	.45*	.51*					6.41	2.36	1	13	.08	.35*	.21	.36*				
Control variables																								
6. Domain similarity[a]	.47	.50	0	1	.01	.06	.06	.10*	.02				.47	.50	0	1	.16*	.04	.01	.02	.10			
7. Size similarity[a]	.30	.46	0	1	.11	.01	-.01	.12*	.05	.56			.38	.48	0	1	-.09	-.17	-.08	-.16	-.08	.47		
8. Type similarity[a]	.29	.45	0	1	-.08	-.02	-.07	-.13	-.26*	.54	.70*		.26	.44	0	1	-.01	-.02	.14	.10	.12	.50	.55	

Notes. *Minimum and maximum values refer to observed values. Qap correlations based on 5,000 permutations. * p<.01; (a) the match coefficient is reported for associations between relations 6 to 8. The match coefficient provides the percentage of matched values (0-1) for two dichotomous variables.*

5.4.2 Multivariate analysis of goal consensus in the SSA service delivery networks

In the final multivariate analyses, we test hypotheses 1 and 2. Table 5.3 summarizes the results for the two service delivery networks. Overall, the explained variances indicate that the strength of relations between two organizations is indeed associated with more goal consensus between them. The joint effect of inter-organizational relations on goal consensus is larger in the youth network than in the elderly network; the explained variance is about 20 per cent in the elderly network versus about 30 per cent in the youth network.

The first hypothesis states that the strength of all types of relations should be positively associated with goal consensus (hypothesis 1). This should be particularly evident for the types of relations that involve more strategic information exchange (hypothesis 2). Hypothesis 1 is corroborated for client referrals and managerial interaction in the elderly network and for financial dependence and managerial interaction in the youth network. The other types of relations show no association with goal consensus—or even an unexpected negative association (being monitored for the elderly network). Hypothesis 2 is also corroborated: in both service delivery networks, information exchange between managers (indicative for a strong strategic information exchange relation) is positively related to goal consensus. This association is more consistent, and also stronger than for the other types of relations.[52] Client referrals however only have a relatively strong and positive association in the elderly network. This result suggests that either 1) personal interaction of case managers in the elderly network involves more discussion of network goals, in addition to discussion of client cases, or 2) client referrals in the youth network involve less personal interaction between organizations than in the elderly network.

The third hypothesis states that structural embeddedness, measured in terms of the number of shared partners, should be positively associated with goal consensus between organizations (hypothesis 3). This hypothesis is not confirmed by our data. In the elderly network, we observe no association. In the youth network, there is a negative association with goal consensus when controlling for other types of relations. This suggests that when it comes to aligning two organizations in terms of the goals that they wish the network would pursue, the intensity of their relation with one another rather than the number of partners they share is crucial in bringing them together. A possible interpretation of these findings is that shared partners reduce the freedom to act of both organizations in the dyad, as there are third parties with prefe-

52 The effect remains when controlling for homophily effects in Model 2 (i.e., similarities between organizations).

rences that should be taken into account. An increasing number of partners, then, simply results in too many organizational interests and perspectives to be simultaneously reconciled.

Table 5.3 Multivariate analysis of goal consensus between organizations in the elderly and youth policy service delivery networks in Breda, 2008. Multiple regression QAP results (Double-Dekker Semi-Partialling).

Variable	**Elderly policy network** (*n* = 306)		**Youth policy network** (*n* = 240)	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Independent variables				
1. Financial dependence	.07	.07	.13*	.12*
2. Being monitored	-.12*	-.12*	.03	.03
3. Client referrals	.14***	.14**	.01	.01
4. Managerial interaction	.27***	.27***	.40***	.39***
5. Structural embeddedness	.00	.00	-.10**	-.11**
Control variables				
6. Domain similarity		.14*		.00
7. Size similarity		-.04		-.36**
8. Type similarity		-.03		.06
Intercept	2.73	2.70	2.80	2.99
R^2	.22	.23	.30	.32

Notes. *Results based on 5,000 permutations. Unstandardized coefficients reported. * p<.10 **p<.05 ***p<.01.*

5.5 Conclusion and discussion

This chapter explored the association between different types of inter-organizational relations and goal consensus for two service delivery networks in the Netherlands. We described the interaction patterns between organizations in terms of their financial dependence, monitoring activities, client referrals and managerial interaction. We ordered these relations according to the degree of strategic information exchange between organizational members and related the strength of these relations to the degree of goal consensus within pairs of organizations, applying network analytical techniques that allow for the statistical modeling of complete network data.

Three conclusions can be drawn. First, we observe a considerable *lack of* goal consensus in both service delivery networks, evidenced by the modest average level of goal consensus between organizations in both networks. This supports the views of O'Toole and Meier (2004) that policy implementation is not simply a question of neutral coordination of activities, but involves reconciling opposing policy preferences as well. Rethemeyer and Hatmaker (2008) have noted that much of the public administration research on collaborative and service delivery networks neglects conflict over network goals –

a restatement of the traditional politics-administration dichotomy. The present chapter shows that goal consensus cannot simply be assumed in the context of implementing a new law in a network setting. Combined with the existing evidence that a lack of goal consensus at the network level has a negative effect on network performance (Provan and Kenis 2008; Percival 2009), this result demonstrates that it is important to study the formation of goal consensus when studying implementation processes.

Second, overall, stronger inter-organizational relations are associated with more congruent preferences for network goals between organizations. This positive association is strongest for the type of relation implying most strategic information exchange between members of the two organizations – managerial interaction. The present study thus implies that even though fundamental organizational interests restrain the room for maneuver of individual organizations, it is possible for network members to influence perceptions of other actors in such a way as to arrive at common policy strategies and solutions. It underscores the importance of strategic relations of managers and employees of different organizations for building trust and effective cooperation (Klijn and Koppenjan 2000; Vangen and Huxham 2003; Agranoff 2006). Finally, the present study provides no evidence for the hypothesis that the embeddedness of a relation between two organizations in larger subgroups of organizations is positively related to goal consensus. This suggests that an analysis of dyadic characteristics is more crucial in understanding how goal consensus develops between pairs of organizations than triadic or higher-order effects.

Jointly, these findings have important policy implications. Investing in relationships with managers of network members produces benefits in terms identifying possible solutions to policy problems, evaluating their effectiveness, and facilitating consensus on network goals. Because the association between managerial interaction and goal consensus we found is independent of other existing bilateral activities, such as client referrals, it suggests that managers should also invest in relationships with organizations that are perceived to be at arm's length. Maintaining a large number of strong relations is certainly demanding in terms of the time, energy and resources of public managers, and the network as a whole may become quite inefficient when all network members pursue this strategy (Provan and Milward 1995; Uzzi 1996). However, reaching goal consensus may be particularly important when substantial turbulence and uncertainty exist, for example when new policy initiatives are being introduced, such as the introduction of SSA by the Dutch national government in this study. Under such conditions, increased managerial interaction is crucial to finding new directions and strategies in local service delivery.

The robustness of the effect of managerial interaction across the two different types of service delivery networks suggests that it might be generalized to other contexts. Yet, the results presented here are explorative, and hypotheses should be seen as first steps toward a more systematic analysis of goal consensus. There are a number of limitations of the present study that simultaneously point toward directions for future research. First of all, the results presented here are context-bound (one city) and thus must be replicated in other settings. More importantly, we have suggested that the direction of the effects is due to patterns of inter-organizational relations to similarities in preferences for network goals. This is because 1) preferences in our case study referred to recently formed opinions on new policy issues and network directions, and 2) inter-organizational policy implementation often takes places within structures of cooperation that are already in place. However, although this assumption is quite tenable, longitudinal analyses are necessary to actually disentangle possible feedback effects. In addition, a longitudinal design can provide insight into the substantial *shifts* that actually take place in the preferences that organizations hold. This would enable researchers to analyze which organization influences the other organization in a dyad most, and which factors drive shifts on the part of either organization.

Appendix 5.1. *Organizational characteristics and main network-level policy issues for the elderly policy network (promoting social participation of elderly and people with a physical or mental impairment). Breda, 2008.*

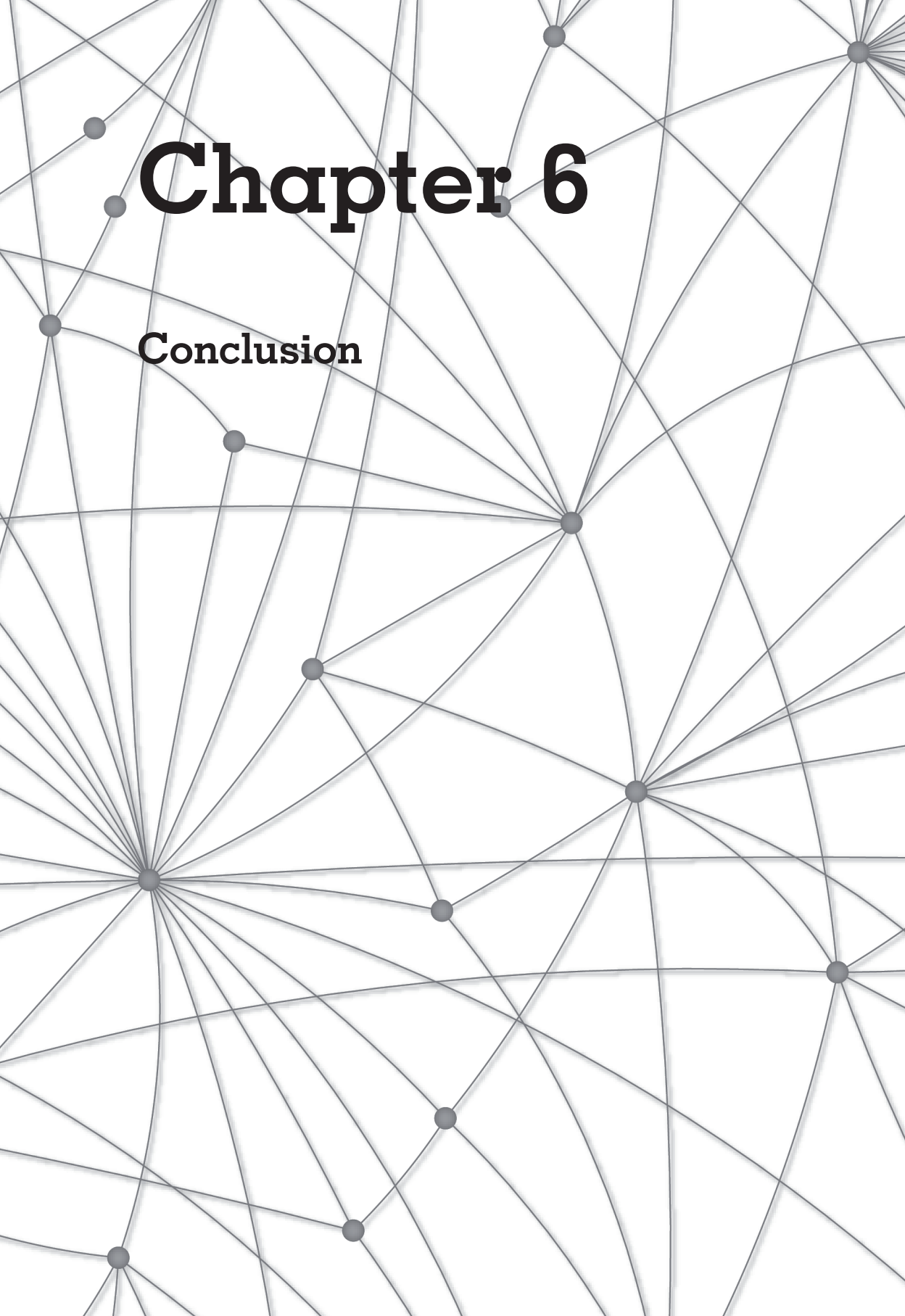
Type of organization	Primary organizational goal	Number of paid employees	Number of volunteers	Fraction of total activities aimed at client population of the network	Examples of policy problems being debated at the network level	Examples of network goals with respect to these policy problems
Municipal Welfare department	To increase the quality of life and social cohesion	50	0	40	1. The function of the consultative table 2. The degree of desired integration and organizational involvement of organizations in four projects in two large areas in Breda 3. Professionalism versus citizen involvement in signalling and solving problems of social participation of the client population	1. Preferences differed mainly with respect to the frequency of meetings, the scope of tasks (size of the areas in Breda covered, number of projects to be set up etc.) and the status of decision making (consultative versus political initiative and binding authority). 2. Discussion was mainly about who should coordinate network activities, and which organizations should be more or less involved in collective projects. 3. Preferences differed mainly with respect to whether citizens themselves or professional health care organizations should be mainly responsible for signalling social and health problems and subsequent case treatment.
Social work	To stimulate voluntary work and sport participation	25	1	30		
Social work	To increase the quality of life of the elderly through voluntary work, housing, legal advice and social activities	60	800	100		
Social work	To provide psychosocial and legal help for disadvantaged social groups	98	7	20		
Social Work	To advice and increase the overall well-being of people with a physical or mental impairment	160	20	60		
Social work	To provide social support and increase participation for disadvantaged groups	185	70	20		
Health care	To increase the social participation of people with a physical impairment	130	40	100		
Health care	Intramural elderly health care	135	110	95		
Health care	Intramural elderly health care	170	65	100		
Health care	To provide health care to people with a mental impairment	570	130	100		
Health care	Intramural elderly health care	850	200	95		
Health care	To provide health care and conduct health research	1200	100	50		
Health care	Intra- and extramural health care	1357	500	100		
Health care	To provide household services	1500	90	100		
Housing corporation	To provide public housing	83	0	35		
Housing corporation	To provide public housing	100	0	30		
Interest Group	To represent elderly interests	0	12	100		
Interest Group	To advice and represent people with a physical impairment	2,5	70	100		

Notes. *Organizational data obtained from questionnaires and year reports. Type of organization and network-level data obtained from expert interviews (n=3).*

Appendix 5.2. *Organizational characteristics and main network-level policy issues for the youth policy network (preventing problems for young people and their parents experiencing problems growing up). Breda, 2008.*

Type of organization	Primary organizational goal	Number of paid employees	Number of volunteers	Fraction of total activities aimed at client population of the network	Examples of policy problems being debated at the network level	Examples of network goals with respect to these policy problems
Municipal Welfare department	To increase the quality of life and social cohesion	50	0	40	1. The function of the consultative table 2. Geographical integration of services 3. Coordination of case referrals with respect to youth health problems 4. The degree of integration of youth policy	1. Whether the table should preserve its external chair or a municipal chair should replace him. The status of decision making (consultative versus political initiative and binding authority). 2. Whether a number of youth facilities should be in direct proximity of schools or not. 3. Whether this should always be the same health organization and which one that should be. 4. The development and detail of joint efforts in the network. Preferences ranging from whether there should only be a common mission formulated, to full scale joint projects with clearly defined organizational tasks and finances.
Social work	To offer advice and support for parents of children aged 0-4 with a physical or mental impairment	6	0	100		
Social Work	To provide psychosocial and legal help for disadvantaged social groups	98	7	15		
Social Work	To provide social support for parents and children	150	10	100		
Social Work	To advice and increase the overall well-being of people with a physical or mental impairment	160	20	40		
Social Work	To provide social support and increase participation for disadvantaged groups	185	70	65		
Social work	To provide youth day care	800	450	100		
Health care	To prevent and treat drug, alcohol and other types of addiction	125	2	10		
Health care	To offer social support and intensive treatment to parents and children	280	2	100		
Health care	To provide health care and conduct health research	305	0	45		
Health care	To provide mental health care	1200	100	30		
Health care	To provide household services	1500	90	10		
Health care	To prevent and treat drug, alcohol and other types of addiction	125	2	10		
Educational	To offer high quality education and represent confessional schools of primary education	150	150	100		
Educational	To offer high quality education and represent schools of secondary education	2200	0	100		
Police department	To prevent crime	450	20	50		

Notes. *Organizational data obtained from questionnaires and year reports. Type of organization and network-level data obtained from expert interviews (n=3).*



Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the results of the previous chapters and connects them to the dissertation's overall research question. The central aim of this dissertation was to improve our current understanding of the public corporate actors'performance by examining the institutional and network embeddedness of these actors at different levels of collaboration. We set out to answer the following two research questions:

Descriptive research question:
Does the performance of public corporate actors vary at the supranational, national, and local levels of collaboration?

Explanatory research question:
If so, how does the performance of public corporate actors depend on the institutional and network embeddedness of these actors at the supranational, national, and local levels of collaboration?

In the previous chapters, we built upon the extensive literature in sociology, public administration and organization science. Each chapter derived hypotheses on the effects of embeddedness on the performance of public corporate actors at the supranational (intergovernmental decision-making in the European Union), national (the inter-organizational network of PABO colleges) and local (inter-organizational networks in the Social Support Act) levels of collaboration. This dissertation also took first steps towards triangulation by testing similar hypotheses on embeddedness at multiple levels of collaboration using complementary research designs.

This chapter concludes the dissertation by summarizing our findings. Based on the findings, we evaluate the extent to which the overall research question has been answered and what general conclusions may be drawn. The chapter concludes with several suggestions for future research.

6.2 Summary of findings and conclusions per chapter

6.2.1 The power of the presidency in EU Council decision-making (chapter 2)

In chapter 2, we investigated whether EU member states that hold the presidency of the Council of the European Union perform better than other member states. Performance was conceptualized in terms of the distance between

member states' preferred decision outcomes (based on domestic interests) and the actual collective decision outcome. The level of collaboration in the EU is *supranational*: the decision-making procedures are intergovernmental, with nation states as the public corporate actors. The main independent variable was *institutional embeddedness*. Based on the work of Tallberg (2006), we first hypothesized that member states holding the presidency would perform better. However, multiple member states typically hold the presidency between the time that a policy issue is adopted by the Commission and the time that a final decision is reached. Thus, we also hypothesized that presidencies would only perform better in the *adoption* and *voting* stages of decision-making due to the particular institutional advantages that presidencies enjoy in these stages. We applied a cooperative bargaining model and estimated parameters for presidential bargaining strength based on 152 policy issues that reached a final decision in the period 1999-2001 (Thomson et al. 2006).

The nonlinear regression analyses presented in chapter 2 indicate that there is no overall effect of holding the presidency: member states holding the presidency do not perform better than those that do not. However, upon closer examination of the various stages of the decision-making process, we observed that member states holding the presidency in the *voting* stage—i.e., when the final decision outcome is reached—do in fact perform better. The particular institutional embeddedness of presidential member states at this stage thus constitutes an advantage in terms of realizing domestic interests, especially the right of presidencies to structure the Council agenda and to formulate compromise solutions. Thomson (2008) found similar results for presidency effects.

The results constitute a large-scale systematic assessment of presidency performance. The results contribute to the *collective decision-making* literature by refuting the commonly held assumption that presidencies are powerless. At the same time, they nuance Tallberg's expectation that presidencies are *always* more powerful. In practice, the need to coordinate intergovernmental decision-making in an efficient manner has greatly increased with the accession of 12 new member states to the European Union in the past decade (forming the EU-27 as of 2007). Yet, member states are hesitant to confer additional institutional powers to the presidency. On the one hand, changes have been made to the presidency system. Under the current Treaty of Lisbon, which came into force in 2009, three member states cooperate intensively during three successive presidencies of the Council of the European Union, known as *presidency trios*, for an 18-month period. In this period, each of the three member states takes the initiative for six months. In addition, the European Council—a biannual meeting of the heads of state—is now presided over by an individual president, currently Herman van Rompuy, who does

not represent his country. This obvious hesitation to confer additional institutional powers to the presidency indicates that member states expect that other member states will successfully pursue their domestic interests when holding the Council presidency.

6.2.2 Network embeddedness and public agency performance: The strength of strong ties in Dutch higher education (chapter 3)

The research question in chapter 3 was whether the *network embeddedness* of PABO colleges affects their performance in terms of graduate satisfaction. We focused on the actual interactions between PABO colleges at the *national* level in terms of their joint membership in formal collaborative affiliations. We tested two hypotheses related to the *structure* (access to other PABO colleges) and *strength* (the number of shared memberships with other PABO colleges) of network embeddedness. The first hypothesis, based on the *public management and performance* literature, predicts that the more relations a PABO college maintains with other colleges, the better it will perform (Meier and O'Toole 2003; Boyne et al. 2006; Akkerman and Torenvlied 2011). The second hypothesis, based on the *embeddedness research* in sociology (Uzzi 1996; Buskens and Raub 2002; Gulati 2007), predicts that the embeddedness of a college in cohesive subgroups positively affects its performance. The hypotheses were tested using logistic multilevel analyses on the complete inter-organizational network of PABO colleges ($n = 28$), combined with college-level performance and contextual data for 2002-2005 ($n = 90$) and the evaluations of a large sample of college graduates for the same period ($n = 7{,}119$).

The results found that PABO colleges differ in terms of their activity in the inter-organizational network. Furthermore, the first hypothesis was rejected, while the second hypothesis was corroborated: it is not the sheer number of relationships but rather the embeddedness of PABO colleges in *highly cohesive subgroups*, which are characterized by strong relations and a closed network structure, that results in effective performance. The findings in chapter 3 contribute to the *public management and performance* literature by analyzing network embeddedness effects in a novel (i.e., Dutch) context: most previous research on educational performance has focused on US settings, most notably the performance of Texas school districts (Meier and O'Toole 2003; O'Toole and Meier 2011). Our findings nuance previous results: although network activity (in terms of the number of relationships) positively affects performance, this is only true when the relations are embedded in cohesive subgroups that facilitate learning and trust among their members. In addition, chapter 3 contributes to the scarce literature on network embeddedness and *client evaluations* as indicators of public corporate actors' performance (Pro-

van and Milward 1995; Andrews, Boyne, and Walker 2006). Earlier studies primarily focused on secondary and 'hard' performance indicators (cf. Akkerman, Torenvlied, and Schalk 2011).

6.2.3 Linking stakeholder involvement to policy performance: Nonlinear effects in Dutch local government policy-making (chapter 4)

The final two research chapters of this dissertation analyzed *network embeddedness* effects at the *local* level of collaboration. They simultaneously addressed the same institutional context, namely the Social Support Act (SSA 2007) in the Netherlands (in Dutch: 'Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning', WMO). In chapter 4, we asked whether Dutch local governments perform better depending on the degree to which they involve local stakeholder organizations in their SSA policy-making process. Local governments' performance was evaluated in terms of how well they are able to attain the overarching national policy goals of the SSA: to increase the independent functioning of people with a physical or mental impediment as measured by their 1) physical self-reliance, 2) social contacts, and 3) social participation. We tested two hypotheses that incorporated the *structure* (in terms of access to stakeholder organizations) of as well as the *type of partner* (professional and client-interest organizations) in network embeddedness. Based on the *public management and performance* (Meier and O'Toole 2001; Boyne et al. 2006) and *collaborative governance* literature (Freeman and Langbein 2000; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; Ansell and Gash 2008), we first hypothesized that local governments'involvement of stakeholders positively affects performance. In addition, we hypothesized that—for professional organizations, *not* for client-interest organizations—this positive effect would diminish with the involvement of additional organizations due to the increasing difficulty of coordinating policy-making and reaching consensus among professional organizations. The hypotheses were tested using a unique longitudinal and multi-actor dataset consisting of a nationally representative sample of 69 Dutch local governments and 3,343 SSA clients.

The multilevel analyses revealed significant differences in performance between local governments in terms of the independent functioning of SSA clients. However, these differences could only be attributed to the involvement of *professional* organizations, indicating that the type of stakeholder conditions the effect of involvement on performance. The second hypothesis was only corroborated for social contacts. Interestingly, the effect of the involvement of professional organizations on the 'social' indicators of independent functioning (social contacts and social participation) not only diminished at higher levels of involvement but became *negative*. At the same time, profes-

sional involvement *positively* (though weakly) affected physical self-reliance, suggesting that the effect of professional involvement is different for different performance indicators.

These analyses moved beyond examining the 'process' indicators of stakeholder involvement (e.g., decision-making time or litigation rates) by accounting for the impact of government policies on clients' actual conditions (Alter 1990). Chapter 4 demonstrated that involvement indeed affects client conditions, although this relationship is much weaker than the relationship between stakeholder involvement and process variables, as much takes place between policy-making and eventual client outcomes. In addition, the analyses contribute methodologically to the *public management and performance* and *collaborative governance* literature. It is one of the few studies that uses representative, longitudinal data to analyze the effects of stakeholder involvement on policy performance across local settings that operate under the same regulatory program (Ansell and Gash 2008: 562; for exceptions, see O'Toole and Meier 1999; Meier and O'Toole 2003). Additionally, common method bias (Spector and Branninck 2010) was avoided through the use of separate surveys among local government officials (the network embeddedness variables) and SSA clients (the performance variables).

Finally, chapter 4 provides SSA policy recommendations for national and local governments in the Netherlands. Most importantly, the results suggest that Dutch local governments are currently overly engaged in stakeholder involvement. The fact that local governments are strongly engaged in interactive policy-making reflects the fact that the national government explicitly encourages them to do so through the SSA (De Klerk, Gilsing and Timmermans 2010). It may likewise reflect the fact that interactive decision-making is currently a trend across European governments (Edelenbos and Klijn 2006). The analyses in chapter 4 temper optimism regarding this approach and highlight the limits on the effectiveness of stakeholder involvements.

6.2.4 Inter-organizational relations and goal consensus: An exploratory study in two local Dutch service delivery networks (chapter 5)

In the final empirical chapter, we closely examined one of the Dutch municipalities that implemented the SSA, namely Breda. As in chapter 4, the level of collaboration is *local*. We asked whether and how characteristics of *network embeddedness* are related to goal consensus. Because of the difficulties associated with determining comparable indicators to evaluate local organizations' performance, we treated goal consensus between organizations as the key dependent variable, assuming that goal consensus is an important precondition for performance (De Buijn and Ten Heuvelhof 2002; Provan and

Kenis 2008; Percival 2009). The unit of analysis in chapter 5 is thus not the organization itself but the *dyad* of two organizations.

Building on *institutional theory* (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) and *embeddedness research* (Uzzi 1996; Gulati 2007), we hypothesized that goal consensus would be associated with stronger inter-organizational relations, especially for types of relationships that involve a large degree of strategic interaction between members of the two organizations and when the two organizations share a larger number of relations with third parties in the inter-organizational network. We analyzed two complete local inter-organizational networks (n =18; n = 16) that are involved in the local policy-making process, each of which addresses one particular policy subdomain of the SSA: elderly and youth policy. In terms of various characteristics of network embeddedness, we looked at variations in *structure* (both bilateral access and access between partners), four different types of relationship *content* (e.g., client referrals), and the *strength* of the relationships.

The results showed that there is a considerable *lack* of goal consensus within the two networks. This finding refutes the typical—but often implicit—notion in the public management and performance literature that goal consensus can be assumed (Rethemeyer and Hatmaker 2008), especially in the context of social policy. Second, the *strength* of relations between organizations positively affected goal consensus, in particular for those types of relationships that involve strategic information exchange between the members of the two organizations (especially managerial interaction). Surprisingly, however, the embeddedness of relations in larger subgroups did not affect goal consensus.

Overall, the results of chapter 5's analysis urge a stronger emphasis on the process of goal formation while implementing a new law in a network setting (cf. O'Toole and Meier 2004). They also show that managers can effectively steer the networks towards common goals. Despite fundamentally conflicting interests that exist between local organizations—e.g., competition over similar services to SSA clients—strong relationships with local partners provide opportunities for developing common strategies and solutions in local service delivery (Van der Veer, Schalk and Gilsing 2011).

6.3 Discussion

This section reflects on the general conclusions that can be drawn regarding the relationship between the embeddedness and performance of public corporate actors based on the chapters' findings. The dissertation began by arguing that it is not at all evident that public actors will perform well. Unexpec-

ted external events, high task difficulty, public goal ambiguity, and goal conflict can compromise the effectiveness of public organizations. Certain actors may be better able to surmount such performance barriers than others. The descriptive research question asked whether variation exists in the performance of public corporate actors across different levels of collaboration. For the four studies undertaken in this dissertation, the answer is affirmative. At the supranational level, we observed that certain member states are better able to attain their domestic goals in EU decision-making than others (chapter 2). At the national level, certain PABO colleges performed better than others (chapter 3). Finally, at the local level, certain local Dutch governments were better able to increase the independent functioning of SSA clients (chapter 4), while certain organizations were better able to reach goal consensus than others (chapter 5).

The explanatory research question asked whether and to what extent these differences in performance can be attributed to the particular institutional and network embeddedness of public corporate actors. Overall, our findings in the research chapters increase our understanding of the conditions under which public corporate actors can pursue their individual interests while coordinating diverging interests within a system of actors who act interdependently (Coleman 1990: 30). A number of general conclusions can be drawn.

First, *institutional embeddedness affects the performance of public actors*. This conclusion is based on chapter 2. In this chapter, we showed that formal and informal institutional rules shape the opportunities and constraints that actors face in their interactions with other actors. We could not test institutional embeddedness effects at the national and local levels of collaboration. In chapters 3 through 5, we held institutional conditions constant or attempted to control for them. In chapter 3, for example, PABO colleges operate under the same national and European regulations (e.g., the Bologna Declaration) in terms of the performance indicators used to evaluate their programs. In chapter 4, we controlled for possible variations in the political composition of municipal councils, which can be seen as an institutional condition under which public managers coordinate their relationships with local organizations in the SSA.

Second, *only specific network embeddedness conditions affect the performance of public corporate actors.* Overall, chapters 3 through 5 demonstrated that the way in which public corporate actors establish and maintain relationships to manage their interdependencies affects their performance. Networking does increase performance, as chapter 3 shows: PABO colleges that are not a member of any affiliation perform worse than those that are. However, the effects vary according to the type of actor as well as the content, strength, and structure of the relationship. Most notably, abstracting from the

results across the different research contexts, it seems that establishing a *limited* number of *strong* relationships is a better strategy for increasing performance than establishing many weaker relationships. In chapter 3, being embedded in small groups characterized by strong relationships increased the performance of PABOs. In chapter 4, involving *too many* professional organizations in collective SSA policy-making negatively affects the performance of local governments. Finally, chapter 5 found that strong relations between any two members of the local elderly and youth policy networks increases goal consensus between them. These findings suggest that reputation and learning effects (Uzzi 1996; Buskens and Raub 2002; Gulati 2007) and mutual adjustment and consensus-seeking (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Molnar and Rogers 1979) could be important mechanisms above and beyond access to the information and resources that actors can obtain through their relations with other actors.

What is more, the chapters that studied performance by measuring outcomes at the client level (chapters 3 and 4) provide insight into the *effect sizes* of network embeddedness. Research into *how much,* rather than *whether*, networking matters for performance is rare in the public administration literature. In chapter 3, being embedded in cohesive subgroups explained 13 to 18 percent of the variance in performance between PABO colleges. In chapter 4, the involvement of professional organizations accounted for four to eight percent of the variation in performance between local governments. These comparable effect sizes indicate that network embeddedness is an important factor in explaining inter-actor performance differences, in addition to other organizational-level explanations. Although network embeddedness makes a difference, the impact is modest: individual-level mechanisms account for much more of the variation in the clients' conditions in both studies. Thus, we should not overemphasize the importance of networks for client outcomes (cf. Issett et al. 2011).

6.4 Suggestions for future research

This section concludes the dissertation by suggesting four promising directions for future research.

6.4.1 Studying institutional and network embeddedness simultaneously

Although this dissertation made first steps towards triangulation, it does not present a full analysis of embeddeness effects on the performance of public corporate actors. The scope of this dissertation did not include all types

of embeddedness for all levels of collaboration. Most importantly, future research should focus on the simultaneous analysis of institutional and network embeddedness within the same context. Institutional rules shape interactions between public corporate actors, and actors anticipate these rules in their interactions with other actors (Scharpf 1997). For example, the prerogative of the president to draft compromise solutions provides it with the opportunity to exclude or attenuate unfavorable policy measures. As a consequence, the Council presidency is likely to become a central broker because it becomes the primary focus of lobbying efforts by other member states. In chapter 2, we could not control for the actual interactions between member states (e.g., the interactions between heads of state) or the tendencies of members of the COREPER to collaborate more intensively with particular representatives.

6.4.2 Studying actor-versus-network performance

An important and growing branch in public administration research studies the performance of networks as a whole and treats the network as the unit of analysis (Provan, Fish and Sydow 2007; Issett et al. 2011). These studies focus on network-level conditions that predict performance. Predominantly, these studies have emphasized the structural aspects of whole networks. Provan and Milward (1995), for example, examined the optimal configuration of service delivery relations in networks providing services to mental health patients. Although these studies recognize that actors have individual goals that may conflict with the network's goals, they rarely take the resulting individual-level behaviors and strategies into account (for exceptions, see Akkerman et al. 2010; Akkerman, Torenvlied, and Schalk 2011). Conversely, this dissertation has addressed precisely these actor strategies and embeddedness effects on actor performance. In doing so, it has largely disregarded the consequences for the network as a whole. This approach stemmed from the fact that we could study only one or two complete networks (chapters 3 and 5) or ego-networks (chapter 4). Thus, there were too few cases for a comparison of whole networks.

Experimental network research has demonstrated the inherent tensions between actor- and network-level performance. Burt's (1992) classic structural hole argument implies that actors in a social network will aim to fill a 'structural hole' between other actors because doing so provides them with various means to advance their own interests. Buskens and Van de Rijt (2008), however, have shown that filling a structural hole is not tenable if every actor strives to fill structural holes. We can expect similar tensions in service delivery and other networks in the public sector. Whole-network research in public administration suggests that when the network is relatively large, service delivery networks as a whole function more effectively when there is a central broker

that coordinates activities between different parts of the network (Provan and Kenis 2008). This phenomenon is particularly visible between local, dense clusters of organizations (Provan and Sebastian 1998; Brass et al. 2004). It is not at all obvious, however, that this effective 'mode of governance' can be sustained in the long term. Other member organizations in the network can, ceteris paribus, be expected to assume that broker position, as it confers to them an important means to improve their own performance, including establishing control over information flows (Borgatti, Everett and Foster 2003) and policy agendas (Koppenjan and Klijn 2004) as well as managing resource dependencies (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). Both actor- and network-level performance are important social outcomes; as one is dependent upon the other, both should be studied in conjunction.

6.4.3 Studying feedback effects between performance and embeddedness

A central problem in inter-organizational network research is that of reversed causality (Brass et al. 2004): the likelihood that performance affects network relations, rather than vice versa. For example, high-performing organizations are attractive partners and therefore may be better able to establish collaborative relations with other organizations. Indeed, a large share of the inter-organizational literature focuses on elements of network embeddedness as *dependent* variables (Oliver 1990; Gulati and Gargiulo 1999; Powell et al. 2005).

In this dissertation, we accounted for this problem to the extent possible. Chapter 5 uses cross-sectional data, and therefore the possibility that goal consensus causes inter-organizational collaboration cannot be excluded. However, as we argued in chapter 5, the fact that the SSA is a new law makes it unlikely that the debate over its goals vis-à-vis organizations preceded collaboration. The research design in chapter 3 accounted for possible reversed causality, as the affiliation network was constant over the years that performance was measured in terms of graduate satisfaction. Chapter 4 in particular represents an important advancement: the longitudinal analysis excluded the possibility that the independent functioning of SSA clients in 2008 caused involvement relations between local governments in 2007.

Notwithstanding these important improvements on earlier research regarding public management and performance, the research designs did not account for two related problems concerning the direction of effects. First, none of the analyses used true panel data. Therefore, the actual *change* in client conditions from one point in time to the next could not be investigated either for college graduates or for SSA clients. Second, none of the networks we analyzed varied over time. Hence, we could not assess 1) possible feedback effects from performance to embeddedness and changes in network relations

nor 2) variation in the strength of the effect of network embeddedness over time. With respect to the latter point, we assumed in chapter 4 that stakeholder involvement would be consequential for the independent functioning of SSA clients *one year* after the involvement process. It was, but the effect may be stronger over the course of several years. Although we followed common practice in assuming a one-year time lag (cf., Meier and O'Toole 2003), some authors argue that it may take as many as 20 years for policies to have significant effects (Sabatier 1998). An important avenue for future research is therefore to investigate such time-lag effects of network embeddedness.

6.4.4 Studying cross-level effects of embeddedness on client outcomes

It was not possible to account for cross-level effects in this dissertation's various analyses. This lacuna was primarily due to methodological limitations. The small number of cases at the actor level (28 in chapter 3 and 69 in chapter 4) excluded the possibility of estimating reliable and robust cross-level interaction effects. However, the problem is not solely methodological. Theoretically, it is challenging to define the contents of the 'black box' that exists between organizations' networking behavior and the eventual outcomes for their clients. For example, stakeholder involvement (chapter 4) affects the independent functioning of clients through numerous possible means. It will affect the actual content of policies (Furlong and Kerwin 2005), the managerial strategies of managers (Walker, O'Toole and Meier 2007), the behavior of local employees (Schalk, Drasch and Maas 2009), the characteristics of the services being delivered (e.g., by means of personal budgets or in-kind donations), etc. Likewise, the networking behavior of PABO colleges will affect teaching methods, curricula, budgets, instructors' motivation, etc. This dissertation demonstrated a direct link between embeddedness and performance at the client level. Future research must ultimately account for the mechanisms that relate embeddedness to performance in terms of client outcomes and incorporate large-n data into statistical designs that can test these mechanisms.

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Nederlandse samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)

De prestaties van publieke actoren: Essays over de effecten van institutionele- en netwerkinbedding in supranationale, nationale en lokale samenwerkingsverbanden

Inleiding

Dit proefschrift bestudeert de prestaties van publieke actoren. *Publieke actoren* zijn collectieve rechtspersonen (in het Engels: 'corporate actors') die betrokken zijn bij de productie van goederen en diensten voor burgers met gebruik van algemene middelen. Het zijn overheden en overheidsbureaucratieën. Maar ook non-gouvernementele publieke en private organisaties kunnen nadrukkelijk als publieke actoren worden beschouwd, wanneer die een sterke rol spelen in de publieke dienstverlening en worden gefinancierd uit algemene middelen, zoals overheidssubsidies (bijvoorbeeld culturele instellingen, kinderopvang, of vervoersbedrijven).

Onder 'presteren' verstaan we in dit proefschrift de mate waarin publieke actoren in staat zijn hun publieke doelen te verwezenlijken. *Publieke doelen* zijn normatieve standaarden die van overheidswege op democratische wijze zijn vastgesteld door middel van het politieke besluitvormingsproces. Zo bepalen in Nederland democratisch gekozen besluitvormers wat de standaarden moeten zijn voor de kwaliteit van onderwijs, en moeten openbare scholen aan deze standaarden voldoen. Dergelijke publieke doelen hebben vaak betrekking op het gedrag of welzijn van een specifieke cliënten- of doelgroep van een publieke actor. Denk bijvoorbeeld aan studenten als cliënten van universiteiten, patiënten als cliënten van ziekenhuizen of gedetineerden als cliënten van gevangenissen.

Het is van cruciaal belang om te begrijpen onder welke condities publieke actoren beter of juist minder goed presteren. De publieke sector vormt een (zeer) groot deel van de economie in westerse samenlevingen. Ter illustratie: in 2009 vormden overheidsuitgaven gemiddeld 50.7 procent van het totale Bruto Nationaal Product van een lidstaat van de Europese Unie. Echter, de prestaties van publieke actoren staan onder druk. De financiële en economische crisis die begon in 2008 vergroot het belang van efficiënte (doelmatige) publieke serviceverlening, terwijl bezuinigingen de beschikbare middelen voor overheden en non-gouvernementele organisaties beperken, waardoor ook hun effectiviteit (doeltreffendheid) in gevaar komt. Bovendien staan de prestaties van publieke actoren onder druk door de vaak hoge mate van complexiteit van hun taken (denk aan zorgverlening aan mensen met een meervoudige zorgvraag), de vaak moeilijk vast te stellen behoeften van

cliënten, en het feit dat publieke doelen vaak conflicteren met andere organisatiedoelen, zoals kostenbeheersing of groei van de organisatie.

Een centrale gedachte in dit proefschrift is dat de prestaties van publieke actoren afhangen van het gedrag van andere actoren in hun omgeving. Deze afhankelijkheden zien we terug op alle niveaus in het publieke domein. Op *supranationaal* niveau kan men denken aan afhankelijkheden tussen Europese lidstaten. Economische groei – een belangrijk doel van elk land – is afhankelijk van het gedrag van andere landen, bijvoorbeeld in termen van handelsbarrières. Op *nationaal* niveau kan men denken aan afhankelijkheden tussen de Rijksoverheid en vakbonden van werkgevers en werknemers in het Nederlandse poldermodel. En ook op *lokaal* niveau ten slotte, vindt men sterke afhankelijkheden tussen gemeenten en serviceverlenende organisaties als gevolg van de toenemende marktwerking binnen de overheid, zoals bijvoorbeeld te zien is in de thuiszorg.

In algemene zin volgt uit deze centrale gedachte dat de interorganisationele relaties die publieke actoren onderhouden om dergelijke afhankelijkheden te managen, verband zouden moeten houden met hun prestaties. Meer specifiek is de verwachting in dit proefschrift dat twee typen van inbedding (in het Engels: 'embeddedness') de prestaties van publieke actoren beïnvloeden. Het eerste type is *institutionele inbedding*. Instituties zijn het geheel van formele en informele regels die de daadwerkelijke interacties tussen publieke actoren structureren in een specifiek samenwerkingsverband. Het zijn collectieve, relatief duurzame regels, die betrekking hebben op het geheel van publieke actoren. Voorbeelden van formele institutionele regels zijn constituties, parlementaire besluitvormingsprocedures, wetten, en algemene eigendomsrechten. Een voorbeeld van een informele institutionele regel is de 'consensusnorm' die geldt onder Europese lidstaten en die stelt dat politieke besluiten alleen onder unanimiteit kunnen worden genomen, zelfs als volgens de formele procedures een meerderheidsbesluit zou volstaan (zie hoofdstuk 2). Hoewel institutionele regels gelden voor het collectief van deelnemende actoren, kunnen deze actoren verschillend zijn 'ingebed' in die regels, wat hun prestaties kan beïnvloeden. Zo zijn alle Europese lidstaten gebonden aan formele besluitvormingsprocedures, maar geven die regels meer invloed aan Frankrijk dan aan Bulgarije.

Het tweede type inbedding is *netwerkinbedding*. Netwerkinbedding heeft betrekking op de bilaterale interacties tussen publieke actoren binnen het geheel van institutionele regels. Publieke actoren initiëren en onderhouden actief bilaterale relaties met andere actoren. Deze relaties hebben een bepaalde inhoud (bijvoorbeeld persoonlijk overleg tussen managers, of de uitwisseling van goederen), een bepaalde sterkte (bijvoorbeeld meer of minder overleg), en hebben betrekking op specifieke partners (een gemeente kan bijvoorbeeld

samenwerken met welzijnsinstellingen of met andere gemeenten). Bovendien vormen alle relaties van alle actoren samen een structuur van directe en indirecte bindingen, ofwel een interorganisationeel netwerk. Eerder onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat de structurele positie van een actor in een dergelijk interorganisationeel netwerk verband houdt met diens prestaties.

De vier empirische hoofdstukken (hoofdstukken 2 tot en met 5) in dit proefschrift zijn gestructureerd naar gelang 1) het type inbedding en 2) het niveau waarop samenwerkingsverbanden kunnen worden waargenomen, namelijk: supranationaal, nationaal en lokaal. De eerste – beschrijvende – onderzoeksvraag die in dit proefschrift wordt gesteld is of er verschillen te vinden zijn in termen van de prestaties van publieke actoren op de drie verschillende niveaus van samenwerking. Wanneer dat zo is, kunnen we nagaan of, en in hoeverre, deze verschillen zijn toe te schrijven aan de specifieke institutionele- en netwerkinbedding van publieke actoren. Dit is de tweede – verklarende – onderzoeksvraag die in dit proefschrift wordt gesteld.

Door vergelijkbare hypothesen over inbedding te toetsten in verschillende samenwerkingscontexten met verschillende onderzoeksdesigns, wordt een belangrijke eerste stap richting triangulatie gezet, waarmee de robuustheid van de resultaten kan worden beoordeeld. Het is echter belangrijk om op te merken dat dit proefschrift zich nadrukkelijk niet ten doel stelt volledig te zijn in termen van het behandelen van alle typen inbedding op alle bestuurlijke niveaus, met alle mogelijke onderzoeksdesigns. Dit zou te veelomvattend zijn. De empirische hoofdstukken moeten gelezen worden als individuele 'essays' waarin algemene verwachtingen over institutionele- en netwerkinbedding worden vertaald in specifieke hypothesen over de prestaties van publieke actoren in een specifiek samenwerkingsverband.

De sociologische, bestuurskundige, politicologische en managementliteratuur die ingaat op de relatie tussen de inbedding van publieke actoren en hun prestaties is zeer uitgebreid. In elk hoofdstuk dragen we bij aan de dominante theorieën voor het samenwerkingsverband en het type publieke actor dat centraal staat in dat hoofdstuk, en dagen we een algemeen gangbare hypothese in die literatuur uit. In de conclusie van het proefschrift wordt geabstraheerd van de specifieke onderzoekscontexten in de empirische hoofdstukken naar de algemene onderzoeksvragen en worden – voor zover mogelijk – algemene conclusies getrokken over de relatie tussen inbedding en prestatie.

Hoofdstuk 2. De macht van de voorzitter in het besluitvormingsproces van de Raad van de Europese Unie

De publieke actoren die we in dit hoofdstuk bestuderen zijn lidstaten van de Europese Unie. Het niveau van samenwerkingsverbanden is in dit hoofdstuk *supranationaal*, waarbij de nadruk ligt op de *institutionele inbedding* van lid-

staten. De vraag die centraal staat is of lidstaten die voorzitter zijn van de Raad van de Europese Unie beter presteren dan lidstaten die dat niet zijn. Daarbij vatten we prestatie op als de mate waarin een lidstaat in staat is om in het besluitvormingsproces collectieve beleidsbeslissingen te realiseren die overeenkomen met zijn nationale prioriteiten.

Het voorzitterschap van de Raad roteert tussen lidstaten, waarbij elke lidstaat het voorzitterschap voor zes maanden bekleedt. De gangbare verwachting is dat voorzitters niet in staat zijn om hun nationale prioriteiten na te streven, om verschillende redenen: hun taken als voorzitter zijn voornamelijk administratief, de periode van zes maanden is te kort om substantiële invloed uit te oefenen, zij worden sterk in de gaten gehouden door andere lidstaten en zij zijn onderhevig aan een norm van onpartijdigheid. Deze verwachting is echter in twijfel getrokken door Tallberg (2006). Op basis van de institutionele voordelen die een voorzitter heeft, verwacht hij dat voorzittende landen juist beter presteren. Deze institutionele voordelen liggen bijvoorbeeld in het recht om de agenda te bepalen, het recht op het formuleren van compromisvoorstellen en de bemiddelingsrol die de voorzitter speelt in bilaterale en multilaterale conflicten tussen lidstaten.

Op basis van Tallberg (2006) specificeren we deze verwachting nog verder. We verwachten dat niet alleen het voorzitterschap op zich, maar ook de specifieke *fase* in het besluitvormingsproces waarin het voorzitterschap wordt bekleed, van invloed is op de prestaties van lidstaten. Het besluitvormingsproces over een enkel voorstel van de Europese Commissie kan jaren in beslag nemen, en de genoemde institutionele voordelen verschillen tussen lidstaten die aan het begin, de afronding, of een tussenfase van het voorstel voorzitter zijn. Op basis van die verschillen verwachten we dat zowel voorzitters die een Commissievoorstel aannemen (in de beginfase) als voorzitters die een Commissievoorstel afsluiten (in de stemfase) beter presteren dan 'tussenliggende' voorzitters en niet-voorzittende lidstaten.

Om de hypothesen te toetsen, ontwikkelen we aan de hand van de collectieve besluitvormingsliteratuur een formeel besluitvormingsmodel, dat uitgaat van coöperatieve besluitvorming in de Raad (uitgaande van de reeds genoemde 'consensusnorm'). De hypothesen worden getoetst op een dataset die bestaat uit 152 controversiële besluitvormingsissues in de Raad, die gaan over een breed scala aan beleidsonderwerpen en waarvoor een collectief besluit werd gerealiseerd in de periode 1999-2001 (in welke periode er 15 lidstaten waren).

Nonlineaire regressietechnieken laten zien dat alleen lidstaten die voorzitter zijn in de stemfase beter presteren dan andere lidstaten; er is geen algemeen effect van het voorzitterschap op prestaties. De voordelen die verbonden zijn aan de specifieke institutionele inbedding van lidstaten die voorzitter

zijn in de stemfase leiden er dus toe dat deze lidstaten beter in staat zijn hun nationale prioriteiten te realiseren. Deze resultaten dragen in belangrijke mate bij aan de Europese collectieve besluitvormingsliteratuur, door het verwerpen van de gangbare assumptie dat voorzitters 'tandenloos' zouden zijn. Tegelijkertijd nuanceren we de hypothese van Tallberg die stelt dat voorzitters *altijd* machtiger zijn dan andere lidstaten. Ook methodologisch boekt deze studie belangrijke vooruitgang door het grootschalige vergelijkende karakter van de analyses, waar eerdere analyses hoofdzakelijk individuele gevalsstudies betroffen. In de conclusie van het proefschrift wordt ingegaan op de consequentie van deze resultaten voor de recente uitbreiding van de EU naar 27 lidstaten.

Hoofdstuk 3. Netwerkinbedding en de prestaties van publieke actoren: De sterkte van sterke relaties in het Nederlandse hoger onderwijs

De publieke actoren die we in dit hoofdstuk bestuderen zijn Nederlandse Pedagogische academia voor het basisonderwijs (Pabo's). De prestaties van Pabo's evalueren we in termen van de tevredenheid van hun afgestudeerden over de gevolgde opleiding als geheel. De centrale vraag is of de *netwerkinbedding* van Pabo's in termen van de structuur en sterkte van relaties met andere Pabo's invloed heeft op hun prestaties. We nemen daarbij aan dat de institutionele context gelijk is voor alle Pabo's. Hoewel Pabo's relaties onderhouden met actoren over verschillende niveaus van samenwerking (bijvoorbeeld met lokale scholen voor de verzorging van stages), richten we ons in dit hoofdstuk op de relaties tussen Pabo's onderling, en dus op het *nationale* niveau van samenwerking.

De bestuurskundige literatuur die zich richt op publiek management en prestaties verwacht over het algemeen een positief effect van de netwerkactiviteit van publieke actoren. Deze 'graad-centraliteit' hypothese stelt dat met hoe meer andere organisaties een organisatie relaties onderhoudt, hoe beter deze organisatie presteert. Dit wordt verwacht omdat deze relaties toegang bieden tot belangrijke hulpbronnen en informatie, en een organisatie in staat stellen om in te spelen op externe veranderingen en 'shocks'. Een voorbeeld uit het onderwijsveld is het gegeven dat actieve Texaanse scholen die waren getroffen door de orkaan Katrina, beter in staat waren dan meer geïsoleerde scholen om hun onderwijsaanbod te handhaven. Zij brachten hun leerlingen onder in scholen waarmee zijn samenwerkingsrelaties onderhielden, en die niet waren getroffen door de orkaan.

Hoofdstuk 3 test deze graad-centraliteit hypothese voor Pabo's, maar bouwt daarnaast voort op de 'embeddedness' literatuur in de sociologie om een alternatieve hypothese te formuleren, namelijk de 'cohesieve subgroep'

hypothese. Deze stelt dat de inbedding van Pabo's in cohesieve subgroepen hun prestaties verhoogt. Een 'cohesieve subgroep' is een verzameling van Pabo's die onderling allemaal een relatie hebben met elkaar, terwijl deze relaties tegelijkertijd sterk zijn. De redenering achter deze hypothese is dat het aantal relaties alleen niet voldoende is om effectieve samenwerking tussen scholen te bewerkstelligen, maar dat daarnaast het ontwikkelen van gedeelde normen en reputaties van belang zijn, die bij uitstek worden gegenereerd in gesloten systemen van sterke onderlinge relaties.

We testen deze hypothesen op het complete interorganisationele netwerk van Nederlandse Pabo's (n = 28). Het type relatie dat we bestuderen is het gedeeld lidmaatschap van formele overlegplatforms waarin Pabo's deelnemen (die gaan over bijvoorbeeld masterprogramma's of ICT-kwesties). We combineren deze data met financiële en andere contextuele eigenschappen op Pabo-niveau voor de periode 2002-2005 (n = 90) en met de evaluaties van een steekproef van individuele afgestudeerden (n = 7,119). De resultaten van de multi-level analyses laten zien dat er verschillen zijn in de patronen van relaties die Pabo's onderhouden met andere Pabo's. Ten tweede wordt de graad-centraliteit hypothese verworpen, terwijl de cohesieve subgroep hypothese wordt bevestigd. Daarmee wordt duidelijk dat niet het absolute aantal relaties per se, maar juist de inbedding van die relaties in sterk verbonden subgroepen van Pabo's de prestaties positief beïnvloedt.

Deze resultaten dragen bij aan de bestuurskundige literatuur over publiek management en prestaties door de nuancering van de graad-centraliteit hypothese, en een test van deze hypothese in een nieuwe context. De meeste eerdere studies waren studies in de Amerikaanse onderwijssector, met name Texaanse schooldistricten. Daarnaast zet deze empirische studie een methodologische stap voorwaarts door haar multi-level analyse van 'zachte' prestatie-indicatoren (evaluaties van afgestudeerden) in aanvulling op de 'harde' outputindicatoren voor prestaties die meestal worden gebruikt (zoals het aantal afgestudeerden of de groei in studentenaantallen).

Hoofdstuk 4. De relatie tussen het actief betrekken van stakeholderorganisaties en beleidsprestaties: Non-lineaire effecten in het Nederlandse lokale beleidsproces

De publieke actoren die we in dit hoofdstuk bestuderen zijn Nederlandse gemeenten. Zowel hoofdstuk 4 als hoofdstuk 5 richten zich op de implementatie van de Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning (Wmo), die is ingevoerd in januari 2007. De prestaties van gemeenten meten we af aan de mate waarin zij de centrale doelen van de Wmo weten te realiseren. De Wmo heeft als doel de zelfredzaamheid te vergroten van (met name) mensen met een beperking, in termen van hun 1) fysieke zelfredzaamheid, 2) sociale contacten (persoonlijk

netwerk van vrienden, familie, etc.) en 3) sociale participatie (maatschappelijke participatie in termen van lidmaatschap van sportclubs, culturele activiteiten, etc.). De centrale vraag in hoofdstuk 4 is of de prestaties van gemeenten samenhangen met de mate waarin zij lokale 'stakeholderorganisaties' betrekken bij de beleidsvorming- en implementatie rond de Wmo. Stakeholderorganisaties zijn lokale organisaties die een belang hebben bij de uitkomsten van het lokale Wmo-beleid, zoals transportorganisaties, mantelzorgorganisaties, de Thuiszorg, enzovoort. Het niveau van samenwerkingsverbanden is in dit hoofdstuk dus *lokaal*, waarbij de nadruk ligt op de *netwerkinbedding* van gemeenten in termen van structuur (toegang tot stakeholderorganisaties) en het type partner (we maken een onderscheid tussen professionele en cliëntorganisaties).

Voor het implementeren van de Wmo genieten gemeenten een hoge mate van beleidsvrijheid: de Rijksoverheid is systeemverantwoordelijk en financiert de Wmo, maar gemeenten mogen zelf lokale doelen bepalen en keuzes maken in termen van het aanbod van services. Daarnaast behoeven zij alleen aan hun eigen burgers (horizontaal) en niet aan de Rijksoverheid (verticaal) verantwoording af te leggen over hun beleid. Deze beleidsvrijheid betekent dat verschillen tussen gemeenten in termen van hun prestaties in de Wmo kunnen worden toegerekend aan verschillen in de keuzes die gemeenten zelf maken, waaronder keuzes over het actief betrekken van stakeholderorganisaties.

De bestuurskundige literatuur die zich richt op publiek management en prestaties, en de literatuur die zich richt op inclusief beleid ('governance'), veronderstelt over het algemeen dat het actief betrekken van stakeholderorganisaties door overheden positief bijdraagt aan de prestaties van beleid. Omdat de effectiviteit van beleid voor een groot deel afhangt van de inspanningen en medewerking van stakeholderorganisaties, kunnen overheden door het betrekken van deze organisaties toegang creëren tot professionele expertise en hulpbronnen, en steun genereren door medezeggenschap in beleidsbeslissingen. Recent onderzoek in deze literatuur heeft echter twee kanttekeningen geplaatst bij deze verwachting. Ten eerste is geopperd dat het positieve effect van het betrekken van stakeholder organisaties afneemt naarmate het aantal stakeholder organisaties toeneemt. Dit zou zijn omdat de marginale voordelen van nieuwe informatie en hulpbronnen afnemen, terwijl tegelijkertijd de kosten van samenwerking, overleg, en het bereiken van consensus toenemen. De tweede kanttekening is dat het effect wellicht verschilt voor verschillende typen stakeholderorganisaties, met name tussen 'professionele' organisaties – organisaties die daadwerkelijk services verlenen en beschikken over substantiële financiële middelen en expertise van professionele serviceverleners – en 'cliëntorganisaties', die een groep van Wmo-cliënten

vertegenwoordigen, een beperkte beschikking hebben over hulpbronnen en met name een adviserende rol spelen.

Inspelend op deze kanttekeningen worden in hoofdstuk 4 twee hypothesen afgeleid. De eerste hypothese veronderstelt een positief effect van het betrekken van stakeholderorganisaties op de beleidsprestaties van gemeenten (voor beide typen stakeholders). De twee hypothese veronderstelt dat het positieve effect afneemt naarmate het aantal stakeholderorganisaties toeneemt, maar alleen voor professionele stakeholderorganisaties.

Deze hypothesen worden getoetst op een longitudinale dataset van 69 gemeenten en 3,343 cliënten van de Wmo binnen deze gemeenten. De multilevel analyses laten zien dat er significante verschillen zijn tussen gemeenten in termen van hun prestaties in de Wmo. Deze verschillen kunnen echter alleen worden gerelateerd aan het betrekken van professionele stakeholderorganisaties, niet aan het betrekken van cliëntorganisaties. Bovendien verschilt het effect voor dit type stakeholder voor de drie verschillende prestatie-indicatoren. De eerste hypothese werd alleen bevestigd voor fysieke zelfredzaamheid, terwijl de tweede hypothese alleen werd bevestigd voor sociale contacten. Het betrekken van professionele stakeholderorganisaties had een negatief effect op sociale participatie. Interessant is dat voor de twee 'sociale' prestatie-indicatoren van de Wmo (sociale contacten en sociale participatie) niet (alleen) geldt dat het positieve effect afneemt, maar zelfs dat het negatief wordt bij een hoge mate van actieve betrekking.

De analyses in hoofdstuk 4 dragen op een aantal punten bij aan de literatuur over het betrekken van stakeholderorganisaties. Ten eerste gaan zij verder dan de gebruikelijke analyse van 'procesindicatoren' als prestatie-indicatoren (bijvoorbeeld de duur van besluitvorming of de tevredenheid van stakeholders) en bekijken het meest interessante effect, namelijk het effect op de uiteindelijke afnemers van beleid. Daarnaast biedt hoofdstuk 4 een van de zeer weinige representatieve, longitudinale en systematisch vergelijkende studies over het effect van het actief betrekken van stakeholderorganisaties op beleidsprestaties. In hoofdstuk 6 wordt gereflecteerd op de consequenties van deze resultaten voor het Nederlandse Wmo-beleid.

Hoofdstuk 5. Het effect van interorganisationele relaties en doelcongruentie: Een exploratief onderzoek in twee lokale Nederlandse netwerken van serviceverleners

In het laatste empirische hoofdstuk zoomen we in op twee lokale Wmo-netwerken van serviceverleners in één stad, namelijk Breda. Net als hoofdstuk 4 richt hoofdstuk 5 zich op de implementatie van de Wmo. Het niveau van samenwerkingsverbanden is dus wederom *lokaal*. Wederom ook richten we ons op de *netwerkinbedding* van lokale actoren. Maar anders dan in hoofdstuk

4 zijn de publieke actoren die we bestuderen in hoofdstuk 5 niet (alleen) gemeenten, maar alle bij de implementatie van de Wmo betrokken actoren (stakeholderorganisaties). Deze stakeholderorganisaties worden dus beschouwd als actieve en netwerkende actoren. Het feit dat de publieke actoren in hoofdstuk 5 niet alle van hetzelfde type zijn, vormt een probleem voor het vergelijken van hun prestaties. Elke organisatie heeft namelijk een deels andere cliëntengroep. Alle hebben ze te maken met Wmo-cliënten, maar sommige meer dan andere. Zo is het overgrote deel van de activiteiten van thuiszorgorganisaties gericht op mensen met een beperking, maar richten woningcorporaties zich maar beperkt op deze doelgroep. We kunnen de prestaties van deze twee typen actoren dus niet vergelijken op basis van het welzijn van deze cliëntengroep. Ook is het moeilijk om de prestaties van deze enkele cliëntengroep toe te schrijven aan het handelen van individuele organisaties binnen de totale verzameling van organisaties van wie deze cliënten services ontvangen.

Om dit probleem op te lossen, hanteren we een andere benadering van prestaties in hoofdstuk 5, die tegelijkertijd een belangrijk hiaat vult in de bestuurskundige literatuur die zich richt op publiek management en prestaties. Prestatie vatten we in dit hoofdstuk op als de mate van *doelcongruentie* tussen publieke actoren. Een beperkte literatuur geeft aan dat doelcongruentie een belangrijke conditie is voor de prestatie van interorganisationele beleidsnetwerken, terwijl tegelijkertijd de meeste analyses van de prestaties van deze netwerken doelcongruentie simpelweg vooronderstellen en als een constante beschouwen. In het geval van de Wmo heeft doelcongruentie betrekking op de op lokaal niveau geformuleerde Wmo-doelen en de voorgenomen maatregelen die het netwerk van lokale stakeholderorganisaties zou moeten nemen. De centrale vraag die we in dit hoofdstuk stellen is of en hoe de netwerkinbedding van lokale organisaties de doelcongruentie tussen deze organisaties beinvloedt. Omdat doelcongruentie altijd ten minste twee organisaties betreft, is de analyse-eenheid in dit hoofdstuk niet de organisatie zelf, maar de *dyade* van twee organisaties.

Voortbouwend op inzichten uit de institutionele theorie en de 'embeddedness' literatuur in de sociologie formuleren we drie hypothesen. We verwachten dat de mate van doelcongruentie tussen twee organisties 1) positief is gerelateerd aan de sterkte van hun interorganisationele relaties, en met name 2) typen relaties die worden gekenmerkt door een hoge mate van strategische en persoonlijke interactie tussen leden van de twee organisaties en wanneer 3) de twee organisaties een groter aantal sterke relaties delen met derden in het interorganisationele netwerk.

Deze hypothesen worden getoetst met gegevens over vier verschillende typen relaties (bijv. financiële afhankelijkheid, managementoverleg) tussen

alle actoren in twee interorganisationele netwerken (gericht op ouderenzorg en jeugdzorg), met variërende sterkte. De twee netwerken bestaan uit respectievelijk 18 en 16 organisaties, en hebben samen een totaal van 546 gerichte bilaterale relaties. De analyses laat zien dat, ten eerste, er een behoorlijk *gebrek* aan doelcongruentie bestaat tussen de actoren in de twee netwerken. Dit gegeven spreekt de gangbare – maar meestal impliciete – assumptie tegen dat doelcongruentie kan worden voorondersteld, in het bijzonder op het gebeid van sociaal beleid. Ten tweede laten de resultaten zien dat de sterkte van bilaterale relaties positief gerelateerd is aan doelcongruentie, in het bijzonder voor typen relaties die een hoge mate van strategische interactie inhouden. De eerste twee hypothesen worden daarmee grotendeels bevestigd. Opvallend is dat de derde hypothese – die een positief effect veronderstelt van de inbedding van bilaterale relaties in een subgroep met sterke interorganistaionele bindngen – moet worden verworpen.

Over het geheel genomen dringen de resultaten aan op een sterkere nadruk op het interorganisationele proces van doelbepaling in de context van het formuleren van lokale netwerkdoelen. Zij laten ook zien dat managers netwerken kunnen sturen. Ondanks altijd aanwezige conflicterende belangen tussen organisaties – dezelfde euro kan bijvoorbeeld altijd maar naar één organisatie gaan – kunnen zij door het initiëren en onderhouden van sterke relaties met andere netwerkleden op bilateraal niveau de doelcongruentie bevorderen.

Algemene conclusies en aanbevelingen

Dit proefschrift is een verzameling van essays die individueel bijdragen aan een specifiek onderzoeksveld. In elk hoofdstuk of essay werd een algemeen gangbare hypothese in de specifieke literatuur voor dat onderzoeksveld aan de kaak gesteld. Naast deze gerichte idiosyncratische bijdragen, geeft het geheel van de resultaten over alle hoofdstukken een antwoord op de algemene hoofdvragen. Hoofdstuk 6 bespreekt in hoeverre deze vragen zijn beantwoord en behandelt de algemene conclusies. Daarnaast worden in hoofdstuk 6 aanbevelingen gedaan voor vervolgonderzoek naar de prestaties van publieke actoren. Wij vatten hier deze conclusies en aanbevelingen kort samen.

Ten eerste – en betrekking hebbend op de eerste, beschijvende, onderzoeksvraag – kan worden gesteld dat er wel degelijk verschillen zijn in prestaties tussen publieke actoren. Deze verschillen werden gevonden in alle hoofdstukken, voor verschillende typen publieke actoren, en op alle niveaus van samenwerkingsverbanden. Ten tweede – en betrekking hebbend op de tweede, verklarende, onderzoeksvraag – zijn deze verschillen toe te schrijven aan zowel de specifieke institutionele- als netwerkinbedding van deze actoren. Dat bevestigende antwoord berust op een aantal kernobservaties.

Zo laat hoofdstuk 2 liet zien dat lidstaten van de Europese Unie bij het aannemen van een andere institutionele rol – die van voorzitter van de Raad – beschikking hebben over een surplus aan invloedsinstrumenten, die hun prestaties in termen van het bereiken van nationale doelen positief beïnvloeden. De hoofdstukken 3 tot en met 5 legden de nadruk op netwerkinbedding. De belangrijkste conclusie die met betrekking tot netwerkinbedding kan worden getrokken, is dat het wel degelijk zo is dat netwerkrelaties effectief zijn, maar dat de effecten verschillen naar gelang de sterkte en structuur van relaties. Over het geheel genomen observeren we dat het managen van een *beperkt* aantal *sterke* relaties een betere strategie is dan het onderhouden van veel relaties per se. Dit resultaat suggereert dat reputatie- en leereffecten inderdaad van belang zijn, in aanvulling op pure toegang tot hulpbronnen en informatie die netwerkrelaties kunnen verschaffen.

Een ander belangrijk algemeen resultaat is dat over verschillende niveaus van samenwerking, we iets kunnen zeggen over de effectgrootte van netwerkinbedding op het niveau van de cliënten van publieke actoren. Onderzoek naar *hoeverre* in plaats van *of* netwerkinbedding belangrijk is, is zeldzaam in het publieke domein, evenals onderzoek op het niveau van cliënten. De hoofdstukken 3 en 4 laten zien dat ruwweg tien procent van de variantie in prestaties tussen publieke actoren kan worden toegeschreven aan netwerkinbedding (respectievelijk cohesieve subgroepen en het betrekken van stakeholderorganisaties). Dit resultaat laat zien dat netwerkgedrag van publieke actoren van belang is, in aanvulling op verklaringen voor prestaties op organisatieniveau (bijvoorbeeld betrekking hebbend op het interne management van een organisatie). Tegelijkertijd is de effectgrootte bescheiden in vergelijking met de gevonden effectgroottes in onderzoek naar proces- en outputindicatoren, en moeten we het belang van netwerken voor het uiteindelijke welzijn van cliënten niet overdrijven.

Op basis van de beperkingen van dit onderzoek worden in hoofdstuk 6 ten slotte een viertal aanbevelingen gedaan voor vervolgonderzoek. Een eerste aanbeveling betreft de simultane analyse van (variaties in) institutionele en netwerkinbedding en het beantwoorden van de vraag onder welke condities institutionele mechanismen de effecten van netwerkgedrag beperken dan wel versterken. Ten tweede zou vervolgonderzoek zich moeten richten op de wisselwerking tussen de prestaties van actoren en de prestaties van netwerken als geheel. Ten derde is een sterkere longitudinale (panel) oriëntatie noodzakelijk om 'feedback' effecten te analyseren tussen inbedding en prestaties. En ten slotte is het van belang niet alleen te kijken naar effecten van inbedding op de gemiddelde cliënt, maar vast te stellen hoe inbedding de effecten van individuele eigenschappen van cliënten versterkt dan wel beperkt.

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Jelmer Schalk
Utrecht, February 2012

About the author

Jelmer Schalk was born in Utrecht, the Netherlands, on May 8th, 1982. He obtained a Bachelor of Science degree from Tilburg University in 2004, and a Master of Science degree in sociology with distinction (*cum laude*) from Utrecht University in 2006. After graduation, he was employed as a management trainee by the City Council of The Hague, in the Department of Spatial Planning. In September 2007 he started as a PhD candidate at the Interuniversity Center for Social Science Theory and Methodology at Utrecht University. During his PhD research he spent two months as a visiting scholar at the University of Arizona (with prof. Keith Provan) and six months as a research fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP). As of September 2011, he is employed as an assistant professor of public administration at the Institute of Public Administration at Leiden University.

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