Administrational Trust:
An empirical examination of inter-organisational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration

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"Za sny na przyklad nie placisz tu grosa

Za zludzenia - dopiero kiedy utracone"

"Dreams, for one, don't charge admission

Illusions are costly only when lost"

Wislawa Szymborska

"Here"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The title of this doctoral thesis is 'Administrational trust: An empirical examination of interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration'.

However, early in the process of writing this dissertation, I decided that it deserved a pet name, since we would be spending a lot of time together. Thinking about trust and the related themes of integrity, benevolence, competence, vulnerability, and risk-taking, I was drawn to the Greek myth of Theseus, which reads as a fable of trust. The Greek hero kills the Minotaur in a display of great competence, cunning and strength, and upon his return, serves as a benevolent monarch to his people, working tirelessly to reunite his family and kingdom. Under his rule, Athens was perceived as a most respected and just land, and his government of justice became an idealised model for Greek and Roman culture throughout history. Of course, being a Greek tragedy, Theseus' story ends in a demonstration of the fragility of so much virtue. With many central themes of this myth and my dissertation being so similar, I gave my doctoral dissertation the pet name 'Theseus the thesis'.

The nickname is appropriate for this dissertation for an entirely different reason as well. In '*Life of Theseus*', Plutarch raises the paradox of Theseus' ship. The Athenians preserved Theseus' damaged ship for many centuries after his heroic return, maintaining it in a seaworthy state by replacing and repairing all the wooden parts that had worn out over time. Athenian thinkers pondered how much of the original ship still remained after years of repairs, and philosophised about the question whether it could still be considered to be the same ship, after every single part was replaced over time. Similar thoughts often struck me during my own attempts to build and maintain a sturdy vessel for the 'conceptual morass' that is interorganisational trust research. Every single component of this thesis has been replaced many times over, repairing leaks and structural weaknesses that every researcher will always encounter in their own work. Every component of this thesis, its fundamental structure, its questions, objectives, concepts, theory, method, language, form, and its author: all of these elements have changed in one way or another during this four-year venture across the "*oceanic volume of literature focusing on constructs of trust*" (Bigley and Pearce, 1998: 406). Much like Theseus' ship, every nook and cranny of this dissertation was built, repaired and supported through the contributions of many others. For that reason, it would be deceiving to claim this dissertation as "my" work. I wrote it, but my mind and my spirit were accompanied, challenged and supported by others, to whom I owe a lot of gratitude. That is why I would like to direct some words toward those who have influenced this dissertation (and myself) over the past four years.

First, I want to thank my promotor, prof. dr. Geert Bouckaert, who has allowed me to take full control of this research, allowing me to set out its direction from the very first draft project proposal to the very last detail of the final dissertation. In working with him, this has been an experience of trust, as much as a study of it. Sometimes I felt like his trust was blind and dysfunctional, that it caught me in a 'trust trap' because I was given opportunities and tasks I thought I did not merit and were beyond my competences, and I was

which were as necessary as oxygen to help me see this process through to the end. Although I have not seen much of them in the last half year, it will feel like no time has passed at all when we meet again. I'm also very grateful to the Young European Federalists. Acting as JEF Europe's Vice President in charge of external relations gave me the opportunity to actually be a boundary spanner for a large organisation, rather than only study them. The opportunity to discuss past, present and future of our national, European and global societies with friends from all over Europe was an essential source of intellectual energy for me, which I have tried to channel into the completion of this dissertation. One particular person stands 'on the crossroads' between friend, colleague and European federalist. Conny, we made a pact to either complete our PhD's together, or give up together. Our 'pact' is now finally complete.

Elisa, just like Theseus would never have found his way out of the Minotaurs' labyrinth without Ariadne, I would never have found my way through this dissertation without you. Whenever I was stuck, lost or demotivated in my self-constructed labyrinth of concepts, methods, operationalisations and theory, you handed me a thread and gave it the yank that got me going again. You have shown the patience of an angel with me and my dissertation (well, perhaps not the final weeks), and you have cared for me with unrelenting love and dedication. Without you, I doubt I would have persevered. This dissertation was completed as much due to your efforts as it is due to mine. Don't worry, our story will not end like Theseus and Ariadne.

As the jury has rightly noted, this is a long dissertation. I have written 215.634 words to complete it. And yet, now I find it impossible to find the words through which to express how grateful I am towards my parents. Although neither mom nor dad received any higher education, they have supported me tremendously during my years at school and allowed me to attend university in Leuven, despite the fact that this was certainly not evident in our family. They have made many sacrifices to allow me these opportunities, and I will never be able to reciprocate the trust they have given me. Although I have not been there for many people in the past year(s), I have been especially absent in our family, but my parents have always, always been there for me. It is strange to realise that, after years working on something that is so unlike them, what I really want now is to become more like my parents and spend more time with them. I dedicate this dissertation to my mom and dad, Rita and Freddy.

Peter Oomsels,
Brussels/Leuven
December 2015

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A note on translation

The quantitative and qualitative analyses in this dissertation are based on survey questions and interviews in Dutch. The translations of these questions and interviews are my own, and are therefore limited by my limited proficiency in the English language. While the reader will find that the survey questions are adequately translated, it must be said that I found it particularly challenging to maintain the prosaic quality of many Dutch (and Flemish) expressions and words, which were easily lost in translation. For the sake of clarity and transparency, I have done my best to convey the intended meaning of respondents' quotes in the English translations, rather than to attempt verbatim translations of Flemish expressions, which would come across nonsensical. For instance, the relatively informal Flemish expression "*daarmee ben ik gestopt hé, want ik was al-tijd gejost*" would translate literally to "I stopped doing that hé, because I was al-ways Joshed" (derived from the first name "Josh" or "Joe"). The intended meaning of this expression is to indicate a situation of severe disadvantage. Obviously, it would not make sense to translate the quote verbatim, so this quote was translated as "*I stopped doing that, right, because I always ended up with the short straw*". While the English translation is less successful in transmitting the informal, playful nature of the exchange between interviewer and respondent, which is obvious in the original Flemish expression, the intended meaning of the respondents' quote is successfully conveyed. I have done my best to do justice to the words of my respondents and the reality they intended to describe, and I hope I have been successful in transferring the intended meaning of their words to paper for the benefit of an international audience.

SECTION A:

BUILDING THE VESSEL FOR OUR VENTURE

"Who shall tempt, with wand'ring feet

The dark unbottomed infinite abyss

And through the palpable obscure find out

His uncouth way, or spread his aery flight

Upborne with indefatigable wings

Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive

The happy isle?"

John Milton,
Paradise Lost

THIS FIRST SECTION contains the first steps of our research about interorganisational trust in public administration.

The first chapter introduces the topic of this dissertation and presents the objectives of our research. In order to reach these objectives we develop a set of questions, and we present the logical structure used in this dissertation to develop and present answers to these research questions. The second chapter discusses the central concepts in further detail on the basis of an overview of the literature. In doing so, we develop a conceptual framework to achieve the three objectives of this research project. The second chapter contributes to defining and identifying interorganisational trust in the empirical reality of public administration. Second, it enables us to not only describe but also explain mechanisms of cause and effect of administrational trust. Third, it allows conclusions from empirical research to spill over into the development of specific instruments and strategies for the optimisation of interorganisational trust in public administration.

Table 1: Objectives and results of section A

Chapter	Section objective	Section result
1	Define objectives (a) and research questions (b) of this study	a) Objectives: • Define and identify interorganisational trust in public administration • Describe ánd explain interorganisational trust in public administration • Contribute to strategies for optimisation of interorganisational trust in public administration b) Research questions: • What is the role of interorganisational trust in a public administration context? (Exploratoy) • What is the distribution of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration? (Descriptive) • Which mechanisms explain interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration? (Explanatory)
2	Conceptualise interorganisational trust in line with the objectives of this study	Definition of 'administrational trust' as "*a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions in public administration characterised by risk, dependency and uncertainty, comprising the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability, on the basis of positive expectations held about the counterpart organisation*", and development of conceptual framework through which to approach RQ1, 2 and 3

As such, this section builds the sturdy vessel for our venture into the palpable obscurity, the conceptual morass of interorganisational trust, located deep in the complex and contingency-ridden land of public administration.

1. Introducing 'administrational trust':
Researching interorganisational trust in public administration

Why research interorganisational trust in public administration?

Public administration is central to the process of governing society (Peters and Pierre, 2003: 8). Hughes (2003:6) defined public administration as *"an activity serving the public, (…). It is concerned with procedures, with translating policies into action and with office management. Management includes administration, but also involves organisation to achieve objectives with maximum efficiency, as well as responsibility for results"*. The quality and performance of public administrations' functioning are matters of societal importance, and it has been argued that the primary objective of public administration scholars and researchers is to *"advance management and policies so that government can function"* (Rabin, Hildreth and J. Miller, 1989: iii).

Such advancement of management and policies has long been approached from the perspective of values such as efficiency, effectiveness and economy – the (in)famous three E's (Peters and Pierre, 2003). One could obtain an overview of crucial themes in public administration through a brief glance at the table of contents in the handbook of public administration (Peters and Pierre, 2003), which is divided in themes such as performance management, strategic planning, Human Resource Management, organisational theory in public administration, the role of public administration in the different phases of the policy cycle, legal aspects of public administration, political aspects of public administration (e.g. interest groups), societal aspects of public administration (e.g. legitimacy of public administration), public budgeting and finance, (international) comparative public administration research, administrative reform and change, public administration in developing societies, accountability and ethics in public administration and intergovernmental relations in public administration.

However, within this wide array of themes that seek to advance *"management and policies so that government can function"* (Rabin et al., 1989: iii), there has been little attention for a topic which has been receiving an increasing amount of attention in other social science research disciplines that seek to enable systems to function more effectively, such as political science, sociology, economics, organisational psychology, and organisational studies. For instance, 'neuro-economist' Paul J. Zak (2012: 22) argues that *"the most important factor in determining whether or not a society does well or remains impoverished is not natural resources, education, quality health care, or even the work ethic of its people. What matters most in determining economic outcomes is actually trustworthiness (…) being able to enforce contracts, being able to rely on others to deliver what they promise and not cheat or steal, is a more powerful factor in a country's economic development than education, access to resources – anything"*. The potentially crucial, but relatively understudied topic in public administration research, is Interorganisational trust (Choudhury, 2008).

Despite limited research focus on the issue, interorganisational trust is often argued to be an important concept for contemporary public administration. Dwight Waldo already argued in 1980 that public administration is subject to increasing complexity because it is given responsibilities "*beyond the virtue and authority [it] can summon*" (Waldo, 1980: 187). As the complexity of public governance grows, individual organisations reach the boundaries of their rationality, while bureaucratic inflation renders organisations increasingly cumbersome and inhibits their capacity to cope with the policy challenges of modern society (Edelenbos and Klijn 2007). Scholars have argued that ideas of 'governance' emerged as a reaction to these challenges in the discourse of public sector reform (Pierre and Ingraham 2010; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). In the 'governance' discourse, organisational specialisation, chains of design and planning and cooperation in networks are central strategies to deal with the bounded rationality faced by individual organisations, and to achieve composite decisions and policy objectives in increasingly complex contexts (Simon 1997; Lane and Bachmann 1998; Miles and Snow 1986; Pierre and Ingraham 2010). It proposes that loosely coupled networks of public governance actors are a potential alternative to full reliance on hierarchical steering on the one hand and the free market on the other hand, which are both considered to be outmoded as strategies for the management of public administration (Loorbach 2010: 162). In such loosely coupled networks, authors such as Shaw (2003), Getha-Taylor (2012) and Agranoff (2013) argue that (interorganisational) trust is a crucial factor for successful (co-)operation. It has been argued that trust contributes to 'positive inter-organisational collusion' or 'conspiring for the common good' (Langan-Fox, Grant and Anand, 2014), and that trust facilitates, solidifies and increases the performance of interorganisational cooperation in complex decision-making networks (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2007). Carnevale and Wechsler (1992) argue that trust represents "*a source of legitimacy and diffuse support*" (Nachmias, 1985), extending commitment beyond utilitarian grounds and mitigating ambiguity and uncertainty in many bureaucratic settings (Pascale and Athos, 1981).

One might therefore argue that public administration scholars and researchers should place interorganisational trust more central in their research efforts, especially considering their ambition to "*advance management and policies so that government can function*" (Rabin et al., 1989: iii) in increasingly complex policy environments. However, Bouckaert (2012: 109) has argued that "*there is a general impression that T3 (trust within the public sector) has decreased in an NPM context and that there is a need to develop and expand it again. (…) The hyper-development of a performance-based control system puts pressure on the trust-based model for managing internal relations. Re-establishing T3 emerges as a new agenda for reform and improvement.*"

Although interorganisational trust is thus argued to be an important issue for public administration, it is also treated critically by scholars of public administration. Bouckaert (2012) warns that trust should not be considered as a panacea for reform, since an overabundance of trust could be as damaging for public administration as a shortage of trust. Van Montfort (2010) has argued that trust is often used as a mantra in reform rhetoric, which potentially veils and obstructs serious debate about mechanisms such as oversight,

accountability and the organisation of checks and balances in public administration. In many economic sectors, the creation of interorganisational networks and alliances has been a central reaction to increasing demands of efficiency in a context of rising complexity, and the development of interorganisational trust is considered crucial in this respect (Shaw, 2003). Although these pressures also affect civil servants and public managers, who are searching for better interorganisational cooperation to deal with complex challenges under constant pressure to 'do more with less"[1], it remains unclear how insights about interorganisational trust from private sector research might be transferred to the public sector.

It is therefore essential to understand interorganisational trust better in the context of public administration. This was the ambition of the research project which led to this dissertation.

> 1.2.   **Outline of the research project: research objectives and (initial) questions**

A four-year research project was commissioned by the Flemish Government to the Flemish Policy Research Centre – Governmental Organisation – Decisive Governance (2012-2015), to address the research problem described above. Three research objectives were explicitly defined for the project. First, the research project should contribute to defining and identifying interorganisational trust in the empirical reality of public administration. Second, the project should not only aim to describe interorganisational trust in public administration but also explain its mechanisms. Third, the lessons learned should provide inspiration for the development of specific instruments and strategies to enable the optimisation of administrational trust where this is possible on the one hand and functional on the other hand.

Taking these objectives into account, the following research questions were specified for the project.

- What is the role of interorganisational trust in a public administration context? (Exploratory)
- What is the distribution of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration? (Descriptive)
- Which mechanisms explain interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration? (Explanatory)

In its most diffuse operationalisation, trust relates to a general attitude of groups towards an abstract object (Bouckaert et al., 2002; Uslaner, 2012), and therefore always requires the specification of a general subject of trust (we will refer to the 'trustor' in this dissertation) and a general object of trust (we will refer to the 'trustee' in this dissertation). However, some authors disagree with this approach, and argue that the trustor, trustee, their particular relationship and the context of their relationship need to be defined as

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[1]   Our reference to the pressure on Flemish Civil Servants to "do more with less" is not without reason. In fact; the slogan "do more with less" is part of one of the four strategic goals of the "Multiannual Program Decisive Government", the current major reform program of the Flemish administration.

accurately as possible, as it is presumed that these predicates bear significant effects on trust in a relation (Nooteboom, 2002: 259).

In our study of interorganisational trust, we will start from a broad and diffuse operationalisation of interorganisational trust in public administration and progressively narrow and deepen our focus toward interorganisational trust in specific interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration.

Figure 1: A funnel approach
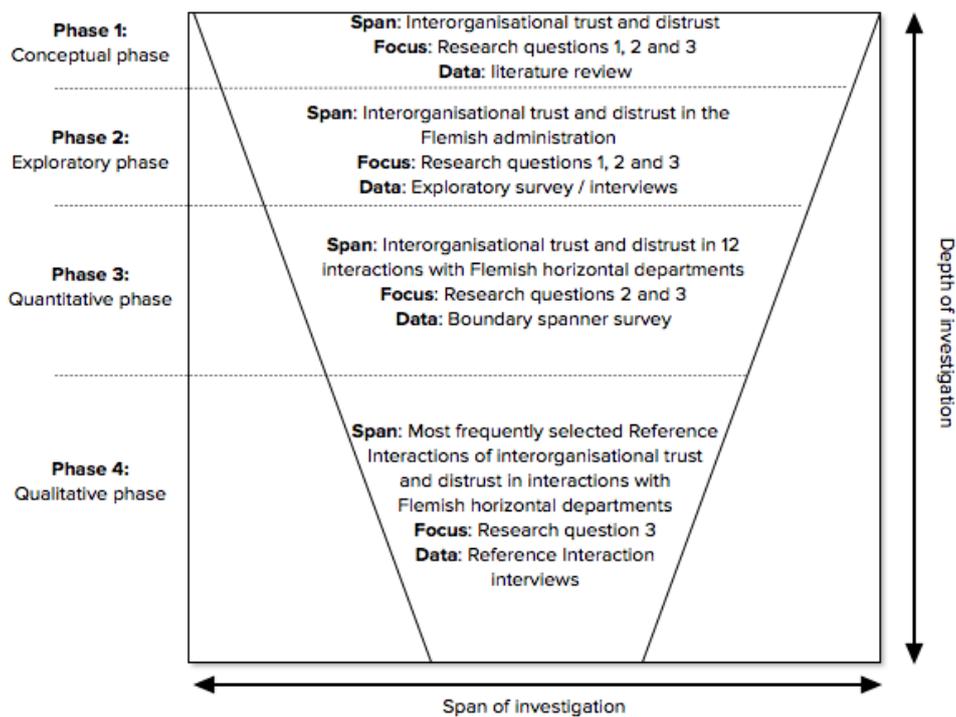
Figure 1 visualises this approach as a 'funnel' which consists of four research phases. In the first phase, our research will be conceptual, and it will focus on (interorganisational) trust in general. In this phase we will review the relevant literature regarding trust in interorganisational relations in both the public and the private sector. In the second phase, we apply the developed concepts to explore interorganisational relations in the Flemish government on the basis of exploratory interviews and an exploratory survey, which allows us to familiarise ourselves with the concepts in the specific context of the Flemish administration, identify specific interorganisational interactions that are worth closer investigation, and to answer the exploratory research question. This exploratory research phase is thus instrumental for the formulation of testable hypotheses, and for the development of the methodological framework through which those hypotheses are tested. In the third research phase, we use a 'boundary spanner survey' to focus on the specific interorganisational interactions that were highlighted during the exploratory research, and compare quantitative data about the mechanisms of interorganisational trust in a case respondents consider to be dominated by trust with a case respondents consider to be dominated by distrust. In phase 4, we will deepen our focus on the two most 'critical cases' identified in the 'boundary spanner survey' on the basis of qualitative interviews with respondents, examining which mechanisms

explain interorganisational trust in those cases. In other words, every subsequent research phase reduces the scope but increases the depth of our inquiry into interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration.

> 1.3. **Structure of the dissertation**

The first section in this dissertation contains the current introductory chapter and introduces the conceptual frameworks to approach the research questions that are central to our study. In section B, we explore the empirical reality of Flemish public administration on the basis of these conceptual frameworks, providing an answer to research question one, and we specify a theoretical and methodological framework for more robust and systematic empirical research regarding research questions two and three. This empirical research is at the core of section C, in which we develop empirical answers to the second and third research questions through investigation of relevant trust problems in the Flemish administration. Section D comprises the final chapters, in which we discuss the research conclusions, develop a model for management of interorganisational trust in public administration, and reflect upon the merits and weaknesses of the study, its contributions, and avenues for further research. All relevant additional material not presented in the main text of the dissertation can be found in the annex.

We hope the reader will enjoy our efforts.

2. Conceptualising administrational trust [2] [3]

> ## 2.1. Introduction

In 1979, Niklas Luhmann (1979: 8) wrote that there was a *"regrettably sparse literature which has trust as its main theme".* However, by the end of the 90's, his lament had lost much of its validity (Kramer 1999). The social, political and economic realities of an increasingly interdependent and global world (Cook 2001) led to a surge of scholarly attention for trust, which became increasingly recognised as an important factor for inter- and intra- organisational relationships in private sector organisational studies (Bijlsma-Frankema and Costa, 2005).

Political scientists and public administration scholars appear to be mainly interested in the topics of social trust in societies and societal trust in government. These topics have been studied extensively in well-known contributions to these fields (e.g. Putnam, 2000; Fukuyama, 1995; Uslaner, 2002). Bouckaert (2012) identifies T1 (societal trust in public administration), T2 (public administration trust in society) and T3 (trust within public administration) as three relevant trust research orientations for public administration, and argues that the two latter orientations receive much less attention than the former. For instance, Yang (2005) studies public administrator's trust in citizens, but his work is a rare exception in that respect. Nyhan (2000) discusses the internal organisational perspective of trust within public administration, but a real focus on interorganisational trust within public administration remains a topic of scarce interest for public administration scholars to date (Choudhury, 2008; Klijn, Edelenbos, and Steijn, 2010). This scarce attention is peculiar considering the (political) discourse surrounding public management and organisational research in the private sector. According to Choudhury (2008), citizens and reformers alike have seemingly started to consider trust to be both a necessary goal as well as a means for effective administration. In this chapter we address this gap in the existing literature through a comprehensive discussion of interorganisational trust in public administration, with particular attention for the development of conceptual frameworks to approach the three central research questions of this dissertation: what are the roles, distributions, and mechanisms of interorganisational trust in public administration?

We first discuss the conceptual nature of interorganisational trust in public administration, which we refer to as 'administrational trust'. Second, we provide a conceptual framework for the role of interorganisational trust in public administration. Third, we discuss three different perspectives on the

distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust in complex interactions. Finally, we focus on the mechanisms of administrational trust, and develop a conceptual and analytical framework to empirically study such mechanisms. As such, we develop the foundations of the dissertation in this chapter.

> 2.2.   Defining 'administrational trust': interorganisational trust in public administration

In this paragraph, we will introduce our core concept, administrational trust. The prefix 'administrational' is a contraction of the words 'organisational' and 'administrative'. On the one hand, this prefix designates an organisational notion of trust, which emphasises the importance of boundary spanners, their subjective evaluations, and their situational embeddedness, for the constitution of trust between organisations. On the other hand, it highlights the administrative context of our study, as studies directed at a better understanding of interorganisational trust need to take the object, subject, context and situation of the particular interorganisational interaction into account (Nooteboom 2002: 259). We first discuss the concept of 'trust'. Second, we discuss what it means to focus on 'interorganisational' trust. Third, we specify why it is important to consider the administrative context, in particular.

> 2.2.1.   *Defining 'trust'*

An extensive and expanding body of literature has generated numerous definitions of trust over the years. However, the multidisciplinary research community did not succeed in formulating a comprehensive theory of interorganisational trust as of yet (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011). Lewicki and Brinsfield (2012) noted that each discipline still tends to focus on aspects of trust that are consistent with its own dominant theoretical paradigms. Although trust is now one of the most frequently used social science concepts (Das and Teng, 2004), the detached accumulation of trust research has led to colourful descriptions of the research field as "*a conceptual morass*" (Carnevale and Wechsler, 1992: 473) a "*confusing potpourri of definitions applied to a host of units and levels of analysis*" (Shapiro, 1987: 624) or even an "*oceanic volume of literature focusing on constructs of trust*" (Bigley and Pearce, 1998: 406) which remains daunting after multiple decades of trust research (Nooteboom, 2006).

While many authors consider the diversity in conceptualisations of trust to be disconcerting because disagreement of this sort is considered to be an impediment to collective efforts at scientific advancement (Pfeffer, 1993), Bigley and Pearce (1998) argue that the variation in conceptualisations focusing on a range of specific problems in the framework of different scientific disciplines has led to a very considerable accumulation of knowledge about trust. Rather than attempting to eliminate the extant conceptual variety, they suggest that a more reasoned discourse on trust-related issues should take advantage of this conceptual richness developed. Table 2 provides a non-exhaustive overview of influential trust definitions to date.

Table 2: Non-exhaustive overview of trust definitions

Authors	Discipline	Definitions
Bachmann and Inkpen (2011)	Sociology	The decision of one party to rely on another party under conditions of risk. The trustor permits his or her fate to be determined by the trustee and risks that he or she will experience negative outcome, i.e. injury or loss, if the trustee proves untrustworthy.
Braithwaite and Levi (1998)	Social psychology	A relationship between actors or groups in which one party adopts the position, expressed either verbally or behaviourally, that the other will pursue a course of action that is considered preferable to alternative courses of action.
Bromily and Harris (2006)	Organisation studies	One's non-calculative belief in another's honesty in negotiations, good-faith efforts to keep commitments, and forbearance from opportunism.
Carnevale and Wechsler (1992)	Public administration	A faith in people, their motivations, and their capacities.
Coleman (1990)	Sociology	Situations in which the risk one takes depends on the performance of another actor.
Choudhury (2008)	Public administration	A voluntary act that is based on a psychological state of positive expectation in the face of vulnerability and risk.
Currall and Judge (1995)	Social psychology	An individual's behavioural reliance on another person under a condition of risk.
Das and Teng (2001)	Organisation studies	Positive expectations regarding the other in a risky situation.
Dasgupta (1988)	Economics	Expectations about the actions of other people that have a bearing on one's own choice of action when that action must be chosen before one can monitor the actions of those others.
Deakin and Michie (1997)	Management	One is willing to assume an open and vulnerable position. One expects the other actor to refrain from opportunistic behaviour even if the opportunity for it arises without having any guarantee that the other party will indeed act as expected.
Gambetta (1988)	Sociology	A particular level of the subjective probability with which an agent assesses another agent or group of agents will perform a particular action. When we say we trust someone or that someone is trustworthy, we implicitly mean that the probability that he will perform an action that is beneficial or at least not detrimental to us is high enough for us to consider engaging in some form of cooperation with him.
Gamson (1968)	Political science	The probability that the political system will produce preferred outcomes even if it is left untended.
Giddens (1990)	Sociology	The confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles.
Grey and Garsten, (2001)	Management	A precarious social accomplishment enacted through the interplay of social or discursive structures, including those of work organisations, and individuated subjects.
Hardin (2002)	Political science	A form of encapsulated interest. A trusts B because he or she presumes it is in B's interest to act in a way consistent with A's interest.
Hosmer (1995)	Sociology	An expectation by one [entity] of ethically justifiable behaviour—that is, morally correct decisions and actions based upon ethical principles of analysis—on the part of the other [entity] in a joint behaviour or economic exchange.
Khodyakov (2007)	Sociology	Trustworthy relationships make people vulnerable to the behaviour of their colleagues, who are expected, but not obliged, to act in the best interest of the organisation.
Klijn, Edelenbos, and Steijn (2010)	Public administration	A stable positive expectation that actor A has (or predicts he has) of the intentions and motives of actor B in refraining from opportunistic behaviour, even if the opportunity arises. Trust is based on the expectation that actor A will take the interests of actor B into account.
Lewis and Weigert (1985)	Sociology	The belief held by members of a social system that allows them to act according to and feel secure in the expected futures constituted by the presence of each other or their symbolic representations.
Lewicki, McAllister and Bies (1998)	Social psychology	Trust is defined in terms of confident positive expectations regarding another's conduct, and distrust is defined in terms of confident negative expectations regarding another's conduct.
Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995)	Social psychology	The willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party.
McAllister (1995)	Social psychology	The extent to which a person is confident in, and willing to act on the basis of, the words, actions, and decisions of another.
Mishra (1996)	Organisation studies	Trust is one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is 1) competent, 2) open, 3) concerned, and 4) reliable.
Misztal (1996)	Sociology	To believe that results of someone's intended action will be appropriate from our point of view.
Möllering (2001)	Sociology	A state of favourable expectation regarding other people's actions and intentions, as such it is seen as the basis for individual risk-taking behaviour, co-operation, reduced social complexity, order, social capital and so on.
Möllering (2006)	Sociology	A reflexive process building on reason, routine and reflexivity, suspending irreducible

		social vulnerability and uncertainty as if they were favourably resolved, and maintaining a state of favourable expectation towards the actions and intentions of more or less specific others.
Nooteboom (2006)	Economics	The expectation that a partner will not engage in opportunistic behaviour, even in the face of opportunities and incentives for opportunism.
Ostrom (1998)	Economics	The expectation of one person about the actions of others that affects the first person's choice, when actions must be taken before the actions of others are known (adapted from Dasgupta).
Parsons (1970)	Sociology	The attitudinal ground- in affectively motivated loyalty- for acceptance of solidary relationships.
Ring and Van de Ven (1994)	Management	Faith in the moral integrity or goodwill of other, which is produced through interpersonal interactions that lead to social-psychological bonds of mutual norms, sentiments, and friendships.
Rotter (1967)	Psychology	An expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, or verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied on.
Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998)	Social psychology	A psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another.
Sztompka (1998)	Sociology	A bet on the future contingent actions of others.
Sabel (1993)	Sociology	Trust is the mutual confidence that no party to an exchange will exploit the other's vulnerability
Williamson (1993)	Economics	Trust is warranted when the expected gain from placing oneself at risk to another is positive, but not otherwise.
Zand (1972)	Sociology	Increasing vulnerability to another whose behaviour is not under one's control in a situation in which the penalty one suffers if the other abuses that vulnerability is greater than the benefit one gains if the other does not abuse that vulnerability.
Zaheer, McEvily, and Perrone (1998)	Organisation studies	The expectation that an actor (1) can be relied on to fulfil obligations (2) will behave in a predictable manner and (3) will act and negotiate fairly when the possibility for opportunism is present.
Zucker (1986)	Sociology	A set of expectations shared by all those involved in an exchange.

This overview illustrates the span of trust definitions quite clearly. It allows us to crystallise that trust stems from both cognition and affection (McAllister, 1995), is required in risky or contingent situations (Luhmann, 1979; Das and Teng, 2001), is characterised by a willingness to be vulnerable (Currall and Judge, 1995), leads to risk-taking behaviour (Lewis and Weigert, 1985) and is based on positive expectations about a counterpart (Mayer et al., 1995).

The element of risk is central to many definitions of trust. Trust is often seen as a phenomenon that is only relevant, and will only arise, under the condition of risk. Grimmelikhuijsen (2012) argues that trust requires interdependency, which implies that the interests of one party cannot be achieved without reliance on the other party. In other words, it is not enough for the trustor to be vulnerable in an interaction with the trustee: the vulnerability of the trustor needs to relate, at least in part, to the behaviour of the trustee. Similarly, Coleman (1990: 91) proposes that "*trust situations are those in which the risk one takes depends on the performance of another actor*". He specifies that trust problems[4] only arise in interactions in which 1) the trustor has the possibility to place resources at the disposal of the trustee, who has the possibility of either honouring or abusing trust, 2) the trustor prefers to place trust if the trustee honours trust, but regrets placing trust if the trustee abuses it, 3) there is no binding agreement that protects the trustor

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[4]   'Trust problems' are not necessarily 'problematic'. Much like 'research problems', the word 'problem' indicates a puzzle on the basis of which relevant insights regarding a question can be extracted. As such, 'trust problems' could also be termed 'trust puzzles' to avoid the connotation of a 'problematic' situation. However, keeping this remark in mind, we will stay true to Coleman's original term and refer to 'trust problems' throughout this text.

from the possibility that the trustee will abuse trust, and 4) there is a time lag between the decision of the trustor and that of the trustee (Barrera, Buskens and Raub, 2012). In other words, trust problems require that the trustor takes a particular risk in an interaction with a trustee, that the actualisation of this risk depends at least in part on the behaviour of the trustee, and that the trustor is radically uncertain about this behaviour of the trustee. Trust is therefore considered impossible under absolute certainty about the trustee's future actions. Instead, trust is built on 'good reasons' (Möllering, 2006a) which ground positive expectations (Lewicki et al. 1998). In the absence of such uncertainty, Luhmann (1988) suggests to use the term 'confidence' rather than trust, as without uncertainty the problem would be one of rational choice and risk management, rather than an actual 'trust problem' (Mishra, 1996; Luhmann, 1988). Indeed, trust entails vulnerability by its very nature, because it provides "*the opportunity for malfeasance*" to those who are trusted (Granovetter, 1985: 491). "*Without vulnerability, trust is unnecessary because outcomes are inconsequential for the trustor*" (Moorman, Deshpande, and Zaltman, 1993: 82).

As such, we can define trust as 'the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability on the basis of positive expectations about a counterpart under conditions of risk, dependency and uncertainty'.

> 2.2.2. ***Defining 'interorganisational' trust: the key role of boundary spanners***

Bigley and Pearce (1998: 416) warn aspiring trust researchers that they should not spend too much time discussing "*definitions and theories focused on problems far removed from their own, simply because those also use the word trust*". Therefore, we now move away from the broad discussion of trust and distrust in general 'interdependent relationships', and increase our focus on the application of these constructs to the specific context of interorganisational relations.

Interorganisational relationships can be defined as "*cooperative relationships involving explicit awareness and management of plans, budgets, control mechanisms, processes and resources that flow between organizations, creating interdependency of joint actions that affect the success of those organizations*" (Calvard, 2014: 116). However, interorganisational relations are not abstract or faceless, but rather actively handled and managed by individuals operating in the institutional and cultural framework of their organisations. Thus, Zaheer et al. (1998: 142) defined interorganisational trust as "*the extent of trust placed in the partner organization by the members of a focal organization*". Trust can therefore be considered to be 'interorganisational' when it is considered or studied in the individuals who act on behalf of their organisation in a certain interorganisational interaction. In the literature, such individuals are often specified as 'boundary spanners' (Aldrich and Herker, 1977; Currall and Judge, 1995; Ring and Van de Ven, 1994; Zaheer et al., 1998, Perrone et al., 2003; Williams, 2012).

Figure 2 illustrates Zaheer et al.'s (1998) conceptualisation, in which the distinct nature of interorganisational and interpersonal trust becomes more apparent.

Figure 2: Interorganisational and interpersonal trust
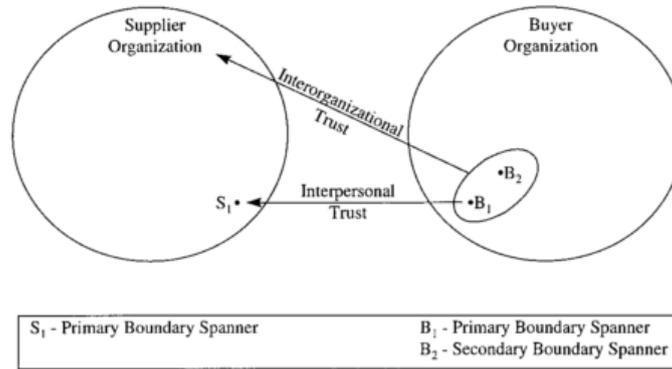
(Source: adopted from Zaheer et. al, 1998: 142)

Beccerra and Gupta (1999) have argued that the subjective trust evaluations of these boundary spanners are embedded in their personal and organisational considerations in complex interorganisational interactions, which therefore become the basis of interorganisational trust. In other words, boundary spanners are by no means decontextualised individual actors making strictly personal subjective trust evaluations. Rather, it is argued that they have a 'dual personality' due to socialisation into their organisational roles. Barnard (1938: 188 cited in Simon, 1997: 283) argues that this dual personality consists of a private personality and an organisational personality, which is mainly determined by organisational demands of efficiency. Therefore, the professional evaluations and decisions made by boundary spanners are different from the evaluations and decisions they might make in their personal lives, although Simon (1997) argues that "*personal motives reassert themselves*" in areas that require discretionary behaviour from the individual civil servant (Simon, 1997: 283). Considering that organisational boundary spanners act and interact in boundary systems, these systems are therefore the loci of the creation as well as the institutionalisation of interorganisational trust (Kroeger and Bachmann, 2014). Interorganisational trust is therefore a relational orientation between boundary spanners and the subject of their subjective evaluations, but it is also embedded in and enacted through the organisational structures, procedures and institutions of boundary systems (Choudhury, 2008). Choudhury infers from this that trust is a social fact in organisations rather than a characteristic of individuals. Thus, interorganisational trust is considered to be constituted in the relationship between individual boundary spanners, whose subjective trust evaluations are embedded in personal, institutional, and interaction-specific characteristics[5].

Thus, while trust was defined as 'the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability on the basis of positive expectations about a counterpart under conditions of risk, dependency and uncertainty', we can define interorganisational trust as 'interorganisational boundary spanners' subjective

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[5]   Rousseau et al. (1998) refer to trust as a "psychological state" of individuals, which is influenced by institutional, relational and calculative elements and considerations. For matters of consistency, we will refer to a 'subjective evaluation' of boundary spanners rather than a 'psychological state' in this study.

evaluation comprising the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability on the basis of expectations about the counterpart organisation under conditions of risk, dependency and uncertainty'.

> 2.2.3.   *Defining 'in public administration'*

Trust, in its most diffuse form, may relate to a general attitude of groups towards an abstract object (Uslaner, 2012). However, it is important to note that some authors reject this diffuse approach to defining trust, emphasising instead that trust is highly context-dependent, and should also be defined as such (Gillespie, 2012). For instance, Zand (1972: 230) argues that trust "*is not a global feeling of warmth or affection, but the conscious regulation of one's dependence on another that will vary with the task, the situation and the other person*". Hardin (2002: 7) argued that trust is a "*three-part relation that restricts any claim of trust to particular parties and to particular matters*". Nooteboom (2002: 259) goes even further, and argues that trust is "*a four-place predicate in which a trustor (1) trusts a trustee (2) in some respect (3) under some conditions (4)*".

In our case, the context of interest is interorganisational interactions in public administration. According to Galston (1996), nearly every social interaction embodies some form of a subjective trust evaluation (Quddus, Goldsby, and Farooque, 2000). However, as we have argued earlier, a trust problem only occurs when a trustor must take a risk in a particular interaction with a trustee, which depends at least in part on the behaviour of the trustee, about which the trustor is radically uncertain. Thus, it is necessary to define that administrational trust only applies to interorganisational interactions in public administration that can be characterised as 'trust problems'.

Therefore, we will define 'administrational trust' as 'a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions in public administration characterised by risk, dependency and uncertainty, comprising the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability, on the basis of positive expectations held about the counterpart organisation'.

> 2.3.   **A conceptual framework for RQ1: role of administrational trust and distrust**

Research question one asks what role interorganisational trust and distrust play in public administration. We formulate a conceptual framework to approach this question in this paragraph.

A meta-analysis of trust research conducted by Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) shows that trust research mainly tends to focus on the positive role of trust and the negative role of distrust. However, we also argue that interorganisational distrust can be considered to be essential for public administration. Van de Walle (2011) for instance, has argued that New Public Management might be considered to have attempted to strengthen citizen trust in public administration by introducing institutionalised interorganisational distrust in the public sector through contracts, fragmentation, short-term explicit standards of performance and audit and control mechanisms (Dubnick, 2005). In recent reform initiatives, strict administrative procedures, oversight and control are considered as instruments to increase the accountability and transparency of administrations towards citizens (Berg, 2005). In other words, both administrational trust

and distrust can be associated with functionalities (positive consequences for public administration systems) and dysfunctionalities (negative consequences for public administration systems). Thus, we follow the concern expressed by Skinner, Dietz and Weibel (2013: 2) that "*highly normative assumptions hailing trust's myriad benefits dominate the discourse: what Gargiulo and Ertug call an 'optimistic bias' (2006: 165). (...) We are concerned that this litany has become taken-for-granted, almost to the point of being unchallengeable, and that trust may be seen as a catch-all panacea*".

Luhmann (1979) argues that anyone who refuses to confer trust will be burdened with the complexity of entirely contingent situations, which places so many demands on the individual that it renders them incapable of action. Trust is therefore functional to enable action and cooperation in contingent environments because it enables 'suspension' of risk (Möllering, 2006). This suspension of risk is an important functional factor for successful collaboration because it allows actors to focus on achieving project goals instead of on developing the contractual details of the partnership (Shaw, 2003). As such, interorganisational trust allows overcoming some "*considerable barriers of collective inertia*" (Agranoff, 2013: 194). However, distrust also enables action in contingent environments on the basis of assumed likely contingencies, and is therefore considered to be the major 'functional equivalent' of trust (Luhmann, 1979; Lewis and Weigert, 1985). The functional equivalence between trust and distrust is explained by Hardin (2002: 95) in his argument that "*if I either trust or distrust you, I have fairly clear grounds on which to act towards you*". While trust is associated with collaborative action due to intentional and behavioural suspension of vulnerability, distrust is associated to atomisation due to the intentional and behavioural avoidance of vulnerability, as actors either withdraw from interactions or rely on an array of strategies to constrain contingency, risk and vulnerability. Such actions are considered functional in a world of untrustworthy partners, while analogously, to trust can be considered to be the most functional strategy in a world of trustworthy partners (Hardin, 2002). Thus, distrust produces a predictable and regular aggregate of lost opportunities and related opportunity costs of foregone cooperation (Hardin, 2002), while trust reduces the transaction costs of collaborative action but also creates unpredictable and irregular gains and costs due to the possibility of being misplaced. This consideration led Nooteboom (2006) to argue that the extrinsic value of trust lies in the economic value it generates. An optimal level of trust might enable action under experienced complexity at far lesser costs due to the associated suspension of risk, while costly control- and enforcement-intensive strategies are needed to enable action in complex environments where distrust dominates (Bromily and Harris, 2006; Cummings and Bromily, 1996; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012; Sztompka, 1998; Zaheer et al., 1998). A large body of research on the societal, organisational, and interpersonal level has illustrated that the suspension of vulnerability in trust-intensive environments leads to a range of functional consequences such as increased innovation, learning, organisational performance, and effective cooperation (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012). We therefore argue that the major functionality of trust lies in its potential for cost-effective goal-oriented collaboration, which is an important virtue in public administration, where efficiency of goal realisation is

considered to be the primary criterion of administrative rationality (Simon, 1997). However, interorganisational trust is not always functional and distrust is not always dysfunctional. Too much trust might lead to the vehement defence of inefficient, ineffective or even downright counterproductive interorganisational cooperation (Ring and Van de Ven, 1994). Granovetter (1985) argued that too much trust allows lawlessness, non-accountability and corruption. Trust can "bind and blind" (McEvily et al., 2003: 98), and provide ample opportunity for abuse. Therefore, administrational trust must not necessarily be considered to be universally functional for public administration, while administrational distrust must not necessarily be considered to be universally dysfunctional. Table 3 outlines the four perspectives that could be conceptualised in this regard.

Table 3: Conceptual framework for the role of administrational trust and distrust

	Administrational trust	Administrational distrust
Functional	Positive consequences: Suspension of risk leads to increased cooperation, flexibility, innovation, learning, goal-orientation, performance and pro-social behaviour, which is argued to result in unpredictable but potential gains and cost-efficiency	Positive consequences: Active avoidance of risk inspires atomisation, regulation and behavioural control, which protect actors against possible abuse of their vulnerability, which is argued to result in predictable (but high) transaction costs and predictable (but low) gains
Dysfunctional	Negative consequences: Suspension of risk leads to possible abuse of vulnerability in case of opportunism and blindness to failure, which is argued to result in unpredictable potential costs	Negative consequences: Active avoidance of risk inspires atomisation, regulation and behavioural control, which is argued to lead to foregone opportunities and associated high opportunity costs

> 2.4. **A conceptual framework for RQ2: distribution of trust and distrust**

Research question two inquires how interorganisational trust and distrust are distributed in the Flemish administration. A conceptual framework to approach this question is developed in this paragraph.

A commonly held assumption is that trust and distrust sit at contrasting ends of the same continuum (Bigley and Pearce, 1998). However, this is not the only possible conceptualisation. In fact, three perspectives can be outlined regarding the distribution of trust and distrust. First, we discuss the 'trade-off' perspective of trust and distrust, in which trust and distrust are presented as one bipolar construct. The model that emerges from this perspective is a single continuum, with trust and distrust as the two polar anchors. Second, we discuss the 'quadrant' perspective, which proposes that trust and distrust are conceptually distinct but linked relational phenomena. Third, we discuss a 'truncated' perspective, in which it is argued that both the 'trade-off' and the 'quadrant' perspectives are ideal-type models, which do not occur in their pure form in empirical reality, and that the relationship between trust and distrust is most accurately described as a middle-ground between the 'trade-off' and the 'quadrant' perspective. In the following paragraphs, we outline these three perspectives on the distribution of administrational trust and distrust.

The 'trade-off perspective' [6] **on trust and distrust in relationships**

In the 'trade-off' perspective, trust and distrust are presented as two ends of a single continuum (Rotter, 1967). Lewicki et al. (1998) argue that this perspective considers trust and distrust as one bipolar construct in which trust is the opposite of distrust, that it often implies a normative consideration of trust as 'good' and distrust as 'bad', and that it entails a limited emphasis on the social context of trust and distrust in relationships. Furthermore, they contend that this perspective has long promoted a one-dimensional focus on relationships with a focus on static balance and consistency of attitudinal valence. Lewicki et al. (1998) argue that this 'old' perspective has led behavioural decision theorists to define trust as cooperative conduct and distrust as non-cooperative conduct in mixed-motive game situations (Arrow, 1974; Axelrod, 1984; Coleman, 1990; Miller, 1992), that it assumes that conflicting psychological states of simultaneous trust and distrust are unstable and transitory (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995; Lewis and Weigert, 1985), and that it has led sociologists to view trust and distrust as functional equivalents, and thus substitutes for reducing complexity and uncertainty in social relations (Lewicki et al., 1998).

In other words, the 'trade-off' perspective considers distrust to be the absence of trust (Bigley and Pearce, 1998; Van de Walle and Six, 2013). Van de Walle and Six (2013) argue that empirical research in public administration has largely continued to rely on this perspective and on traditional survey items assuming a trust–distrust continuum due to the pervasiveness of one-dimensional trust items in public administration research, which is explained by the relative scarcity of primary data in public administration research and the fields' reliance on secondary datasets which were developed for policy rather than research purposes (Bouckaert, Van de Walle and Van Roosbroeck, 2005). The result of this empirical tradition has been that low trust is studied and treated as high distrust, and high trust is studied and treated as the absence of distrust in public administration research. The 'trade-off' perspective is reflected in the 'standard question' of trust in many secondary data sets (the standard question is: 'generally speaking, do you believe that most people can be trusted or can't you be too careful in dealing with people') (Uslaner, 2012). Examples of such influential secondary data sets are the European Social Survey, the World Values Survey, and the Eurobarometer (Van de Walle and Six, 2013). Another well-known example is the American National Election Studies (NES) measure, which uses a multi-item political trust scale which runs from high trust to high distrust. While the NES instrument has been thoroughly tested and is widely used for both cross-sectional and longitudinal comparison, its pervasiveness in political science research has been argued to have a fossilising effect on trust research in this discipline (Van de Walle and Six, 2013).

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[6]   Lewicki et al. (1998) originally referred to the "old" perspective on trust and distrust, which they juxtaposed with their own "new" perspective on trust and distrust. In order to avoid the connotation of a value judgement toward the 'old' and 'new' labels for these perspectives, we have opted to use the more descriptive labels of a 'trade-off' perspective on the one hand, and a 'quadrants' perspective on the other hand. For all means and purposes however, these perspectives correspond to Lewicki et al.'s original "old" and "new" juxtaposition between perspectives on trust and distrust in social relations.

The 'trade-off' perspective on trust and distrust is therefore rather pervasive in much empirical public administration and political science research (Van de Walle and Six, 2013; Cho, 2006). However, another perspective seems to gain ground in conceptual and theoretical discussions regarding trust and distrust in organisational research. This alternative 'quadrant' perspective is discussed in the following paragraph.

> 2.4.2.   *The 'quadrant' perspective on trust and distrust in relationships*

The 'quadrant' perspective on trust and distrust in relationships was introduced in Lewicki et al.'s (1998) widely-cited article, in which the authors conceptualise that trust and distrust are separate but linked constructs, each moving on a scale from low to high, rather than being the two opposite ends of a single continuum. As a result, these authors argue that it is possible to experience both trust and distrust within any given relational context, as both constructs allow individuals to deal with uncertainty and complexity in different ways (Luhmann, 1979; Saunders and Thornhill, 2004).

Four arguments can be considered to support trust and distrust as separate (but linked) constructs. First, it is argued that trust and distrust are grounded in different antecedents. For instance, Sitkin and Roth (1993) argue that distrust is grounded predominantly in value congruence, while trust is grounded mainly in the context- specific reliable execution of tasks. On the basis of this consideration, they argue that legalistic 'remedies' are appropriate to build trust while they are inappropriate to reduce distrust. Rousseau et al. (1998: 399) argue that *"belief in the absence of "negative intentions" is not the same as belief in the presence of positive intentions – the latter being a necessary condition of the generally accepted definition of trust"*. Furthermore, Zucker (1986) suggests that disruptions of trust arise when either 'background expectations' (i.e. common world understandings) or 'constitutive expectations' (i.e. context-specific understandings) are violated. However, this does not necessarily involve more distrust, as "*distrust only emerges when the suspicion arises that the disruption of expectations in one exchange is likely to generalize to other ... interactions or exchanges, at least of a particular type*" (Zucker 1986: 59). On the basis of empirical research, Liu and Wang (2010: 28) argue that "*it is evident that trust and distrust are associated with distinct antecedents and consequences*". Van de Walle and Six (2013) liken the discussion to Herzberg's study on job satisfaction, in which 'satisfiers' (factors that cause job satisfaction) are distinguished from dissatisfiers or hygiene factors ('factors that do not cause job satisfaction, but help to avoid job dissatisfaction'). It is therefore argued that actions needed for trust building are different from actions effective to overcome distrust. Second, some scholars argue that trust and distrust are distinct concepts because they have different consequences. Lewicki et al. (1998) define distrust in terms of fear, scepticism, cynicism, wariness, watchfulness and vigilance, while they define trust in terms of hope, faith, confidence, assurance and initiative. Distrust is reflected by the presence of suspicion (Mcknight and Chervany, 2006), whereas a lack of trust is merely the absence of trust (Grimmelikhuijsen 2012). Bigley and Pearce (1998: 407) contend however that the constructs of trust and distrust are inherently related: "*when the terms "trust" and "distrust" have been evoked in the social sciences, they almost always have been associated with the idea of actor vulnerability*". Third, Lewicki et al. (1998) argue that modern relations and interactions are multiplex;

meaning that they consist of numerous facets. Actors in complex interactions can therefore have multidimensional attitudinal valences regarding their counterparts in specific interactions. In other words: actors might trust each other with respect to some facets of the relation but distrust each other regarding other facets. Finally, it is argued that relational balance and consistency are based on equilibria rather than on stable states. As relationships consist of the aggregation of facet elements in which we encounter the other within a given context, at a given point in time, and around a given interdependency, inconsistencies of trust and distrust in these different facets will extend pressures on the relational equilibrium that will maintain or shift in time (Lewicki et al., 1998). As such, Lewicki et al. (1998) suggested that the distribution between trust and distrust in social relations may be best perceived as four 'ideal type' quadrants, which can be associated with different relational characteristics.

Figure 3 presents the 'quadrant' perspective as it was suggested by Lewicki et al. (1998) in their original paper.

Figure 3: 'Quadrant' perspective, adopted from Lewicki et al. (1998: 445)

High Trust	High-value congruence	Trust but verify
Characterized by Hope Faith Confidence Assurance Initiative	Interdependence promoted Opportunities pursued New initiatives	Relationships highly segmented and bounded Opportunities pursued and down-side risks/vulnerabilities continually monitored
Low Trust	Casual acquaintances	Undesirable eventualities expected and feared
Characterized by No hope No faith No confidence Passivity Hesitance	Limited interdependence Bounded, arms-length transactions Professional courtesy	Harmful motives assumed Interdependence managed Preemption: best offense is a good defense Paranoia
	Low Distrust Characterized by No fear Absence of skepticism Absence of cynicism Low monitoring No vigilance	**High Distrust** Characterized by Fear Skepticism Cynicism Wariness and watchfulness Vigilance

A first quadrant combines high trust and low distrust. Under this distribution, the trustor is confident and does not suspect the trustee. This situation is expected to result in many rich and intense cooperative relationships that create social capital and relational initiative, identification with each other's values, verbalisation of positive appreciation and support (McAllister, 1995), relational repair after conflicts and even the invocation of defence mechanisms when confronted with evidence that a trustee might be untrustworthy (Lewicki et al., 1998). Relationships characterised by such a balance are considered to be resilient and sustainable because of the thick trust (Nooteboom, 2006) that grounds them. The second quadrant is dominated by distrust while trust is relatively absent. In this situation, the trustor has no intention to position himself in a vulnerable way and is extremely wary and watchful for damaging actions

of the 'trustee'. Cooperation is avoided when possible. Where cooperation is unavoidable, the distrusting actor would be expected to attempt to constrain and steer the distrusted actor and make himself as invulnerable to the conduct of the distrusted actor as possible. Interorganisational cooperation under this social reality is characterised by pre-emption, deterrence (Rousseau et al., 1998), continuous monitoring, checking, control (Lewicki et al., 1998) and exertion of power and coercion (Bachmann, 2001). The third quadrant presents a situation in which low trust and low distrust occur simultaneously. Here, actors have no reason to be particularly confident or wary, nor do they have a strong tendency to disengage or engage in any interaction with each other (Lewicki et al., 1998). They are neither particularly willing nor unwilling to be vulnerable. Furthermore, the absence of interactions leads to a low production of relational information, resulting in a lack of 'good reasons' for actors to change their attitudes. Finally, the fourth quadrant is characterised by both high extents of trust and high extents of distrust. Trustors are confident about some facets of their relationship with a trustee while they are suspicious about other facets at the same time. Actors in a relationship have both common and competing objectives. Lewicki et al. (1998) argue that this is the most prevalent position for sustained working relationships in modern, complex organisations.

Lewicki et al. (1998) argue that each of these four quadrants have face validity in modern professional relations. Furthermore, they argue that sustained high trust/high distrust relationships have been relatively understated in trust research while high trust/low distrust and low trust/high distrust positions have been relatively overstated in trust research (Saunders and Thornhill, 2004). However, some contributions have firmly rejected the idea that trust and distrust are conceptually distinct. Schoorman, Mayer and Davis (2007) contend that there is no credible evidence for the theoretical or empirical viability of different conceptualisations of distrust and trust. McKnight and Chervany (2001) summarised a wide body of literature to construct models of trust and distrust antecedents, only to arrive at the conclusion that the resulting explanatory models for trust and distrust were identical. Furthermore, some researchers who empirically study distrust have actually used reverse-scored measures of trust as indicators of distrust (e.g. McAllister, Pang, Tan and Ruan, 2006; Schoorman et al., 2007). Finally, the Merriam-Webster dictionary also defines distrust as the *"lack or absence of trust"*[7], while the Cambridge online dictionary refers to "*the feeling of not trusting someone or something*"[8], which would suggest that distrust is understood as the mirror image of trust in everyday language.

Although the 'quadrant perspective' is increasingly referred to in research about interorganisational trust in public administration (Van de Walle and Six, 2013; Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012), and although the perspective

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[7]   We consulted the entry for "distrust" on Merriam-Webster's online dictionary at
     http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/distrust
[8]   We consulted the entry for "distrust" on Cambridge dictionaries online at
     http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/distrust_1?q=distrust

is now over 15 years old, efforts to apply the perspective in empirical organisational research have lagged (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2012). Only few empirical attempts to gauge the validity of this conceptualisation have been undertaken. One such an attempt is discussed in the following paragraph.

> 2.4.3.   *A third perspective, or 'truncated quadrants'?*

An empirical application of the 'quadrant' perspective was conducted by Saunders and Thornhill (2004). On the basis of a case study using card-sort methodology and in-depth interviews, the authors aimed to explore and explain respondent's categorisations of emotional experiences in reaction to organisational change within the 'quadrant' perspective on trust and distrust. Their findings[9] showed that employees who had stronger feelings of trust appeared more likely to have low feelings of distrust. To a lesser extent, those who had stronger feelings of distrust appeared more likely to have low feelings of trust. A relative minority of respondents was found to be somewhat ambivalent, feeling both trusting and distrusting 'to some extent' or feeling neither trusting nor distrusting (Saunders and Thornhill, 2004).

On the basis of these findings, Saunders and Thornhill (2004) concluded on the one hand that there is little support for the 'trade-off' perspective on trust and distrust, because some trust-distrust ambivalence was found to be present in empirical reality. On the other hand however, they also note that the 'quadrant' model proposed by Lewicki et. al. (1998) overstates the occurrence of high trust/high distrust observations, and thus also provides an inadequate representation of reality. Saunders and Thornhill (2004) therefore suggest that the relationship between trust and distrust is more adequately represented by a trust – mistrust – absence (TMA) triangle. The triangle places 'trusting' and 'mistrusting' on the two vertices and suggests a negative relationship between trust and distrust, but emphasises that both trust and distrust may be absent in the relationship, and that they only occur together 'to some extent'. The difference between the 'quadrant' perspective and the 'TMA triangle' perspective is thus that the former allows high trust and high distrust to occur together, while the latter emphasises that this is only the case for a limited extent of trust and a limited extent of distrust. A large extent of trust and distrust can thus not occur together in this perspective. While Saunders and Thornhill recognise that conclusions from their single case study with 28 respondents are difficult to generalise, and suggest that further empirical work is required to develop and generalise their insights into the relationship between trust and distrust in relationships (Saunders and Thornhill, 2004), one could question whether their empirical findings actually suggest an entirely new model, or rather illustrate a truncated version of the 'quadrant' perspective, as illustrated in the following figure.

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[9]   Saunders and Thornhill (2004) report the following distribution of respondents in their study:
-    Trusting, at least to some extent, with an absence of distrust (16 respondents or 57%);
-    Both trusting and distrusting, at least to some extent (3 respondents or 11%).
-    Neither trusting nor distrusting (6 respondents or 21%);
-    Distrusting, at least to some extent, with an absence of trust (3 respondents or 11%);

Figure 4: 'Trust-mistrust-absence triangle' perspective or 'truncated quadrants'?
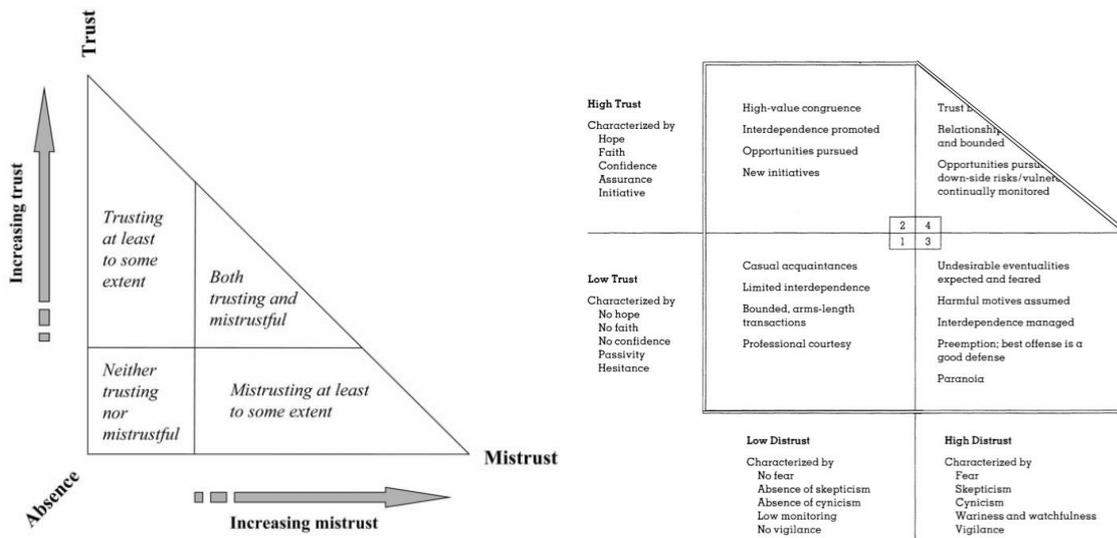
We can therefore conclude that the discussion about the relation between trust and distrust is still on-going. As the quadrants framework provides the largest extent of analytical possibilities to study the distribution of trust and distrust in the Flemish administration, we will use it as the framework of reference for our own examination of the distribution of administrational trust and distrust.

> 2.5.   **A conceptual framework for RQ3: mechanisms of interorganisational trust**

The third research question inquires into the mechanisms of interorganisational trust in public administration. In our discussion about the definition of interorganisational trust, we have emphasised the central role of boundary spanners, as their subjective trust evaluations are the constitutive element of interorganisational trust (Beccerra and Gupta, 1999). As these subjective trust evaluations are embedded in boundary spanners' personal characteristics, as well as in their perceptions about the institutional and interaction-specific characteristics of interorganisational interactions in which they engage, the analysis of 'mechanisms' of interorganisational trust requires that we investigate internal dynamics of boundary spanners' 'subjective trust evaluation' on the one hand, and the impact of personal, institutional, and interaction-specific characteristics on this evaluation on the other hand. We will refer to the former as the 'internal dynamics of the trust process', and to the latter as 'interaction-specific reasons for the trust process'. Both elements of the mechanisms of administrational trust are discussed in the following paragraphs.

> 2.5.1.   *Internal dynamics of the trust process*

Our definition of interorganisational trust includes the seminal definition of trust as a "*psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another*" (Rousseau et al., 1998: 395), but goes beyond it by following others (for an overview, see McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012; Dietz, 2011) who have argued that trust is a "*psychological state based on perceptions and on perceived motives and intentions of others, but also a*

manifestation of behaviour towards these others" (Costa, 2003: 600; Six and Skinner, 2010). The definition by Rousseau et al. (1998) omits the behavioural manifestation of trust. Mayer et al. (1995) considered risk-taking behaviour as a necessary outcome of trust, but not part of trust itself in their seminal integrative model of organisational trust. Skinner et al. (2013) argue that "*the risk-taking act is trust's defining stage, and the way that it is both sought and enacted*", and should thus be considered as an integral part of trust and the trust process. In this respect, McEvily and Tortoriello (2011: 33) argue that "*given its complexity, it would seem appropriate to operationalize trust as a multi-dimensional construct and empirically assess the extent to which distinct dimensions exist and the nature and degree of their relationship to each other*".

Our definition of administrational trust as "*a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions in public administration characterised by risk, dependency and uncertainty, comprising the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability, on the basis of positive expectations held about the counterpart organisation*" thus contains the three dimensions suggested in the 'integrative model of organisational trust (Mayer et al., 1995), but treats the behavioural dimension as an integral part of trust, as suggested by Skinner et al. (2013). It defines trust as a process containing a dimension of a trustors' perceptions of trustee trustworthiness (positive expectations), a dimension of trustors' intentional willingness to suspend vulnerability ('the leap of faith') and a dimension of trustors' behavioural suspension of vulnerability (actual risk-taking behaviour). These dimensions have been argued to be causally related (Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Mayer et al., 1995; Dietz and den Hartog, 2006; McEvily et al., 2003; Dietz, 2011; Skinner et al. 2013; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012). The subjective trust evaluation comprises an assessment of the other party's trustworthiness, which Mayer et al. (1995) operationalised as perceived ability, benevolence and integrity of the counterpart. If this assessment of perceived trustworthiness is positive, trustors are more 'willing to suspend vulnerability', which means that they are willing to assume that irreducible social vulnerability and uncertainty will be favourably resolved (Möllering, 2006b) in the interorganisational interaction. This willingness to suspend vulnerability must then be followed by a behavioural manifestation of risk-taking in dealings with the other party in order for trust to become a 'social reality' in the relationship (Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Mayer et al., 1995; Schoorman et al., 2007). Finally, it is argued that the outcome from such risk-taking behaviour updates the trustors' perceptions of the counterpart's trustworthiness, rendering trust a cyclically dynamic process (Mayer et al., 1995). Dietz (2011) has argued that this causal process represents a 'universal sequence', which is now well accepted in trust research, and which can be applied to all trust problems. Figure 5 provides a schematic presentation of the internal dynamics of this universal trust process.

Figure 5: The internal dynamics of the universal trust process
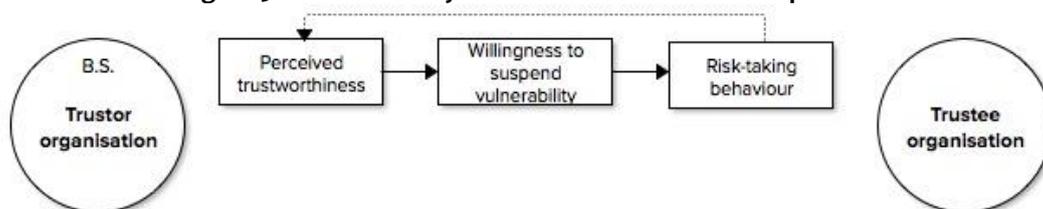
As it has been argued that discussions of trust are often confounding because they fail to distinguish the different dimensions of the concept (Hardin, 2001), a comprehensive framework for the analysis of the mechanisms of trust should distinguish between perceived trustworthiness, suspension of vulnerability and behavioural trust as separate but causally linked dimensions of a 'universal trust process (Das and Teng, 2004; McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011; Dietz, 2011). We will discuss this 'trust process' in further detail in the following paragraphs, in order to develop such a comprehensive framework.

> 2.5.1.1.   *Dimension one: perceived trustworthiness*

The first dimension of trust comprises the trustor's perceptions about the trustee's trustworthiness, or the trustor's positive expectations about the trustee. While different authors have proposed that these positive expectations have different components, there is clear resemblance between conceptualisations (Rousseau et al., 1998). Table 4 shows how Grimmelikhuijsen (2012) has presented this convergence between operationalisations of perceived trustworthiness.

Table 4: Dimensions of perceived trustworthiness

	Competence	Benevolence	Honesty	Other	Object of trust
	Dimensions				**Object of trust**
Hetherington (1998)	X		X		Political trust
Jarvenpaa, Knoll & Leidner (1998)	X	X	X		Trust in teams
Kim (2005)	X	X	X	Commitment, Fairness	Trust in government
Levi and Stoker (2000)	X	X			Political trust
Mayer et al. (1995)	X	X	X		Organisational trust
McKnight, Choudhury & Kacmar, (2002)	X	X	X		Trust in organisations
Mishra (1996)	X	X		Reliability, openness	Trust in organisations
Peters, Covello & McCallum (1997)	X	X	X	Openness	Trust in communication
Tyler (2001)	X	X	X		Trust in legal authorities
Welch, Hinnant & Moon (2001)	X	X	X		E-government and trust

(Adopted from Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012)

In our study, we will follow the operationalisation of perceived trustworthiness as proposed by Mayer et al. (1995), who propose that perceived trustworthiness is built on the trustors' perceptions about the trustee's ability, benevolence and integrity in a specific relation (Colquitt, Scott and Lepine, 2007; Dietz, 2011; Li, 2011). As the first component of perceived trustworthiness, ability refers to perceived skills, competences and other characteristics that allow the trustee to have influence in a specific domain. In other words; perceived ability refers to a trustor's expectations regarding an organisation's competence to successfully complete a specific task. Perceived trustworthiness is therefore domain-specific (Zand, 1972), as the trustee may be perceived to be highly competent in one area, but have little competence, aptitude, or experience in another area. The second component is benevolence, or the belief that the trustee wants to do good for the trustee, aside from an egocentric profit motive. Benevolence refers to the extent to

which a trustee is believed to want to do good for the trustor because of genuine care about the trustor's interests and needs, because of the trustees' positive appreciation of the trustor, or because of genuine altruism. Integrity, which is the third component of perceived trustworthiness, refers to the belief that the trustee adheres to a set of values and principles that the trustor finds acceptable. The integrity component implies the expectation that the trustee has a strong sense of justice, that similar values exist between the trustor and the trustee, and that the trustee will be open and honest toward the trustor (Mayer et al., 1995).

> 2.5.1.2. ***Dimension two: the willingness to suspend vulnerability***

On the basis of these perceptions about the trustworthiness of a trustee, trustors are argued to become willing to 'suspend' the existing unpredictability, ambiguity and complexity in interactions, encouraging their willingness to accept vulnerability in a certain relation (Edelenbos and Klijn 2007; Zucker 1986). This is the second dimension of trust. This dimension corresponds most to the definition of trust proposed by Rousseau et al. (1998) we referred to earlier. The trustor becomes willing to make a 'leap of faith' on the basis of incomplete information, through which risk and vulnerability in the relationship are suspended (Möllering 2006a). Suspension of vulnerability means that a trustor is willing to make the assumption that irreducible social vulnerability and uncertainty will be favourably resolved (Möllering 2006a) in the interaction, on the basis of 'good reasons', despite the radical uncertainty that is inherent to trust problems (Lindenberg, 2000). The notion of suspension does not mean that the trustor 'becomes' invulnerable, as trustors in trust problems are never sure whether they are making the right choice due to the radical "*uncertainty regarding the motives, intentions, and prospective actions of others on whom [actors] depend*" (Kramer 1999: 571). In that sense, the trustor thus does not 'become' invulnerable, but is prepared to pretend 'as if' he were, due to the assumption that the counterpart can, but will not abuse his vulnerability. It also does not mean that the trustor 'accepts' vulnerability because he is indifferent, or unaware of his vulnerability in the particular interaction. Rather, suspension involves that the trustor is aware of the vulnerability, and would prefer to avoid it, but assumes that it will not be abused by the trustee on the basis of 'good reasons'.

> 2.5.1.3. ***Dimension three: risk-taking behaviour***

There is a third, behavioural dimension of the trust process that needs to be taken into account, as it has been argued that "*trust is only involved when the trusting expectation makes a difference to a decision; otherwise what we have is a simple hope*" (Luhmann 1979: 24). Lewis and Weigert (1985:971) note that "*the practical significance of trust lies in the social action it underwrites*". Risk taking has therefore been argued to be the most proximal behavioural expression of trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Ross and LaCroix, 1996; Colquit et al., 2007). However, risk-taking behaviour is considered not only as an outcome of trust, but as the third constituent dimension of the trust process, as it is the "*only credible demonstration of trust and hence its definitional realization (Schoorman et al., 2007) (...) Trust cannot only be viewed as a 'psychological state', as per Rousseau and colleagues' (1998) widely used definition. The act is real trust, not the stated willingness to*

trust" (Skinner et al., 2013: 12-13). Observable risk-taking behaviour in the 'trust problem' interaction can therefore be seen as the third dimension of the trust process. Thus, in order for trust to be realised, risk-taking behaviour needs to be present in the interorganisational interaction.

> 2.5.1.4.   *Linking the dimensions: the assumption of a universal trust process*

The trust literature increasingly converges on the theory that these three dimensions are causally related (Mayer et al., 1995; McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012) in a 'universal sequence' of trust (Dietz, 2011), which applies to trust problems, regardless of their context. If perceptions of the counterparts' trustworthiness are more positive, a trustor is argued to be more likely to feel a 'willingness to suspend vulnerability' which in turn renders the behavioural manifestation of trust through risk-taking behaviour more likely to occur. Furthermore, it is argued that the experience of taking such a risk will update the trustor's perceptions of the counterpart's trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995), thus establishing a feedback loop which renders trust a cyclically dynamic process (Dietz, 2011). Due to this cyclical dynamic, trust is argued to be a self-reinforcing phenomenon. This theory is at the core of the argument for the emergence of virtuous cycles of trust and vicious cycles of distrust (Vlaar, Van den Bosch and Volberda, 2007; Zand, 1972; Ostrom and Walker, 2003).

> 2.5.2.   *Interaction-specific reasons for the trust process*

Although the internal dynamics of the trust process are thus argued to be universal to all trust problems, regardless of their context, the trust process does not occur in a sterile environment. Rather, since the trust process is a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners, it is embedded in the personal characteristics of the individuals through which it occurs, as well as in characteristics of particular interactions and contexts in which those individuals operate.

Our definition of administrational trust as "*a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions in public administration characterised by risk, dependency and uncertainty, comprising the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability, on the basis of positive expectations held about the counterpart organisation*", emphasises that interorganisational interactions are not faceless because they are actively handled and managed by particular boundary spanners (Ring and van de Ven, 1994; Zaheer et al., 1998). Interorganisational trust is thus considered as the trust of interorganisational boundary spanners in the counterpart organisation in particular interorganisational interactions. Since such interorganisational boundary spanners have their own personalities, and operate in the institutional, cultural, organisational, and relational characteristics of particular interactions, their subjective trust process will be affected by (their perceptions of) these interaction-specific aspects. In other words, boundary spanners' personalities and their perceptions about interaction-specific aspects may shape their subjective trust evaluations (Beccerra and Gupta, 1999), and therefore shape interorganisational trust.

Table 5: Non-exhaustive overview of reasons of trust

Author	Trust reasons	Description
Zucker (1986)	Process-based	Developed through repeated interactions where a credible reputation evolves
	Characteristic-based	Tied to the identity of a person or organisation, with shared values, beliefs, race, gender, family, etc.
	Institution-based	Based on the existence of formal organisations with responsibility for professional, business and/or government regulation
Sako (1992)	Contract-based	Built on shared moral norms of honesty and promise-keeping
	Competence-based	Shared understanding between parties of appropriate professional conduct and acceptable technical and managerial standards
	Goodwill-based	Based on an understanding among parties about what is fair in their transaction
Shapiro, Sheppard and Cherakin (1992)	Deterrence-based	Developed through repeated interactions where the reputation of the firm is held hostage
	Knowledge-based	Developed through knowledge about the other party, resulting from communication and the development of personal relationships that produce dependability
	Identification-based	One party in the transaction fully internalises the preferences of the other party, foregoing opportunism
McAllister (1995)	Affect-based	Grounded in reciprocated interpersonal care and concern
	Cognition-based	Grounded in individual beliefs about peer reliability and dependability
Lewicki and Bunker (1996)	Calculus-based	Trust is an ongoing economic calculation whose value is derived by determining outcomes from creating and sustaining the relationship relative to costs of maintaining or severing it.
	Knowledge-based	Trust is based on information and knowledge about the other party as a result of communication and personal relationships
	Identification-based	Trust is based on effective understanding and appreciation of the other's wants, and this mutual understanding is developed to the point where each can effectively act for the other.
Rousseau et al. (1998)	(Deterrence-based)	Utilitarian considerations that another will act trustworthily because of fear of sanctions that accompany violation of trust (the authors do not consider this to be actual trust)
	Institution-based	Organisational and cultural supports (e.g. legal systems) produce confidence that vulnerability in an exchange will not be exploited.
	Calculus-based	Trust is developed when one of the parties in an exchange perceives that the other party intends to perform in a beneficial manner
	Relation-based	Repeated interactions between agents over time produce positive expectations concerning the reliability and dependability of the party
Kramer (1999)	Disposition-based	As expectancies are generalised, people acquire a diffuse expectancy for trust of others that eventually assumes the form of a relatively stable personality characteristic.
	History-based	Is predicated on interactional histories that provide useful information in assessing others' dispositions, intentions, and motives, providing a basis for inferences about future behaviour.
	Third-party based	Third parties diffuse trust-relevant information via gossip, which constitutes a valuable source of "second-hand" knowledge about others.
	Category-based	Is predicated on information regarding a trustee's membership in a social or organisational category.
	Role-based	Is predicated on knowledge that a person occupies a particular role in the organisation rather than specific knowledge about the person's capabilities, dispositions, motives, and intentions.
	Rule-based	Is predicated not on a conscious calculation of consequences, but rather on shared understandings regarding the system of rules regarding appropriate behaviour.
Dietz; Gillespie and Chao (2010)	Presumptive based	Facilitates trust without prior direct knowledge about the other actor (for instance based on formal or informal institutions or personal predispositions to trust)
	Direct-evidence based	Relies on evidence that stems from first-hand interaction experience with a particular actor.

(Source: expansion based on Wilson, 2005)

In this respect, it is useful to consider different typologies of 'reasons of trust' that have been proposed in the trust literature.

Table 5 presents a non-exhaustive but comprehensive overview of often-cited typologies. The different typologies overlap each other in various respects, but can be argued to entail 'reasons of trust' on three levels of (interorganisational) interactions: reasons on the level of the institutions that encompass interorganisational interactions (macro-level), reasons on the level of the interaction itself (meso-level) and reasons relating to personal characteristics of boundary spanners (micro-level). It follows that an analysis aimed at understanding the mechanisms of interorganisational trust in public administration must then examine these macro-, meso- and micro-level aspects of boundary spanners' interactions, and assess the impact of these interaction-specific aspects on the universal trust process we have discussed in the previous paragraph. In the following paragraphs, we will briefly discuss these interaction-specific determinants on the macro-, meso- and micro-level of interorganisational interactions. A more elaborate discussion of the mechanisms by which these aspects are expected to affect the trust process is provided in the theoretical chapter of this dissertation.

> 2.5.2.1.   *Macro-level aspects of interorganisational interactions and the trust process*

With macro-level interaction aspects, we refer to the institutions that encompass interorganisational interactions. Institutions can be defined as "*systems of established and prevalent social rules that structure social interactions*" (Hodgson, 2006: 2). It is often argued that institutional arrangements can act both as supports or impediments to trust (Zucker, 1986; Bachmann and Zaheer, 2008; Bachmann and Inkpen, 2011; Rousseau et al., 1998). Literature on 'institution-based trust' suggests that institutions enable trust on the basis of "*internal organising principles and practices*" (Perrone et al., 2003: 428).

Institutions are notoriously difficult to define and operationalise. We will follow Bachmann and Inkpen (2011) by distinguishing between 'formal' and 'informal' institutions. With respect to formal institutions, we will consider formal rules and formal role attributions in interorganisational interactions, which are argued to allow shared understanding regarding appropriate behaviour in interactions and establish institutional templates for mutual expectations (Kramer, 1999). With respect to informal institutions, we will consider informal routines and salient norms of boundary spanners' political and administrative leaders in interorganisational interactions. Both can be argued to establish interorganisational trust because they support taken-for-granted attitudes of mutual trust between organisations (Möllering, 2006b) which are only questioned at the moment of their establishment or their destabilisation (Six, 2014), and because they exert normative pressure on boundary spanners' subjective evaluations in interorganisational interactions by empowering a 'culture of trustfulness' in the boundary spanners' institutional environment (Sztompka, 1998).

Meso-level aspects of interorganisational interactions and the trust process

While macro-level interaction aspects facilitate trust on the basis of 'institutional templates', meso-level interaction aspects rely on direct experience with or evidence about a particular interaction or counterpart. On this meso-level of interorganisational interactions, we can distinguish between 'calculative' and 'relational' interaction aspects, which have been argued to affect trust.

Calculative aspects of interorganisational interactions

Calculative aspects refer to a utilitarian consideration of costs and benefits on the basis of information about the interaction, the trustee's opportunistic motivations and the extent of risk in the interaction, in which risk-taking occurs if doing so maximises utility (Rousseau et al., 1998). Calculus-based trust has been defined as *"an on-going, market-oriented, economic calculation whose value is derived by determining the outcomes resulting from creating and sustaining the relationship relative to the costs of maintaining or severing it"* (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996: 120). Calculative-based trust emphasises the cognitive nature of trust (Lewis and Weigert, 1985), and is particularly present in Rational Action Theory - based approaches to trust, which can be found in transaction cost theory, resource dependence theory, and principal-agent theory (Zhong, Su, Peng and Yang, 2014).

We disagree with authors who have argued that calculus-based trust is not trust but rational action (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2007; Williamson, 1993), because we consider calculus-based trust to go beyond mere rationality. While a decision to engage in risk-taking behaviour can be calculated on the basis of information, the conditions of bounded rationality and radical uncertainty (Nooteboom, 2002; Möllering, 2014) inherent to complex interorganisational interactions dictate that trustors must 'overdraw' on available information (Luhmann, 1979) and make a 'leap of faith' (Möllering, 2006a) in which they act *as if* they were completely sure of their decision, even though they are not. Karpik (2014) has similarly argued that the plurality of social knowledge necessitates judgement rather than calculation, and that judgement *"can only be based on the leap of logic that makes it possible to establish the meaning of the residue filed under uncertainty: that is the job of trust"* (Karpik, 2014: 29; Möllering, 2014). Thus, trust requires a 'leap of faith' in the willingness to suspend vulnerability, and therefore goes beyond rational action, rendering calculus-based trust a relevant and insightful consideration regarding boundary spanners' subjective trust evaluation.

Relational aspects of interorganisational interactions

Relational aspects emphasise a socio-emotional (Lewis and Weigert, 1985) perspective of trust-building, and can also be considered to reside at the meso-level of interorganisational interactions. Relation-based trust (Rousseau et al., 1998) is argued to develop as a result of repeated experiences, and to rest upon reciprocated interpersonal care, concern and emotional attachment between boundary spanners, who establish a personal bond through interpersonal familiarity across their professional interaction experiences (Rousseau et al., 1998). It is reflected in related conceptualisations such as affection-based

trust (McAllister 1995) and identity-based trust (Lewicki and Buncker, 1996; Shapiro et al., 1992), and it is particularly present in social exchange-based theories, such as social embeddedness theory (Zhong et al., 2014) or relational signalling theory (Six, Nooteboom and Hoogendoorn, 2010).

It is important to note that relation-based trust does not exclude calculus-based trust. For example, interpersonal familiarity, which is a crucial interaction aspect for relation-based trust, may also be a source of credible information about costs, benefits and risks in an interaction, on the basis of which calculus-based trust is supported. While relation-based trust may thus build on or enter into rational calculations, it is argued to go beyond mere calculation, as it acquires value outside a strict self-interested discourse (Braithwaite and Levi, 1998). In this respect, Luhmann (1979: 20) emphasises that *"trust is only possible in a familiar world. It needs history as a reliable background,. (...) but rather than being just an inference from the past, trust goes beyond the information it receives and risks defining the future"*, and that *"in familiar worlds, the past prevails over the present and the future"* (Luhmann, 1979: 19).

> 2.5.2.3.   *Micro-level aspects of interorganisational interactions and the trust process*

Finally, aspects of individual boundary spanners' personality, which stem from psychological (Sztompka, 1998), sociological (Glanville and Paxton, 2007) or even physiological (Zak, 2012) configurations, are argued to affect trust. In particular, it is argued that boundary spanners' individual predispositions to trust or distrust their fellow human beings affect their subjective evaluations in particular interactions (Rotter, 1967). These individual predispositions are argued to be relatively stable over time (Frazier, Johnson and Fainshmidt, 2013), and have also been discussed as individual trustfulness (Sztompka, 1998), dispositional trust (McKnight et al., 1998), generalised willingness to trust others (Frazier et al., 2013) or individual propensity to trust (Mayer et al., 1995). Individuals' predispositions to trust others has been found to be an important determinant of trust in empirical research concerning a wide variety of trustees (Mayer et al., 1995), including in public administration research about trust in government (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012).

> 2.5.3.   *Consolidation: an analytical framework for mechanisms of administrational trust:*

The conceptual framework we thus propose for the investigation of the mechanisms of administrational trust, can be summarised as follows: in order to explain the interorganisational trust of organisation A in organisation B, we must investigate:

- Internal dynamics of the trust process according to boundary spanners of organisation A:
  - The dimensions of the trust process (perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability, and risk-taking behaviour)
  - The relations between the dimensions of the trust process
- Interaction-specific reasons for the trust process according to boundary spanners of organisation A:
  - The (perceived) presence of macro- (formal and informal institutions), meso- (calculative and relational considerations) and micro- (the boundary spanners' predispositions to trust others) level interaction aspects

o   The relations between these interaction aspects and the trust process

Figure 6 provides a schematic illustration of this framework. It shows how interorganisational trust consists in the trustor boundary spanner's subjective evaluation regarding the perceived trustworthiness of the trustee, and the consequent willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in the interaction with the trustee. This 'universal' trust process is embedded in interaction-specific aspects on the macro- (the boundary spanners' perceptions of formal and informal institutions relevant to the interaction), the meso- (the boundary spanners' calculative and relational considerations in the interaction) and the micro- (the personal predispositions of the boundary spanner) level of interorganisational interactions.

Figure 6: Model of the mechanisms of administrational trust
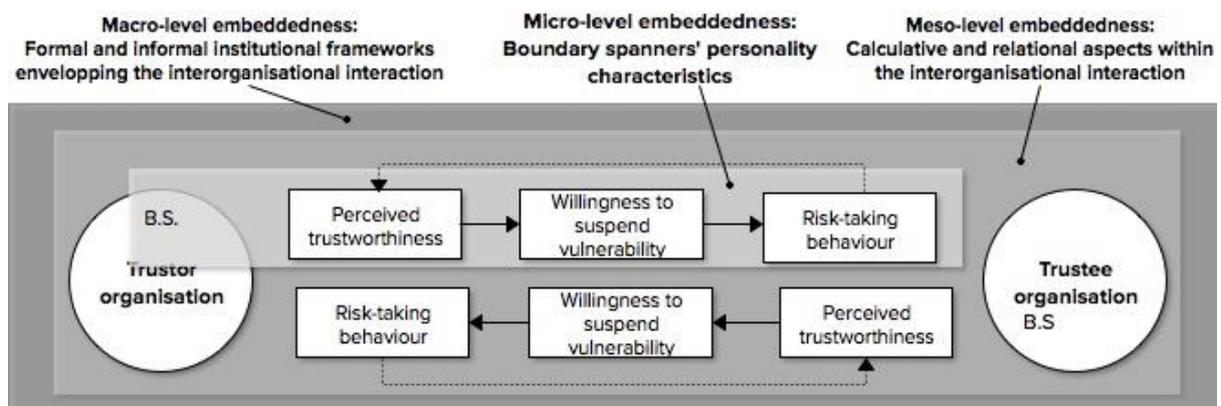
While macro-, meso- and micro-level interaction aspects are thus argued to encapsulate and affect the trust process, it remains unclear exactly how they do so. This is what we seek to uncover in research question three. Table 6 therefore reformulates the graphical presentation of this conceptual framework as an analytical framework, which allows us to tackle research question three empirically. The framework lays the foundation for a comprehensive empirical analysis of the capacity of administrative systems to develop 'administrational' trust in interorganisational interactions, and summarises our discussion of the 'conceptual morass' of (interorganisational) trust. To that extent, the development of this analytical framework brings a number of clear advantages. First, the framework brings added analytical value because it allows comparative study of the trust process in different interorganisational interactions, allowing researchers to compare interorganisational cases dominated by trust with interorganisational cases dominated by distrust, allowing to draw lessons about which interaction aspects stimulate or prevent the development of administrational trust, as well as distrust. Second, the framework conceptualises a 'universal' trust process consisting of three distinct dimensions, thus allowing researchers to examine the dynamics within and between the three dimensions of this process. Third, the framework allows contextualised examination of this 'universal' model of the trust process because it identifies seven categories of interaction-specific aspects, situated on three levels of interorganisational interactions. The framework allows analysis of how boundary spanners' subjective evaluations are affected by

Table 6: Analytical framework for mechanisms of administrational trust

| | Macro: Formal institutions | | Macro: Informal institutions | | Meso: Interactions | | Micro: Personal | |
	Rules	**Roles**	**Routines**	**Salient norms**	**Calculus**	**Relations**	**Disposition**	
(Perceived) trustworthiness	How do rules affect perceived trustworthiness?	How do roles affect perceived trustworthiness?	How do routines affect perceived trustworthiness?	How do salient norms affect perceived trustworthiness?	How do calculative considerations affect perceived trustworthiness?	How do relational considerations affect perceived trustworthiness?	How do dispositions affect perceived trustworthiness?	Mechanisms of perceived trustworthiness
Willingness to suspend vulnerability	How do rules affect willingness to suspend vulnerability?	How do roles affect willingness to suspend vulnerability	How do routines affect willingness to suspend vulnerability	How do salient norms affect willingness to suspend vulnerability	How do calculative considerations affect willingness to suspend vulnerability	How do relational considerations affect willingness to suspend vulnerability	How do dispositions affect willingness to suspend vulnerability	Mechanisms of willingness to suspend vulnerability
Risk-taking behaviour	How do rules affect risk-taking behaviour?	How do roles affect risk-taking behaviour?	How do routines affect risk-taking behaviour?	How do salient norms affect risk-taking behaviour?	How do calculative considerations affect risk-taking behaviour?	How do relational considerations affect risk-taking behaviour?	How do dispositions affect risk-taking behaviour?	Mechanisms of risk-taking behaviour
	Macro-level rule mechanisms of administrational trust	Macro-level role mechanisms of administrational trust	Macro-level routine mechanisms of administrational trust	Macro-level salient norm mechanisms of administrational trust	Meso-level calculative mechanisms of administrational trust	Meso-level relational mechanisms of administrational trust	Micro-level mechanisms of administrational trust	Mechanisms of administrational trust

characteristics of rules, roles, routines and dominant normative frameworks on the macro-level, by interaction-specific calculative and relational considerations on the meso-level, and by individual predispositions on the micro-level of interorganisational interactions. As such, the framework allows researchers to identify and examine the mechanisms that lie at the basis of administrative systems' capacity to generate administrational trust. A comparison of columns in the framework permits an answer to the question of how singular interaction aspects impact the trust process in its three dimensions. A comparison of the horizontal rows answers the question as to how subjective evaluations of each singular dimension of the trust process are impacted by boundary spanners' perceptions of interaction-specific aspects. In its entirety, the framework therefore captures much of the complexity of administrational trust, and allows researchers to compare different cases of interorganisational interactions regarding their capacity to generate and support administrational trust. Furthermore, the framework can also be used as a tool by public managers who seek to formulate specific managerial strategies to optimise administrational trust in particular interactions. In addition to its analytical value, the framework therefore also has practical value for public sector reformers, who can use it as a diagnostic tool in an integrated strategy to manage administrational trust.

> 2.6.   **Chapter conclusion: conceptualising administrational trust**

In this chapter, we argued that interorganisational trust is a crucial but currently understudied topic in public administration research, and is still considered to be a 'conceptual morass'. We discussed our core concept of administrational trust through an overview of the trust literature, and formulated a definition of administrational trust as "*a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions in public administration characterised by risk, dependency and uncertainty, comprising the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability, on the basis of positive expectations held about the counterpart organisation*". We then proposed a conceptual framework through which to approach each of the three research questions. In the conceptual framework of research question one, we have argued that both administrational trust and distrust can be considered to have certain functionalities and dysfunctionalities. In the conceptual discussion of research question two, we introduced three perspectives on the distribution of administrational trust and distrust, and proposed to use the 'quadrants' framework as the conceptual point of reference for our empirical work. Finally, we discussed a conceptual framework for research question three, in which we argued that the mechanisms of administrational trust can be studied through analysis of 'universal' internal dynamics of the trust process on the one hand, and the impact of interaction-specific macro-, meso- and micro-level determinants on the trust process on the other hand. We proposed an analytical framework to study these mechanisms of administrational trust empirically and develop strategies to facilitate, solidify and increase interorganisational trust in public administration.

SECTION B:

EXPLORATIONS AND PREPARATIONS

"We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time."

T.S. Eliot,

Little Gidding (four quartets)

THIS SECOND SECTION applies the concepts developed in the previous section to the empirical reality of the Flemish administration. The objectives of this section are to provide an answer to our exploratory research question, generate some first exploratory evidence for research questions two and three, and to use this evidence to develop the theoretical and methodological frameworks for the third section of this study.

Table 7: Objectives and results of section B

Chapter	Section objective	Section result
3	Explore the role of interorganisational trust in a public administration context (a), and explore research questions two and three (b)	a) Four core findings: • Functional trust: "Trust as rule": potential but unpredictable gains and cost-efficient cooperation • Dysfunctional trust: "Trust as dogma": unpredictable potential costs • Functional distrust: "Distrust as reasonable exception": predictable (but high) transaction costs and predictable (but low) gains • Dysfunctional distrust: "Distrust as rule": foregone opportunities and associated high opportunity costs b) Explored research questions two and three to provide input for theoretical and methodological framework
4	Build theoretical framework for research questions two and three	Developed hypotheses for five propositions: • A - Opposite distribution of administrational trust and distrust • B - Dimensional variation between Reference Interactions • C - Interdimensional equivalence between Reference Interactions • D - Interaction aspect variation between Reference Interactions • E - Mechanism equivalence between Reference Interactions
5	Build methodological framework for research questions two and three	Developed nested mixed-method research design with four phases, progressively narrowing span but increasing depth of research: • Phase 1: Conceptual phase: literature review • Phase 2: Exploratory phase: exploratory survey + interviews • Phase 3: Quantitative phase: boundary spanner survey • Phase 4: Qualitative phase: RI interviews

Chapter 3 starts from our definition of 'administrational trust', and empirically explores this dissertation's research questions. We conduct three explorations in which we develop the answer to our exploratory research question regarding the role of interorganisational trust and distrust in public administration, identify relevant 'trust problems' for our research design, and explore the dimensions and reasons of administrational trust in a broad set of interorganisational relations between Flemish agencies and their departments. Chapter 4 incorporates the conclusions and lessons from these explorations in a theoretical framework for research questions two and three. Finally, we present the research design that will be used to develop an answer to these research questions in chapter 5.

We are starting this exploration without expectations of what we will find, but with a clear notion of what we are looking for. As such, the aim is to familiarise ourselves with the reality of administrational trust in the Flemish administration, in order to understand better what kind of research is needed to examine it appropriately.

3. Exploring administrational trust in the Flemish administration: three explorations

> 3.1.   **Introduction: the aims of exploration**

The first chapter of this second section presents our exploration of administrational trust in the Flemish administration. Our exploration has the ambition to provide an answer to research question one, and to apply the conceptual frameworks developed for research questions two and three to familiarise ourselves with empirical practices and challenges in the Flemish administration which are important to address these questions. As such, this exploration focuses on all three research questions with the aim to answer research question one, and allow an informed development of theoretical hypotheses and a methodological framework for research questions two and three.

We will first discuss the 'anatomy' of the Flemish administration at the time of our empirical research. Next, we will outline the methods used to explore the Flemish administration through the lens of the three conceptual frameworks introduced in the previous chapter. Subsequently, we discuss our exploration of the role, the distribution, and the mechanisms of administrational trust (and distrust) in the Flemish administration. We conclude our exploration with an overview of lessons learned, in which we have particular attention for the theoretical framework and the research design in the subsequent steps of our study.

> 3.2.   **Introducing the Flemish administration**

The Flemish administration governs the 6 million Dutch-speaking inhabitants of Flanders, the northern region of Belgium. At the time of our exploratory study, it employed almost 40000 civil servants, and consisted of thirteen 'homogeneous policy areas' (such as Agriculture and Fisheries, Environment and Energy, Public Works and Transport, …), each containing a department, internal and external agencies, and an advisory council. The organisational structure of the Flemish administration, defined originally in the BBB-decree ('Beter Bestuurlijk Beleid'), confirms the strong role of the 'primacy of politics', as these homogeneous policy areas are steered directly by one or more responsible ministers in the Flemish Government (Verschuere, 2009). In terms of division of tasks, the legislative (Parliament) and executive (Government) powers decide on legislation and policy, while the administration prepares, implements, monitors and evaluates these policies. In theory, policy implementation is formally conducted by the agencies of the Flemish administration while preparation, monitoring, evaluation and support is the responsibility of the departments, but this task division is argued not to apply strictly in reality (Verschuere, 2009). Each of the thirteen departments is headed by a Secretary-General, and steered by the responsible Government minister on the basis of a contract-like agreement with performance measures (managementovereenkomst) agreed between the minister and the department. Because the departments organise themselves as they see fit within the lines of these agreements and according to their objectives, no two departments are structurally identical. The Flemish administrations' agencies operate at arms'

length from the responsible minister of the Flemish government, with various degrees of autonomy. There are four different 'agency types' with different degrees of formal autonomy; internally autonomised agencies without legal personality (IVAZRP), internally autonomised agencies with legal personality (IVARP), externally autonomised agencies according to public law (EVAPRP), and externally autonomised agencies according to private law (EVAPPRP). The first three agency types are headed by an Administrator-General and are steered by the responsible minister in the Flemish Government on the basis of a contract-like agreement containing performance measures (beheersovereenkomsten). The external agencies according to private law are steered by 'collaboration agreements' (samenwerkingsovereenkomsten) between the minister and the agencies, which allow for more organisational autonomy.

Although the nature of organisational tasks differs substantially within and between the thirteen homogeneous policy areas, interorganisational cooperation and coordination are often required to deal with complex policy problems that crosscut policy areas. Three particular policy areas enable such horizontal coordination in the Flemish administration, and are therefore sometimes referred to as 'managerial' policy areas, 'overhead' policy areas, or the 'horizontal' policy areas: DAR (Services for General Government Policy), BZ (Administrative Affairs) and FB (Finances and Budgeting). Table 8 summarises the task division between the thirteen policy areas in terms of the horizontality of their policy content.

Table 8: The Flemish administrations' 13 homogeneous policy areas during our study

'Vertical' policy areas	'Horizontal' policy areas
Agriculture and Fisheries (LV)	General Government Policy (DAR)
Environment, Nature and Energy (LNE)	Public Governance (BZ)
Mobility and Public Works (MOW)	Finances and Budget (FB)
Spatial Planning, Housing and Immovable Heritage (RWO)	
International Flanders (iV)	
Education and Training (OV)	
Welfare, Public Health and Family (WVG)	
Work and Social Economy (WSE)	
Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI)	
Culture, Youth, Sports and Media (CJSM)	

We note that policy area 'International Flanders' is sometimes also considered to have a horizontal task, due to its coordinating role between Flemish and European/international administrations

It is important to note that the Flemish administration is an ever-changing organisation[10], as it operates in a context of complexity and public, budgetary and political pressures. Just like any large organisation or organisational network, many interorganisational interactions within the Flemish administration are therefore characterised by trust problems. In the following paragraphs, we explore the role of administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration, the prevalence of administrational trust

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[10] In its July 2014 coalition agreement, the new Flemish Government has announced to merge the policy areas DAR with BZ and LNE with RWO, bringing the number of policy areas in the Flemish administration to 11. The coalition agreement also announced the fusion of some agencies, and announced that a core task inventory would be drafted in ever policy area in order to further reform the Flemish administration in line with the policy objectives and the coaliton's principles of administrative efficiency (Vlaamse Regering, 2014)

problems in the Flemish administration, and the presence of trust process dimensions and interaction-specific reasons of administrational trust in the Flemish administration.

> 3.3.   **The methods of our exploration**

In this section, we introduce the methods used for our exploration. The data are based on an exploratory set of questions, which was included in the 2012-2013 COBRA senior civil servant survey on the one hand, and on qualitative interviews with Flemish senior civil servants on the other hand. In this paragraph, we introduce both of these instruments, and clarify how they relate to our exploration of the different research questions. Table 9 presents how the collected exploratory data relate to our research questions. The instruments discussed below are included in the annex to this dissertation.

Table 9: Summary of data collection in exploration

Method	RQ1: Roles of administrational trust and distrust	RQ2: Distribution of administrational trust and distrust	RQ3: internal dynamics of administrational trust	RQ3: interaction-specific reasons of administrational trust
Senior civil servant survey (COBRA)		X	X	X
Senior civil servant interviews	X	X		X

> 3.3.1.   *Exploratory survey (COBRA)[11]*

The COBRA survey (Common public Organisation data Base for Research and Analysis) is a central instrument of the CRIPO-research agenda (Comparative Research into Current Trends in Public Sector Organisation), which is conducted within the European Unions' COST framework program (European Cooperation in Science and Technology). The COBRA-questionnaire is addressed to the senior management of public sector organisations and has been replicated in a considerable number of European countries and non-European countries. For the Flemish administration, the COBRA-survey was conducted a first time in 2003, and was replicated in 2012-2013. We adden an exploratory set of items about administrational trust to the 2012-2013 replication of the COBRA-survey in the Flemish administration, with the ambition of exploring interorganisational trust in various interorganisational relations within the Flemish administration.

Before introduction in the COBRA-survey, these items were discussed with the coordinator for the Flemish replication of the survey, reformulated accordingly, then submitted to a pre-test in a limited panel of Flemish senior civil servants, and reformulated a second time.

Two versions of the COBRA-survey were sent out to the senior civil servants of the Flemish administration. One version was sent to the senior civil servants of the 13 departments of the Flemish administration. The second version was sent out to the senior civil servants of 52 Flemish agencies. The total response rate for this survey was satisfactory at 69%. A chi square goodness of fit test (three degrees of freedom = 1.92, p =

[11]   We would like to thank professor Koen Verhoest for his useful comments to our set of questions regarding interorganisational trust in public administration, and for allowing us to integrate the questions in the COBRA-questionnaire.

.5901), suggested that the sample was representative for the wider Flemish public administration in terms of organisational types (Verhoest, Wynen, Molenveld and Oomsels, 2013). Analysis of the survey data was conducted using StataMP statistical analysis software.

> 3.3.2. *Exploratory interviews*

In addition to the data gathered through the COBRA-survey, we also conducted 9 exploratory interviews with civil servants on the senior and middle management levels in various departments of the Flemish administration. These high-level civil servants were expected to have a broad overview of coordination between different organisations, and could thus be considered to be key informants regarding administrational trust in the Flemish administration. In total, we invited ten respondents for an interview. Nine accepted our invitation. The selection of these high-level civil servants occurred in two steps. In a first step, we invited six senior civil servants from three departments in the horizontal policy areas (DAR, BZ, FB), as it is reasonable to assume that horizontal coordinators would be able to provide the broadest account about interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration due to the nature of their horizontal task. In the second step, we invited the senior civil servants of four medium-sized departments in 'vertical' policy areas, of which two had 'tangible' and two had 'non-tangible' tasks (Bouckaert and Halachmi, 1996), in order to mitigate any possible horizontal bias toward 'success stories of interorganisational trust and cooperation'.

We thus conducted nine exploratory semi-structured interviews, which were systematically organised in terms of interview selection, interview preparation, face-to-face interviewing, interview follow-up, and data analysis. A semi-structured interview is argued to be a "*high-preparation, high-risk, high-gain and high-analysis operation*" (Wengraf, 2004:5). In semi-structured interviewing, the interviewer uses a substantive framework (Weiss, 1994: 15) or topic list that reflects the conceptual framework of the study. However, the interviewer retains the flexibility to improvise and rearrange questions on the fly, to react to specific markers in the discourse of respondents, and to probe into respondents' answers to encourage them to recount aspects of their stories in further detail in order to obtain more relevant information which may add to the conceptual framework. While this approach allows respondent-specific differentiation about the issues respondents are most knowledgeable about, the disadvantage is that such interviews can be difficult to compare. However, as the objective of this exploration was to explore key informant experiences regarding a broad operationalisation of administrational trust, such comparability was not a prime concern in this phase of our research. Table 10 summarises the substantive interview framework for the three research questions, which is based on the conceptual discussion of the previous chapter. The full topic list of the semi-structured interviews is included in the annex to this dissertation.

Table 10: Substantive exploratory interview framework

Exploratory questions	Semi-structured interview framework
RQ1: The role of administrational trust and distrust in Flemish administration	Respondents were asked whether they felt that interorganisational trust is necessary in public administration. We asked them to motivate their answer. Respondents who argued trust to be essential were asked whether they felt trust is always a good thing, or is sometimes regretted. Subsequently, we asked similar questions for distrust, and asked respondents to motivate their answer.
RQ2: The distribution of administrational trust and distrust in Flemish administration	We asked respondents if they could give concrete examples of interorganisational relationships that were highly characterised by trust. Subsequently, we asked to do the same for relationships they considered to be highly characterised by distrust. We then showed respondents a picture of the 'quadrants' frameworks, and asked whether respondents could think of examples that were characterised by simultaneous high trust and high distrust, or low trust and low distrust.
RQ3: The mechanisms of administrational trust in Flemish administration	For each of the examples discussed in the exploration of RQ2, we asked respondents to elaborate on what they considered to be the reasons for the occurrence of trust and/or distrust in those examples. We also asked if respondents could think of additional reasons for administrational trust or distrust in the Flemish administration, besides those already discussed in the examples.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face in a location suggested by the respondent. At the start of each interview, the research problem, the research context, and the confidentiality of the interview were presented to the respondent in a protocol, which was signed by both interviewer and respondent. On average, interviews took one hour and fifteen minutes. Interviews were recorded for transcription. Respondents were informed that the recording could be stopped if they wanted to discuss certain issues 'off the record'. Each interview was transcribed verbatim by the researcher, after which the interview transcriptions were coded for analysis using QSR NVivo10 qualitative analysis software. Qualitative coding was developed on the basis of the conceptual frameworks presented in the previous chapter, and specified further as our understanding of administrational trust grew during the qualitative exploration.

> 3.4. First exploration: roles of administrational trust and distrust

The first research question is an exploratory question, and will thus be fully answered in this section. The research question as it was presented in the introduction to this dissertation ('what is the role of interorganisational trust in a public administration context?') was slightly amended in view of the conceptual discussion between trust and distrust as separate, but related constructs in the previous chapter ('what are the roles of administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration?').

We have developed a conceptual framework to approach this question in the previous chapter, in which we specified why administrational trust and administrational distrust can be considered to be functional (positive consequences for public administration systems) and/or dysfunctional (negative consequences for public administration systems) according to extant trust literature. In this first exploration, this simple conceptual framework is applied to empirical data gathered through qualitative interviews with senior civil servants in the Flemish administration, leading to a more detailed answer as to why, how, and when administrational trust and administrational distrust are considered to be functional and/or dysfunctional in Flemish public administration. We first discuss functional trust and dysfunctional trust and then explore functional distrust and dysfunctional distrust. Third, we discuss respondents' argumentation that interorganisational trust and distrust have different functionalities in the public and the private sector. We then conclude this first exploration with a discussion and summary of our findings.

> 3.4.1.   *Functional trust*

In the conceptual framework that was introduced in the previous chapter, we presented the functional role of trust in terms of more suspension of risk which enables increased cooperation, flexibility, innovation, learning, performance and pro-social behaviour, which results in gains and cost-efficiency in administrative systems which are unpredictable due to the radical uncertainty that is inherent to trust problems.

This conceptualisation of the functional role of interorganisational trust in Flemish public administration is reflected in the empirical experiences of Flemish high-level civil servants. In particular, our interviews highlighted that increasingly transversal societal problems have strengthened the perceived necessity of interorganisational cooperation in public administration. Respondents argued that contemporary policy challenges cross-cut multiple policy areas, and that interorganisational trust is of primary importance for more transversal cooperation in the Flemish administration. Interorganisational trust between various organisations in the Flemish administration was considered as a sine qua non condition for cooperation, as a way to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative cooperation, as an instrument to improve the management of cooperative processes through more exchange of information and to enable a larger extent of interorganisational flexibility by focusing on processes and breaking through ossifying formal structures (see quotes 3.1 and 3.2 in annex). As such, administrational trust was argued to enable more efficient and effective cooperation through flexibility and exchange in interorganisational interactions, thus supporting cost-effective governance arrangements that high-level civil servants deemed crucial to address contemporary complex policy challenges. This argumentation emphasises that understanding administrational trust is not only an academic interest, but is rooted in an empirical problem-driven need for better cooperation between organisations in the Flemish administration, which stems from a perceived mismatch between the transversal and interdependent nature of policy challenges on the one hand, and the compartmentalised structural characteristics of the Flemish administration on the other hand.

> 3.4.2.   *Dysfunctional trust*

However, the argument for functional trust can be juxtaposed with an argument for dysfunctional trust, which may explain why some scholars and practitioners are reluctant to discuss trust as a principle for organisation and coordination in public administration. In the conceptual framework we introduced in the previous chapter, we discussed this dysfunctional role of trust in terms of the potential abuse of vulnerability by opportunistic counterparts, and blindness to the failure of a trusted counterpart, which results in unpredictable and high potential costs for the misguided trustor. Our exploratory interviews elucidated two core elements arguments regarding the dysfunctional role of trust in the Flemish public administration.

The first argument referred to the potential loss of critical thought in the administrative system. Groupthink was argued to occur when trust becomes too high, possibly leading to a situation in which one

organisation or person exclusively dominates the pace of innovation and creative processes (see quote 3.3 in annex). Groupthink has also been discussed as a possibly dysfunctional consequence of trust by Ring and Van de Ven (1994) and Edelenbos and Klijn (2007), and can be considered as a particular case of 'blindness to failure' of the trusted counterpart.

The second argument for a dysfunctional role of administrational trust was based on a combination of two concepts that are central to Transaction Cost Economics: the bounded rationality of the trustor, and the opportunistic motivations and interests of other stakeholders, including the trustee. The combination of bounded rationality and a context that stimulates opportunistic behaviour was argued to lead to dysfunctional consequences of administrational trust. Simon (1997) argued that the rationality of actors in complex environments is bounded by their cognitive limitations, by time, and by the incomplete and asymmetric information that actors have at their disposal. This leads actors under bounded rationality to seek satisfactory rather than optimal solutions. Second, opportunistic behaviour, which is defined by Williamson (1985: 30) as *"self-interest seeking with guile"*, was argued to be present in interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration, especially when organisations are under pressure to perform competitively rather than collectively, for instance during times of budgetary negotiations where different administrations compete for resources under the context of budgetary austerity, or during reform processes in which different stakeholders try to maximise their bureaucratic influence (Niskanen, 1971). Professing administrational trust under conditions of bounded rationality and opportunistic motives of other organisations was argued to potentially lead to comparative disadvantages for trusting actors, due to adverse selection mechanisms in which those who do not engage in any trusting behaviour are most likely to be rewarded (see quote 3.4 in annex). This latter argument is in line with the reasoning of Williamson (1993), who argued that "*the lessons of bounded rationality and opportunism lead to the following combined result: organize transactions so as to economize on bounded rationality while simultaneously safeguarding them against the hazards of opportunism*" (Williamson, 1993: 459), which he considers to be incommensurable with trust. Williamson therefore argues that trust is not a rational principle for behaviour in relations between competitive organisations, and "*should be concentrated on those personal relations in which it really matters*" (Williamson, 1993: 484).

> 3.4.3.   *Functional distrust*

In the conceptual discussion of the previous chapter, we discussed that functional distrust implies that risk avoidance protects actors against possible abuses of vulnerability in situations of radical uncertainty, resulting in predictable (but relatively high) transaction costs and predictable (but relatively low) gains. To that extent, distrust can be considered to be functional as a rational investment in self-preservation when trustors might reasonably expect that their counterparts have damaging intentions. In our exploratory interviews, this notion of functional distrust (which respondents also described as 'healthy distrust') was argued to be a normal and constructive everyday orientation, and to apply to many interorganisational

interactions in the Flemish administration. Two arguments were made regarding the functional role of interorganisational distrust in public administration.

A first argument in support of functional interorganisational distrust, was that it allows to identify conflicting objectives of counterpart organisations in the Flemish administrations' highly politicised and competitive environment, for instance during election years, budgetary negotiations, or during on-going public sector reform in which organisations compete for bureau maximisation (Niskanen, 1971). Respondents argued that politicised and conflicting organisational objectives are unalienable characteristics of public administration, rendering a certain extent of distrust toward other organisations a healthy and neccesary orientation, which was considered to be functional to maintain necessary balance in public administration systems. Therefore, high-risk competitive environments were argued to emphasise the functionality of interorganisational distrust in public administration, much like they were argued to increase the dysfunctionalities of trust (see quote 3.5 in annex).

Second, some of the high-level civil servants we interviewed considered that interorganisational distrust enables constructive criticism toward partner organisations in common projects or project proposals. An important note here is that constructive criticism was argued to be enabled and supported by structures that allow the expression of distrust in a non-personal and non-threatening way, but also requires a certain extent of openness on behalf of the criticised actor. As such, distrust was argued to be functional when it is depersonalised in institutional structures, and when it can be met with an attitude of openness to criticism (see quote 3.6 in annex). This argument is in line with Luhmann's (1979) consideration that distrust can be institutionalised in order to bypass its dysfunctional characteristics, through or within legitimate, universal and depersonalised structures. The ability of institutional system structures to depersonalise distrust, disable its 'destructive forces' and turn it into something functional in a social system, was well explained by Luhmann (1979: 72), who argues that any expressions of distrust outside of these structures must be seen as being 'functionless'. "*A social system which requires, or cannot avoid, distrusting behaviour among its members for certain functions needs at the same time mechanisms which prevent distrust from gaining the upper hand, and, from being reciprocated by a process of reciprocal escalation, turned into a destructive force. Above all there must be strategies and types of individual behaviour which are socially recognized and easily understood and which intercept and neutralize acts of distrust, thus rendering them, from the point of view of the system, 'accidental', insignificant, and therefore functionless aberrations*."

> 3.4.4.   *Dysfunctional distrust*

In the fourth cell of the conceptual framework for research question one, we argued that the dysfunctional role of distrust relates to an overinvestment in risk avoidance, which is associated with relational withdrawal and organisational compartmentalisation, extensive regulation of interorganisational interactions and attempts at behavioural control of distrusted counterparts. All this was argued to imply significant opportunity costs and transaction costs for public administration systems, especially because interorganisational cooperation is considered to be a prerequisite for administrative performance in

complex policy environments. The notion that distrust is dysfunctional for public administration was considered to be rather self-evident by the high-level civil servants we interviewed. Their argumentation closely resembled our conceptual discussion, and provided many practical examples illustrating the dysfunctional role of administrational distrust in the Flemish public administration.

For instance, several respondents argued that compartmentalisation and 'siloization' occurred in the Flemish administration as a result of interorganisational distrust, because organisations were reluctant to cooperate out of fear that other parties would 'steal their credit' or obstruct the achievement of organisational objectives (see quote 3.7 in annex). Siloization has been argued to have become more prevalent in European public administrations since the New Public Management (NPM) era (Gregory 2006; Pollitt 2003), and refers to a situation in which organisations increasingly adopt an overly narrow perspective that does not consider the trans-boundary challenges which cut across the traditional responsibilities and boundaries of single organisations (Laegried, Randma-Liv, Rykkja and Sarapuu, 2013). Collective gains are therefore systematically foregone, thus generating substantial opportunity costs. Furthermore, our respondents gave examples of how interorganisational distrust generates high transaction costs when actors are not free to withdraw from interorganisational interactions (see quote 3.8 in annex). Thus, dysfunctional distrust was illustrated with examples of active resistance to interdependency, uncertainty and risk. In addition to immediate opportunity costs and transaction costs, expressions of distrust were also considered to sour interorganisational relations, making future cooperation less likely and thus creating long-term opportunity costs (see quote 3.9 in annex).

Finally, while distrust is considered to be functional when it is based on clear reasons to believe that other parties have bad intentions, it is considered to be dysfunctional when it is not based on any clear reasons. The interviewed high-level civil servants argued that when administrational distrust was an indiscriminate, standard starting position in interorganisational relationships, it would automatically lead to aggregation of opportunity- and transaction costs. Distrust is therefore considered to be dysfunctional when it is taken as an unfounded starting position in contingent environments (see quote 3.10 in annex).

> 3.4.5.   *The specific nature of the public versus the private sector*

Finally, it is worth noting that one respondent emphasised that interorganisational trust and distrust are more important in the public than in the private sector. This respondent referred to the core values of the Flemish public administration, which relate to the quality, efficiency and accountability of public services to citizens. As citizens have no other choice than to make use of public administration and are coerced to finance it by means of paying taxes, public administration owes those citizens high standards of quality and performance, and must find ways to work together efficiently in the interest of its citizens, rather than in the interest of anyone else. This is considered to be incompatible with interorganisational distrust (see quote 3.11 in annex). This respondent thus argued that much more than in the private sector, interorganisational trust should be a core value for Flemish public administration, and for the public sector in general terms.

Discussion: roles of administrational trust and distrust explored

In this first exploration, we have presented the results of interviews with key informants in the Flemish public sector, with the objective of increasing our understanding of the role that interorganisational trust and distrust are considered to play in the empirical reality of Flemish public administration. Our general conclusion is that both interorganisational trust and distrust can be functional or dysfunctional, depending on how and under which circumstances they are 'used'. Table 11 summarises our conclusions concisely.

First, we conclude that interorganisational trust and distrust can be functional or dysfunctional because they can both have positive and negative consequences for public administration systems. Trust is considered to be functional because it allows efficient and effective cooperation, open communication and flexibility while distrust is considered to be functional because it allows predictable costs, critical perspectives and the identification of conflicting objectives. On the other hand, trust is seen to be dysfunctional because it leads to unpredictable costs, groupthink and possible comparative short-term disadvantages in high-risk contexts, while distrust is seen as dysfunctional because it produces high opportunity costs and transaction costs, long-term relational deterioration, and can lead to compartmentalisation and lack of cooperation in public administration.

Table 11: Perceived roles of administrational trust and distrust in Flemish public administration

	Trust	Distrust
'Functional'	**Why:** **Theoretical argumentation:** Suspension of risk leads to increased cooperation, flexibility, innovation, learning, performance and pro-social behaviour, which is argued to result in potential but unpredictable gains and cost-efficient cooperation **Empirical examples:** Sine qua non condition for cooperation, efficient and effective cooperation, open communication, flexibility **'Use':** -trust as rule- As general starting position in environments with highly contingent, complex, unpredictable or transversal policy challenges necessitating cooperation between actors	**Why:** **Theoretical argumentation:** Avoidance of risk leads to atomisation, regulation and behavioural control to protect against possible abuse of vulnerability, argued to result in predictable (but high) transaction costs and predictable (but low) gains **Empirical examples:** Maintaining critical perspective, identification of conflicting objectives, enabling constructive criticism **'Use':** -distrust as reasonable exception- As reflexive attitude in high-risk context where opportunistic behaviour and bounded rationality might be reasonably expected to lead to risk actualisation
'Dysfunctional'	**Why:** **Theoretical argumentation:** Suspension of risk leads to possible abuse of vulnerability in case of opportunism and blindness to failure, which is argued to result in unpredictable potential costs **Empirical examples:** Groupthink, comparative short-term disadvantages in high-risk contexts **'Use':** -trust as dogma- As blind and uncritical position in high-risk context where opportunistic behaviour and bounded rationality lead to actualisation of the risk of adverse selection	**Why:** **Theoretical argumentation:** Avoidance of risk leads to atomisation, regulation and behavioural control, which is argued to lead to foregone opportunities and associated high opportunity costs **Empirical examples:** Opportunity costs of avoiding non-effectuated risk, long-term relational deterioration, obstruction and atomisation as conscious strategies **'Use':** -distrust as rule- As starting position in contingent environments without evidence to reasonably expect or risk actualisation or negative intentions of other actors

Second, we conclude that the functionality or dysfunctionality of trust and distrust are dependent on how they are 'used'. Trust is considered to be functional when it is a basic attitude in interactions (trust as 'rule') while distrust is considered to be functional when it is a reflexive attitude (distrust as a 'reasonable exception'). On the other hand, trust is seen to be dysfunctional when it is absolute and uncritical (trust as 'dogma') and distrust is seen as dysfunctional when it is the basic attitude in interactions (distrust as 'rule').

Third, we argue that the functionality or dysfunctionality of interorganisational trust and distrust are dependent on the circumstances in which they are 'used'. Trust is considered to be functional in highly contingent environments with complex, unpredictable or transversal policy challenges that necessitate cooperation between well-intending actors, even if there are no clear reasons for such trust. Distrust is argued to be dysfunctional in the same contingent environments without clear reasons for distrust. Interorganisational distrust is considered to be functional in highly contingent environments only if credible information is available on the basis of which actors can reasonably expect that their counterparts have ill intentions or opportunistic interests to abuse their vulnerability. Trust is considered dysfunctional in such environments with reasons to expect ill intentions of counterparts. In other words, while interorganisational trust was argued to be functional even in the absence of specific 'reasons' to trust in the interorganisational interaction, distrust was argued to be functional only when such specific reasons to distrust existed in the interorganisational interactions' context. Thus, functional trust requires only the absence of objective reasons to distrust, while functional distrust requires the presence of objective reasons to distrust in the interorganisational interaction or its context.

On the basis of these conclusions, we argue that administrational trust is a relevant area of study, with the potential to bring much merit to public administration, but should not be used as an 'applause concept' for public sector reform. Reformers should not ascribe absolute and universal value judgments to interorganisational trust and distrust in public administration, as both can be functional under the right circumstances, but are bound to have dysfunctional side effects when used as panacea. Furthermore, our discussion shows that public managers can stimulate the functional roles of trust and distrust by creating environments in which trust is the self-evident starting position for interorganisational relationships, and in which distrust is accepted (or even stimulated) within institutional fora, on the condition that it is based on 'good reasons'. The capacity for constructive distrust in public administration therefore lies in the availability and production of credible (performance) information in transparent and open administrations.

A broad lesson for our own further research into interorganisational trust in public administration is that different respondents, under different circumstances, might have different personal preferences for certain functionalities and dysfunctionalities of trust and distrust, which may stem from their moral, ideological, or cultural belief systems. It is important to keep such respondent-specific dispositions in mind when interpreting opinions regarding the desirability of interorganisational trust and distrust as organising principles for public administration. This brings us to a final note, in which we remind the reader that Moore (1903) argued that it is a naturalistic fallacy to derive moral conclusions from factual premises: an 'ought' cannot be derived from an 'is'. Our consideration of what the functionalities and dysfunctionalities of trust and distrust *are* does not imply a value judgment about whether, and to which extent, interorganisational trust or distrust *ought* to be present in (the Flemish) public administration. A normative preference for administrational distrust emphasises the functionality of predictable costs of risk avoidance strategies, but accepts that the opportunity- and transaction costs of such strategies are relatively high. A

normative preference for administrational trust stresses functionalities such as interorganisational cooperation and unpredictable gains, while it accepts the possibility of unpredictable costs when vulnerability is abused and actors become blind to failure. As researchers, we may therefore well identify whether and when interorganisational trust or distrust *have* certain functional and dysfunctional consequences in public administration, but the choice regarding what *ought* to be the distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust, is in part normative (and in public administration; therefore often political). These normative choices should be left to autonomous moral faculties, who act within their own normative (ideological) frameworks of reference about the desired nature of public administration, and about the extent to which functional interorganisational trust and/or distrust are desirable assets for the public administration systems they manage.

> 3.5. **Second exploration: trust problems in the Flemish administration**

The second research question is a descriptive question ('what is the distribution of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration?'), therefore answering it goes beyond the ambition of this exploratory chapter. However, an exploration is necessary to focus our research on those interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration that may be characterised as 'trust problems'. Thus, the ambition of this second exploration is not to answer the second research question, but to focus our empirical research in the subsequent steps of our study on the most prevalent 'trust problems'. The actual question we answer in the second exploration is therefore: 'which interorganisational interactions in the Flemish public administration are particularly characterised as trust problems'?

Since many different interactions exist between Flemish administrative organisations, both within homogeneous policy areas (for instance between the policy-preparing department and the implementing agency) and between policy areas (for instance between the LNE department and the WVG department to prepare a new anti-pollution policy), we explored various interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration on the basis of an exploratory senior civil servant survey (n=45) and exploratory senior civil servant interviews (n=9), in order to identify the interorganisational interactions in which trust problems are most prevalent. It is important to note that this exploration is not a descriptive analysis, but an exploration intended to identify interorganisational interactions that might be considered and studied as 'trust problems' in the subsequent phases of our research. We therefore warn for extrapolation or speculation on the basis of the exploratory results we will present here.

> 3.5.1. *Trust problems in the Flemish administration: quantitative exploration*

In the COBRA survey, senior civil servants were requested to describe interorganisational trust in three particular interorganisational relationships in the Flemish public administration: the relationship between their organisation and their political principal, between their organisation and the horizontal coordinating departments of the Flemish administration, and between their organisation and other agencies in their policy area (this last relationship was only included in the survey sent to agencies, and not in the survey sent to departments). Respondents were asked to indicate their answers on five-point scales which ranged

from 'very limited level of trust' (1) to 'very high level of trust' (5). A Shapiro-Wilk test of normal distributions indicated that the data did not differ from a normal distribution, allowing the use of parametric tests for significant differences between answers patterns (Field, 2009).

Table 12: Trust in political principals, agencies in policy area, and horizontal departments

Measure	N	Mean	S.D.
Trust granted to political principal(s)	44	3,864	0,795
Trust granted to other agencies within the policy area	36	3,611	0,599
Trust granted to horizontal departments	44	2,909	0,858

Some noteworthy observations emerge from these data. On the one hand, the trust granted to political principals (cabinet and ministers) was consistently attributed the highest scores. On the other hand, senior civil servants reported the lowest scores regarding trust granted to 'horizontal coordinating departments'. T-tests suggested that trust in horizontal departments was significantly lower than trust in political principals and in other agencies in the policy field ($p<.01$), while trust in other agencies in the policy field was significantly lower than trust in political principals ($p<.05$). In other words, trust granted to horizontal departments was significantly lower than trust granted to other agencies in the policy area and trust granted to political principals. One-way analyses of variance suggest that no statistically significant differences existed between departments and agencies, or between departments, IVAZRP, IVARP and EVAPRP. No statistical differences were found for organisation size, policy area or respondent sex or years of experience.

The main conclusion of this brief exploration is that of the three tested interorganisational relations, interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments appear to be rather relevant trust problems in the Flemish administration.

> 3.5.2.   *Trust problems in the Flemish administration: qualitative exploration*

In our exploratory interviews, we asked respondents if they could think of interorganisational interaction experiences characterised by different extents of administrational trust and distrust. Respondents were therefore asked if they could give a specific example of an interorganisational interaction that was characterised by high trust and low distrust, high distrust and low trust, low trust and low distrust and both high trust and high distrust.

Figure 7, a simplified form of the quadrants model, was shown to the respondents as a guiding framework for this discussion.

The interviewed high-level civil servants were comfortable giving examples in each of these four quadrants. Of the 16 interaction examples given by the respondents in the interviews, 12 examples related to an interaction with at least one of the horizontal departments. Thus, the results of this qualitative exploration affirm that interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments constitute prevalent cases of 'trust problems', which further research phases could focus on in order to investigate the distribution and the mechanisms of administrational trust in the Flemish administration.

Figure 7: Exploring incidents of trust and distrust: framework

Trust high

I.   II.

Distrust   Distrust
low   high

III.   IV.
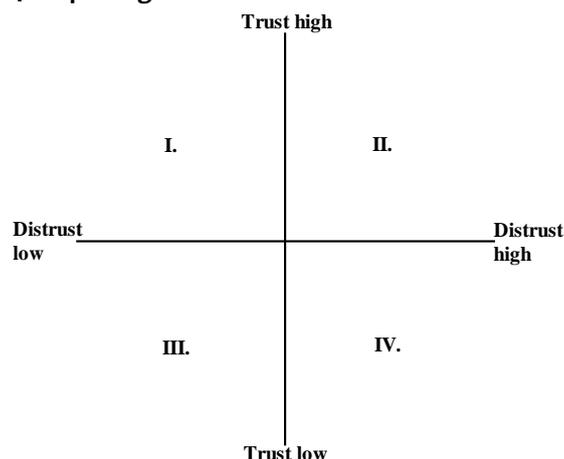
Trust low

The first quadrant groups examples the respondents characterised as high trust, low distrust. For these examples, respondents argued that they felt confident to accept vulnerability and did not suspect their counterpart to harm them. Different interactions with horizontal departments were used to exemplify this quadrant. For instance, the cross-sectorial collaborative project 'Ruimte voor Morgen' (Room for Tomorrow) was argued to be a good example of the gradual development of administrational trust between entities in different policy areas, who cooperated to plan the future of spatial planning in Flanders, involving all sectors of government activity (mobility, agriculture, environment, housing, health, education, leisure and sports,…) (see quote 3.12 in annex). Another example used to illustrate this quadrant was the 'modern HR' project, in which representatives of different organisational entities worked together on a modernisation of the Flemish administrations' HR-policy. However, although the respondent argued that administrational trust was high between the representatives of the administrative entities, many representatives were argued to distrust the representatives of the minister who was politically responsible for the project (see quote 3.13 in annex). It is important to note that the very same project was given as an example for quadrant IV by a different respondent, at a later point in time (infra). A third example in this quadrant was the establishment of a central, horizontally managed service for prevention and safety at work for employees of the Flemish administration.

The second quadrant groups interorganisational interaction examples which actors considered to be characterised as high trust, high distrust. Different reasons were considered for this seemingly paradoxical notion of high trust, high distrust. For instance, the respondents argued that they were willing to suspend vulnerability regarding some facets of the interorganisational interaction, but were suspicious about others facets. They also argued that in some interorganisational interactions, their organisation was represented by multiple boundary spanners, who make different subjective trust evaluations about the same interaction and under the same conditions. Another explanation for high trust, high distrust in interorganisational interactions was that boundary spanners, especially on the level of senior civil servants, must sometimes play simultaneous administrative and political roles on the basis of which they must unify common interorganisational objectives whilst separating competing interorganisational objectives. This

last point is exemplified in the following quote about an interorganisational interaction with the horizontal department of Finances and Budgeting, where the respondent was explaining that the department of Finances and Budgeting was generally perceived to be competent and benevolent, and was thus considered trustworthy, but that there was still a large extent of distrust when organisations were requested to share organisational financial data in the ORAFIN Management Information System for financial information in the Flemish administration (see quote 3.14 in annex). Other examples included the VLIMPERS Management Information System for employee information, for which it was argued that the horizontal department in charge of administrating this system was considered to be competent on the one hand, but that the system was not used correctly, and created advantages for some entities over others. A third example regarded a project focused on reducing the bureaucratic hurdles and administrative burdens faced by investors who start up new projects, in which multiple administrations were involved, for instance to simplify environmental, spatial and commercial permit procedures. It was argued that although the various administrative entities were willing to suspend their vulnerability towards each other to make the project a success, they also continued looking for ways to allow their own organisation and political minister to take the (political) credit, rather than sharing it with other partners, making the cooperating organisations willing to suspend vulnerability and wary about their partners' motivations at the same time.

The third quadrant groups interorganisational interactions which are characterised by low trust and low distrust. Here, the high-level civil servants referred explicitly to interorganisational interactions between 'vertical' entities on the one hand, which were argued to have a front-office client-based focus and diverging needs for back-office support, and 'horizontal' entities on the other hand, which were argued to have a back-office focus on 'one size fits all' structures and processes but little interest in specific service delivery to citizens. Various respondents argued that this caused mutual disinterest and alienation between vertical and horizontal entities, rather than distrust or trust as such. In three different interviews with high-level civil servants, this quadrant was illustrated with an example about management information exchange with horizontal departments in (automated) monitoring and reporting systems (see quote 3.15 in annex).

Finally, the fourth quadrant groups interorganisational interactions which were described as high distrust, low trust. Again, interorganisational relations between horizontal and vertical entities in the Flemish public administration were frequently used as examples for this quadrant. One particular example concerned a Management Information System, administrated by one of the horizontal departments, to collect organisational information from the various entities, consolidate this information in key performance indicators and management dashboards, and allow automatic reporting and benchmarking both within and outside of the Flemish administration. Several respondents argued that administrative entities were very wary toward the horizontal department regarding the information they were requested to share in this system, especially under a context of budgetary austerity, due to the fear that their information might be used against them in political decisions about budget and resource allocations (see quote 3.16 in annex).

In another example, a respondent argued that the interorganisational trust in the horizontal 'modern HR' reform project was strong in its initial phases, but had derailed completely into strong distrust when the political decision was made to 'speed up' the process by suspending the negotiations between the administrative entities and have the department of Public Governance (DBZ) implement the new HR-vision in a top-down fashion across the Flemish administration. The respondent argued that different actors, who were previously positive about the horizontal project, now considered it as a veiled attempt to reduce their budget, instead of an attempt to ameliorate the quality and efficiency of HR-policy in the Flemish administration (see quote 3.17 in annex).

> 3.5.3. *Discussion: horizontal departments of the Flemish administration*

The results of our second exploration point out that examples of interorganisational trust and distrust feature prominently in interactions between Flemish administrative entities and the departments of the three 'horizontal' policy areas. Thus, interorganisational interactions with the horizontal departments in the Flemish administration can be considered to be relevant and prevalent cases of 'trust problems' in the Flemish administration, which are suitable for further and more detailed study to uncover the mechanisms of administrational trust. We therefore discuss these three horizontal departments and their particular responsibilities in further detail in this paragraph.

It is important to note that the following discussion describes the horizontal departments in the Flemish administration at the time of our exploratory study (beginning of 2013), as well as during the third (beginning of 2014) and the fourth phases of our study (mid 2014 – early 2015). However, as the result of elections in May 2014, a new coalition Government was formed, which announced a number of reforms in its coalition agreement. Among these reforms, the policy areas DAR and BZ were integrated in a new single policy area KB (Chancellery and Administration). The departments of the two policy areas were also integrated in a new Department Chancellery and Administration (DKB). These reforms were implemented over the course of 2015. At the time of our exploratory research, none of these reforms had been implemented yet.

> 3.5.3.1. *The horizontal departments*

We have pointed out earlier that the Flemish administrations' thirteen departments are responsible for policy preparation, evaluation, monitoring and providing support to the policy implementation, which is the responsibility of the Flemish administrations' agencies. Of the thirteen departments in the Flemish administration, the departments of the three 'horizontal' policy areas DDAR (Department Services for General Government Policy), DBZ (Department of Administrative Affairs) and DFB (Department of Finances and Budgeting), are characterised by a distinct task nature. These departments are in charge of preparing, monitoring and evaluating policy regarding administration-wide matters (such as the HR – and financial policy of the Flemish administrative entities or government-wide projects). An important responsibility of these departments is the collection of organisational and policy-specific data from the various entities of the Flemish administration, and to analyse, present and disseminate this information in order to develop

evidence-based administration-wide policy for the Flemish administration (for instance, on the basis of key performance indicators about Human Resources, financial and budgetary information, and specific indicators in support of the development of general government policy in different fields). Furthermore, they play a central coordinating role in different thematic projects that cross-cut multiple policy areas. As these departments occupy a central position in the network of interorganisational interactions within the Flemish administration due to the horizontal nature of their tasks, most other Flemish government entities may be expected to engage regularly in interorganisational interactions with the three horizontal departments. In that respect, we argue that the interorganisational interactions with these horizontal departments are suitable cases for further examination of the distribution and the mechanisms of interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration.

> 3.5.3.2. *Department Services for General Government Policy (DDAR)*

The department Services for General Government Policy (DDAR) organises the Flemish communication policy and is responsible for the preparation, coordination, evaluation and monitoring of policy regarding general administration-wide policy, as well as the coordination of particular thematic affairs that intersect multiple policy areas. Examples of such 'transversal' affairs are sustainable development, equal opportunities, the public image of the administration, public administration reform, the particular case of Brussels and the Flemish periphery around Brussels, and operational support to the functioning of the Flemish Government. Whereas the DDAR prepares, coordinates, evaluates, monitors and supports the initiatives regarding existing transversal challenges, it also provides support in identifying and preparing for emerging government-wide challenges. For instance, in 2014 the DDAR coordinated an effort to consolidate the input of all entities in the Flemish administrations' contribution to the coalition agreement of the 2014- 2019 Flemish Government, which was being negotiated at the time (Vlaamse overheid, 2014a). Another example is its work regarding the coordination and follow-up of the strategic 'multiannual programme decisive government' (Meerjarenprogramma Slagkrachtige Overheid), in which thirtheen administration-wide key projects are proposed and connected to key performance indicators (Vlaamse overheid, 2011).

In that sense, DDAR also prepares, monitors, evaluates and supports the work of the executive agencies in the DAR policy area. The agency Research Service of the Flemish Government (Studiedienst van de Vlaamse Regering) provides policy-oriented research, indicators, data, and methodological know-how in support of the Flemish administration and the Flemish Government. The Agency for Geographical Information Flanders (Agentschap voor Geografische Informatie Vlaanderen) supports and organises the use and management of geographical data through training of organisations in the Flemish administration regarding Geographical Information Systems and through promotion and coordination of a common Geographical Information System infrastructure for the Flemish administration. The agency Audit Flanders (Audit Vlaanderen) evaluates the organisation-and process control of all departments, and public agencies (IVA and public EVA) in the Flemish administration (internal control) and the local administrations in

Flanders (external control), performs a range of different audits and makes proposals to improve the quality of the administrative services following such audits.

In addition to these responsibilities, the DDAR also aims to contribute to the image of a single, client-oriented, transparent and accessible administration through the initiation, stimulation and coordination of a high-quality communication policy and a professional and efficient information management policy. The department also entails the Flemish infoline (Vlaamse infolijn), which represents the most important access point to the Flemish administration (online or by telephone, email or chat) for citizens, enterprises or organisations regarding any questions about the Flemish administration or other administrations, and supports the integration of similar initiatives in other organisations in the Flemish administration (Vlaamse overheid, 2014b).

> 3.5.3.3. *Department of Finances and Budgeting (DFB)*

The department of Finances and Budgeting (DFB) is responsible for policy preparation, monitoring, evaluation and support regarding financial, budgetary and fiscal matters. The department coordinates and supports the preparation of the annual and multi-annual budget, it negotiates and provides support in the execution of the Flemish budget through budget agreements with the Flemish agencies and departments, and it is responsible for the complete and correct financial management of the Flemish administration, such as the coordination of accounting, debt relief, monitoring of the budgetary requirements, compiling relevant financial policy information and making it available when requested. The department manages the central financial system of the Flemish administration (ORAFIN) and checks the quality of the data encompassed in that system. It also provides support and advice to agencies and departments in other policy areas of the Flemish administration regarding financial management, financially complex projects, and monitors the accounting processes in the Flemish administration. The supporting role of DFB is further evidenced through its activities in the fields of developing applications for financial management and control and the provision of training and technical or functional support to the users of those applications in the Flemish administration (Vlaamse overheid 2014c).

As such, the DFB works in close conjunction with other entities in its policy area. The Flemish Tax Service (Vlaamse belastingsdienst), which organises the Flemish debt claims and the collection of the Flemish taxes and the fiscal control on the collection of those taxes. The Inspection of Finances (Inspectie van Financiën) provides advice during the preparation of the budget and financial or budgetary policy and the policy – and budget- evaluation.

> 3.5.3.4. *Department of Public Governance (DBZ)*

The department of Public Governance (DBZ) is responsible for the preparation, monitoring, evaluation and support concerning policy about service quality, governmental organisation, personnel and HR policy (including health and safety, diversity and integrity), public contracts and tenders, logistics, the administration's real estate, ICT and e-government. The DBZ develops policy- and management reporting

procedures and monitors management agreements ('managementovereenkomsten' or 'beheersovereenkomsten') between the departments or agencies and the Flemish Government. It prepares, monitors, evaluates and supports organisational development initiatives, HR-policies and the welfare of the Flemish administrations' employees. To these ends, the department focuses on building and maintaining information management systems, monitoring systems, data-warehouses and Management Information Systems that bring together essential information and make this information available to the departments and agencies of the Flemish administration, as well as to the general public in the interest of administrative transparency. The department also provides ICT support to the entities of the Flemish administration (Vlaamse overheid, 2014d).

Regarding these responsibilities, the DBZ works closely with the agencies in the policy area BZ. The Agency for Facility Management provides logistic and facility services to the departments and agencies across different policy areas in the Flemish administration. The Agency for Administrative Personnel provides support regarding personnel and organisation through the provision of advice, training and knowledge exchange regarding these themes. The Agency for Domestic Governance prepares regulation concerning local government and organises the necessary support activities.

> 3.5.4.   *Conclusion: trust problems explored in the Flemish administration*

The main question of this second exploration was 'which interorganisational interactions in the Flemish public administration may be characterised as trust problems?'. Our ambition was to identify certain interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration in which trust and distrust are experienced to be particularly prevalent, and may thus be investigated as 'trust problems' in the next phases of our study. We explored potential trust problems in various interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration on the basis of an exploratory senior civil servant survey (n=45) and exploratory senior civil servant interviews (n=9). Our exploratory survey leads us to conclude that interorganisational relations with horizontal departments are characterised by relatively lower mean scores and a higher variance in trust. Our exploratory interviews affirm the assertion that interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments constitute interesting cases of 'trust problems' in the Flemish public administration through numerous examples. Therefore, we have discussed these horizontal departments in further detail, and suggest focusing specifically on interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the following research phases.

> 3.6.   **Third exploration: dimensions and reasons of administrational trust**

Finally, we explore the third, explanatory research question ('which mechanisms explain interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration?'). As explanatory research questions require an explanatory research design, providing a definite answer to the third research question goes far beyond the ambitions of this exploratory chapter. The far more modest ambition of this third exploration is to explore the dimensions of the trust process and the interaction-specific reasons argued to affect this trust process, on the basis of preliminary operationalisations of measures and methods, in order to become

more acquainted with the empirical reality of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration. On the basis of the findings in this third exploration, more sophisticated theoretical and methodological frameworks will be developed in chapters four and five of this dissertation, which will allow us to answer the third research question at a later stage.

We will explore the dimensions of administrational trust on the basis of quantitative data gathered in the COBRA survey. We explore which interaction aspects are argued to affect interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration on the basis of qualitative interviews with senior civil servants.

> 3.6.1.   ***Exploring the dimensions of administrational trust: quantitative exploration***

In the conceptual chapter of this dissertation, we have argued that perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour can be considered as three dimensions of a universal trust process in interorganisational interactions. In this section, we explore these three dimensions on the basis of quantitative data gathered in the COBRA-survey. Senior civil servants of the Flemish departments were requested to assess these three dimensions regarding interorganisational relations with the biggest agencies of their policy area, while senior civil servants of the Flemish agencies were asked to assess these three dimensions for interorganisational relations with the department of their policy area. Analysis of the survey data was conducted using StataMP statistical analysis software.

The survey items used for this exploration are included in the annex of this dissertation. Respondents were asked to assess these dimensions through items on a five-point scale, which ranged from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree'. Perceived trustworthiness was assessed through one direct item (TW6) and five indirect items (TW1-TW4). The direct item asks the straightforward question whether respondents consider their counterpart to be a trustworthy actor. The indirect items for perceived trustworthiness are based on the index proposed by Mayer and Davis (1999), which McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) described as an example of a well-developed instrument with high validity. However, due to concerns about survey parsimony, a verbatim replication of Mayer and Davis' (1999) instrument was not considered to be appropriate in the COBRA survey, and we only adopted a limited selection of the items proposed by Mayer and Davis (1999), with items covering the ability, benevolence and integrity dimensions of perceived trustworthiness. The Cronbach's alpha value of these five items is 0.838, which suggests good internal consistency (George and Mallery, 2003; Kline, 2000; Devellis, 2012; Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black, 1998). The willingness to suspend vulnerability is addressed with one single item, which closely resembles items suggested by authors such as Currall and Judge (1995) and Cummings and Bromily (1996). Although this single-item assessment of the willingness to suspend vulnerability is relatively simple and straightforward, we consider it to present an effective exploratory probe into this central dimension of the trust process. Risk-taking behaviour was operationalised as information exchange with the counterpart. Information exchange was selected as the operationalisation of a particular 'trust problem' on the basis of preliminary discussions with officials in the Flemish administration. Furthermore, information exchange was also used as an indicator of the behavioural dimension of interorganisational trust in private sector

research by Beccerra and Gupta (2003). Although we note that information exchange behaviour is only one among many possible behavioural manifestations of administrational trust, we consider it to have sufficient face validity to be a pragmatic and relevant indicator for risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions. Finally, we also included a direct question that asked to which extent respondents would agree that their organisations had a high level of trust in their respective counterparts. Taken together, these eight items have a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.861, which indicates high internal consistency and suggests that these items can be considered to measure a single construct, which we argue to be interorganisational trust (George and Mallery, 2003; Kline, 2000; Devellis, 2012; Hair et al., 1998). We therefore consider them appropriate for this exploratory analysis. Since three variables were not normally distributed according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (perceived ability, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and information exchange behaviour all differed from a normal distribution with $p<.1$), nonparametric approaches are used to analyse respondents' answers regarding the dimensions of the subjective trust process, as these are more flexible in their requirements concerning the normal distribution of variables in intergroup comparison (Field, 2009).

Table 13: Dimensions of interorganisational trust in departments and agencies

Measure	Obs	Mean	S.D.
Trust is high (direct measure)	45	3,244	0,957
Trustworthiness (index)	45	3,556	0,689
• TW 1 Ability	45	4,000	0,769
• TW 2 Integrity a	45	3,444	0,967
• TW 3 Benevolence	45	3,356	0,883
• TW 4 Integrity b	45	3,333	0,826
• TW 5 Is trustworthy	45	3,644	0,957
Willingness to suspend vulnerability	45	2,511	1,199
Risk-taking behaviour	45	4,356	0,712

Table 13 presents the senior civil servants' answers regarding the surveyed items. On average, senior civil servants tend to agree with the statement that trust of their organisation in the counterpart is high. The index of perceived trustworthiness shows that on average, senior civil servants also tend to agree that the counterpart is trustworthy. In particular, they agreed most with the statement that the counterpart has enough knowledge and resources to perform their task well (TW1 ability). However, on average senior civil servants neither agree nor disagree with the item measuring the willingness to suspend vulnerability in interactions with the counterpart. Risk-taking behaviour on the other hand, received a relatively high average score. Thus, senior civil servants appear only moderately willing to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions, but do report to share a high extent of information with their counterparts. This is a surprising observation, considering our discussion of a 'universal trust process' in the previous chapter, on the basis of which one would expect that perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, are positively related to each other. Table 14 presents both parametric Pearson correlations and non-parametric Spearman rank correlations, and shows that the expected positive relations do not occur between all three dimensions. Only perceived trustworthiness is significantly and positively related to the willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational relations, as indeed specified by the 'universal trust process', which suggests that senior civil servants who

consider their counterparts to be more trustworthy are empirically more willing to take a 'leap of faith' in interorganisational interactions with their counterpart. However, we found no significant relationship between these measures of the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, although a positive relationship is implied in the 'universal trust process'.

Table 14: Partial correlations between dimensions of the trust process

	1.	2.	3.
1. Trustworthiness (index)	1	0,5615***	0,045 ns
2. Willingness to suspend vulnerability	0,5925***	1	0,0652 ns
3. Risk-taking behaviour	0,0221 ns	0,1018 ns	1

* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

Pearson correlation coefficients below diagonal; non-parametric Spearman correlation coefficient above diagonal

Even though it would be premature to argue that these exploratory observations disprove the universal model of the trust process, these findings do highlight the necessity to treat this model not as a conceptual framework, but as a theoretical model that remains to be tested in the empirical context of public administration, using more advanced methods. On the one hand, this requires us to develop and assess a set of hypotheses regarding the internal dynamics of the 'universal trust process', as it is possible that the model does not apply in the context of public administration (which would mean that it is not universal). For instance, one could argue that 'organisational risk-taking behaviour' is not a consequence of individuals' willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions in public administration. Rather, risk-taking behaviour in public administration may be more accurately predicted by other factors, such as obligations and hierarchical instructions to share information with other organisations, or information-sharing regulations and procedures. On the other hand, this requires us to develop more appropriate measures, as it is also possible that the expected correlations are not observed because the exploratory measures are too crude and lack internal validity. This is likely the case. For instance, risk-taking behaviour certainly comprises more activities than only the exchange of information, and information exchange comprises more than only a decision of whether or not to exchange information. Information may be exchanged between organisations voluntarily or only after formal insistence or obligation. Information may be exchanged openly and honestly, or it may be carefully framed and formulated to guide decision-makers in their interpretation. Information may be exchanged in full extent, or some (sensitive) pieces may be withheld from the exchange between organisations. Some information may be exchanged to greater extent (for instance, information on successful projects), while other information is closely guarded (for instance, information about failed projects). A single item that only gauges whether or not information is exchanged does not capture this variety of risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational information exchange, and can thus be argued to have limited internal validity as an indicator of risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions. This problem can be alleviated by developing more sophisticated measures that capture a larger extent of the possible variance, for instance by employing multi-item scales for each dimension of the trust process.

Finally, we have analysed whether differences in answers patterns were related to two organisation-level controls (organisation size and organisational type) and two individual-level controls (respondent sex and seniority in their organisation). No differences were found between respondents from organisations with different sizes or between respondents with various extents of seniority in their organisation. However, we did find differences between respondents from different organisational types and between the two sexes. First, male respondents were significantly more positive regarding the direct trust question ($p<.05$) and regarding the trustworthiness index measure ($p<.1$) than female respondents (more specifically, within the trustworthiness index, men were more positive regarding the TW5 ($p<.05$) item). Second, we found significant differences between senior civil servants in different organisational types. Table 15 summarises the results of Kruskal-Wallis and Wilcoxon rank-sum tests[12] for the four organisational types. The Kruskal-Wallis tests reveal significant differences between respondents from the four organisational types for the items measuring direct trust, benevolence (TW3), and the willingness to suspend vulnerability. Follow-up pairwise Wilcoxon rank-sum tests specify how the organisational types compared specifically. IVARP were more negative regarding the direct trust question than departments ($p<.05$) and IVAZRP ($p<.05$). IVARP were also more negative about the benevolence of their counterparts than departments ($p<.1$), EVAPRP ($p<.05$) and IVAZRP ($P<.01$). For the willingness to suspend vulnerability, we found differences between departments and EVAPRP ($p<.05$), departments and IVARP ($p<.05$), EVAPRP and IVAZRP ($p<.05$) and between IVAZRP and IVARP ($p<.1$). Specifically, respondents in EVAPRP and IVARP were more negative about their willingness to suspend vulnerability than respondents in departments and IVAZRP. These findings seem to suggest a negative relationship between the extent of an organisational entities' formal autonomy and various indications of the interorganisational trust.

This section of our exploration thus highlights the necessity to treat the universal trust process as a theoretical model that is to be tested in the empirical context of public administration albeit through more advanced methods, and with particular attention for respondent sex and formal autonomy as important control variables. The implications of these lessons for our further research will be discussed in the theoretical and methodological chapters of this dissertation.

lxvi————————————

[12]   The Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric test for significant differences between groups. It assigns ranks to the answers, adds up the ranks for each group and divides the result by the number of observations in the group. It then calculates a test statistic H with a chi-square distribution and n-1 degrees of freedom where n represents the number of groups that are compared (Field 2009). The Wilcoxon Rank-Sum test relies on a similar principle, but is used to calculate pairwise differences between two groups with a test statistic W on the basis of which z-scores are calculated. We used test statistics for tied ranks for both tests because the 5-point interval scale we used to measure the different variables is expected to result in many tied answers (e.g. we expect that many observations have the same rank value) (Field, 2009).

Table 15: Kruskal-Wallis/Wilcoxon comparison of trust dimensions by organisational types

Items		Kruskal-Wallis test of group differences		Pairwise Wilcoxon rank-sum test (cells contain significant differences between groups)			
	df	H	P	Dep (a)	IVARP (b)	IVAZRP (c)	EVAPRP (d)
Direct trust	3	6.742	0.0806*	b (P=0.0367)**	a (P=0.0367)** c (P=0.0460)**	b (P=0.0460)**	/
Trustworthiness (index)	3	5.271	0.1530 (ns)	/	/	/	/
• Ability	3	4.262	0.2346 (ns)	/	/	/	/
• Integrity a	3	3.488	0.3223 (ns)	/	/	/	/
• Benevolence	3	9.562	0.0227**	b (P=0.0810)*	a (P=0.0810)* c (P=0.0023)*** d (P=0.0193)**	b (P=0.0023)***	b (P=0.0193)**
• Integrity b	3	4.446	0.2153 (ns)	/	/	/	/
• Is trustworthy	3	3.029	0.3871 (ns)	/	/	/	/
Willingness to suspend vulnerability	3	9.292	0.0257**	b (P=0.0328)** d (P=0.0151)**	a P=0.0328)** d (P=0.0384)** c (P=(0.0730)*	b (P=(0.0730)*	a (P=0.0151)** b (P=0.0384)**
Risk-taking behaviour	3	0.450	0.9298 (ns)	/	/	/	/

*= p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

> 3.6.2. *Exploring interaction aspects as 'reasons' of administrational trust*

The final part of our exploration focuses on the 'interaction-specific reasons on the macro, meso and micro-level of interorganisational interactions that are considered to affect administrational trust. This part of our exploration is based on the exploratory qualitative interviews with high-level civil servants. After asking the respondents to describe particular incidents of administrational trust and distrust in one of the four quadrants discussed in the second exploration (supra), the respondents were requested to elaborate upon the reasons of the interorganisational trust or distrust in the interaction they had just described. The responses were coded according the macro-, meso- micro framework described in the previous chapter. The objective of this section is therefore to establish an exploratory inventory of specific interaction aspects considered to affect administrational trust in various interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration. It is important to note however, that the exploratory interviews did not distinguish between the three dimensions of the trust process, and therefore do not allow us to investigate how certain interaction aspects are argued to affect certain dimensions of the trust process.

We will first discuss the macro-level interaction aspects, in which the respondents mainly discussed institutional rules, institutionally defined role distributions, institutional routines, and informal normative pressure. Second, we discuss the meso-level calculative and relational interaction aspects. Finally, we will discuss the micro-level interaction aspects.

Macro-level interaction aspects

Institutional rules

Respondents argued that institutional rules and structures can establish and support both administrational trust and distrust. Clear and consistent rules that delineate the starting point, the modus operandus (including the administrative and political management of interorganisational cooperation) and the end point of the interorganisational cooperative arena, were argued to support administrational trust (see quote 3.18 in annex), by acting as enablers rather than enforcers of interorganisational interactions. While rules can be used to 'push' organisations to cooperate on the one hand, respondents stressed that interorganisational trust benefits mainly when rules allow or support voluntary cooperative actions. Therefore, the administrative governance framework for interorganisational cooperation needs to be clear and consistent to delineate cooperative arenas in which interorganisational trust can develop on the one hand, but the framework needs to be flexible to allow voluntary cooperation on the other hand. The trust-supporting role of formal rules can therefore be argued to reside mainly in enabling platforms for voluntary cooperation, rather than in imposing interorganisational cooperation (see quote 3.19 in annex).

Examples of high administrational distrust were argued to be characterised by ambiguous regulatory frameworks. Ambiguous arrangements for interorganisational cooperation were argued to allow 'fear' that other organisations could interpret arrangements, concepts or definitions in an opportunistic way (see quote 3.20 in annex). Furthermore, some New Public Management-inspired regulatory innovations might have institutionalised interorganisational distrust in public administration in their attempt to strengthen the transparency and accountability of public administration (Gregory 2003; Van de Walle 2011). For instance, one of our respondents argued that some organisational entities were unwilling to exchange information with other entities out of a fear that such information might be 'picked up' by journalists or citizens, who can demand access to administrative information under Flemish transparency regulations (see quote 3.21 in annex).

In conclusion, trust-supporting rules need to be clear and consistent but flexible, and stimulate voluntary cooperation. Ambiguous institutional rules were argued to shape an institutional environment in which interorganisational distrust is enabled.

Institutional roles

Flemish high-level civil servants also considered institutional roles to be important reasons for either administrational trust or distrust. First, administrational trust was argued to be supported by the clear and transparent definition of organisational boundary roles (Aldrich and Herker, 1977), which can serve as proxies for knowledge about unfamiliar actors (Kramer, 1999) (see quote 3.22 in annex). Second, interorganisational trust was argued to be supported by boundary role competency frameworks which emphasise the importance of interorganisational cooperation, and guide the selection, promotion and evaluation of the civil servants taking up such boundary roles. This element was brought forward in several

interviews, in which respondents argued that current selection, promotion and evaluation frameworks do not take competences related to cooperation and boundary spanning into account (see quote 3.23 in annex). Third, organisational boundary spanners must be able to make credible commitments on behalf of the organisations they represent in interactions. Such credible commitments require on the one hand, that boundary spanners are firmly anchored in their own organisations. On the other hand, the ability to make credible commitments requires that boundary spanners have clear, stable and transparent mandates to act on behalf of their organisations in interorganisational interactions (Dasgupta, 1988). Scholars such as Williamson (1993) and Ring and Van de Ven (1994) argue that such mandates are 'sine qua non' conditions for successful interorganisational transactions (see quote 3.24 in annex).

Interorganisational distrust was argued to be enabled by ambiguously defined (boundary) roles which allow overlap between unclear task divisions. In such ambiguous institutional environments, boundary spanners argued that there were greater opportunities for opportunistic behaviour by other stakeholders, due to which mutual suspicion could arise and from which distrust might consequently sprout (see quote 3.25 in annex). However, respondents noted that in such ambiguous institutional environments, much depended on the personalities and interpersonal dynamics between boundary spanners, and emphasised that the effects of institutional roles on administrational trust should be therefore be analysed in the context of specific interactions.

In conclusion, administrational trust is argued to be supported by clearly defined boundary roles, which attribute clear mandates to make credible commitments to boundary spanners and which establish cooperation-focused competency frameworks for the selection, promotion and evaluation of the boundary spanning civil servants.

Institutional routines

Although little mention was made of institutional routines, respondents did refer to seemingly self-evident and relatively stable group orientations of interorganisational trust and distrust (see quote 3.26 in annex). Also, respondents mentioned the socialising impact of organisational 'social facts' that exert pressure on individuals to conform to routines of interorganisational trust (see quote 3.27 in annex).

Institutional norms

In our interviews, high-level civil servants argued that senior administrative officials exert normative pressures for either administrational trust or distrust upon boundary spanners and other civil servants. It is important to see that the normative frameworks perceived by boundary spanners are not necessarily the same as the actual normative preferences of these administrative leaders. It is therefore important to have attention for actor's interpretation of normative signals sent by salient normative referents (see quote 3.28 in annex). Furthermore, the respondents also argued that the trust between incumbent political actors, such as between ministers or their cabinets, could 'radiate down' on the administration, and could even be

replicated in administrative interorganisational behaviour and in the formal structures encompassing such behaviour (see quote 3.29 in annex).

> 3.6.2.2. *Meso-level: calculative and relational interaction aspects*

Calculative interaction aspects

In the previous chapter, we have specified that calculative reasons for trust and distrust relate to a utilitarian cost-benefit consideration on the basis of asymmetric information that is available to the trustor. When such a cost-benefit analysis results in the attribution of positive value to interorganisational trust, trust is expected to develop in the interaction (Rousseau et al. 1998), while a negative outcome results in distrust. Such calculative considerations were clearly present in respondents' explanations of administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration (see quote 3.30 in annex). Information about the counterpart and about potential benefits to interorganisational cooperation was considered to be crucial for calculus-based trust. One of the respondents argued that the Flemish administration did not spend sufficient attention on the dissemination of such information about potential benefits of interorganisational cooperation and trust (see quote 3.32 in annex). One respondent also argued that the nature of organisational tasks may affect how costs and benefits are considered in interorganisational interactions. For example, it was argued that the nature of policy challenges had become increasingly 'horizontal' as a result of as Europeanisation, globalisation and pressures on public resources, which increased the perceived utility of interorganisational cooperation within and across policy areas in the Flemish administration (see quote 3.31 in annex).

However, calculative interaction aspects were also related to interorganisational distrust. As discussed in the first exploration, distrust was considered to be functional when respondents have reasons to suspect that their counterparts have interests in behaving opportunistically. Information about opportunistic interests and opportunistic behaviour plays a big role in Niskanen's theory of bureaucrats, who are seen as bureau maximisers who aim to defend their own monopolistic positions and break the monopolies of other administrative organisations (Niskanen, 1971). Opportunistic behaviour in the form of such bureau-maximisation was also argued to exist in the Flemish administration (see quotes 3.33 and 3.34 in annex), and to imply clear costs to interorganisational trust and benefits to interorganisational distrust. A second element in calculative sources of distrust was the extent of perceived risk in interorganisational interactions. Budgetary austerity in particular was considered to create pressures for interorganisational cooperation on the one hand, while generating competition between administrative organisations trying to protect their competitive advantages on the other hand. One of the respondents argued that this high-risk competitive environment stimulated interorganisational distrust, and placed a serious strain on government-wide reform projects that require interorganisational collaboration and open exchange of best practices and ideas (see quote 3.35 in annex). Finally, rumours were discussed as an important source of 'credible' information about a counterpart and about the potential costs and benefits of cooperation (see quote 3.36 in annex).

In conclusion, administrational trust was argued to be supported by perceived low costs and high benefits to cooperation, by absence of information about opportunistic motivations of counterparts, by a low extent of perceived risk in the interaction, and by the particular organisational utility considerations of trustors in interorganisational interactions.

<u>Relational interaction aspects</u>

Relational reasons find their essence in repeated interactions between organisational boundary spanners, and foster the development of positive or negative relational familiarity, emotional attachments, and value identification. The high-level civil servants we interviewed emphasised that administrational trust and distrust were constituted mainly through boundary spanners' experiences in repeated interactions. One of our respondents emphasised that "*organisations can hardly trust each other. Trust plays between persons*" (see quote 3.37 in annex).

Interorganisational trust was argued to be supported by frequent iterations of positive experiences within specific interactions, giving rise to positive relational familiarity in one particular interaction, which was even argued to spill over into other interactions within a certain interorganisational relationship (see quote 3.38 in annex). However, the same logic was argued to apply to the emergence of interorganisational distrust. Through the repeated iteration of boundary spanners' negative experiences in interorganisational interactions, negative historical familiarity emerges between boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions, which may spill over from specific interactions to general relationships between actors (see quote 3.39 in annex). Relational interaction aspects were argued to affect administrational trust and distrust in two ways. On the one hand, positive or negative previous experiences between boundary spanners were argued to affect organisational trust and distrust in particular interorganisational interactions between the particular boundary spanners who act on behalf of their respective organisations. On the other hand, it was argued that the positive or negative historical familiarity between boundary spanners also affects organisational trust or distrust beyond the relationship between those particular individuals (in particular when the boundary spanners are also senior civil servants) as their relational experiences can, over time, become institutionalised in routines, expressed norms and organisational myths, which exert socialising pressures on other organisational boundary spanners (see quote 3.40 in annex). Finally, one of our respondents argued that interorganisational distrust can grow from value conflict, which was considered unavoidable in the Flemish administration since most senior civil servants are appointed by political parties and thus have a certain ideological profile (see quote 3.41 in annex).

In conclusion, administrational trust was argued to be affected by interpersonal relational experiences, historical familiarity and value identification between boundary spanners, both through direct relational experiences between actors and through institutionalisation and socialisation, thus affecting macro-level informal reasons of administrational trust.

> 3.6.2.3. *Micro-level: individual interaction aspects*

On the level of individual characteristics, the high-level civil servants we have interviewed emphasised on multiple occasions that individual predispositions of boundary spanners are very important factors for interorganisational trust, and that some boundary spanners are simply considered to be more or less trusting of others by their very nature (see quote 3.42 in annex). In particular, the respondents argued that senior civil servants' micro-level predispositions were especially consequential for interorganisational trust and distrust, as they not only directly affect organisational trust and distrust by representing their organisations as boundary spanners, but their normative attitudes are also likely to influence other boundary spanners in the organisations they lead (c.f. our discussion about macro-level informal interaction aspects). As such, the personality of some senior civil servants was argued to be one of the major determinants of interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish public administration, and to set in motion virtuous cycles of interorganisational trust or vicious cycles of interorganisational distrust (see quote 3.44 in annex).

> 3.6.3. *Discussion: dimensions and reasons of administrational trust explored*

In this third exploration, we have explored the dimensions of the universal trust process, as well as the macro-, meso- and micro-level interaction aspects that were considered to be reasons for the existence of administrational trust or distrust in various interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration. While we did not examine how these aspects and these dimensions relate to each other, we did clear the way for the formulation of hypotheses regarding these relationships in the next chapter.

First, we explored the dimensions of the universal trust process in interorganisational interactions between agencies and departments in the Flemish administration on the basis of the COBRA survey. An analysis of correlations between these three dimensions revealed that only perceived trustworthiness was significantly and positively related to the willingness to suspend vulnerability, but no significant relationship was found between our measure for the willingness to suspend vulnerability and our measure for risk-taking behaviour, which would be expected on the basis of the universal trust model. This exploration emphasises the necessity to treat the universal trust model as a theoretical model that remains to be tested in the empirical context of public administration, albeit through more advanced and sophisticated methods. Also, it suggests that respondent sex and formal autonomy are relevant aspects to control for in quantitative explanatory models of interorganisational trust.

Second, we explored 'reasons' for administrational trust and distrust on the macro-, meso- and micro-level of interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration on the basis of qualitative interviews. Formal institutional aspects, informal institutional aspects, calculative interaction aspects, relational interaction aspects and individual personality aspects were argued to affect interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration. The conceptual framework that we developed in the previous chapter therefore seems an appropriate guide for development of specific hypotheses regarding the

relationship between these interaction aspects and the universal trust process, and to analyse these relationships empirically in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

We note that this exploration did not have the ambition to formulate a definitive answer to the explanatory research question, but merely sought to provide input for the theoretical and methodological frameworks that will enable us to do so. First, our exploration of the dimensions of the universal trust process in interorganisational interactions between Flemish departments and agencies emphasises the necessity for more advanced and sophisticated measures and methodologies to test the universal trust process as a theoretical model for interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration. Second, the diffuse and relatively superficial operationalisation of interorganisational interactions we have employed in our exploration allowed us to examine reasons for administrational trust in a wide variety of 'trust problems', but limited the possibility to compare different perspectives about a single trust problem, thus restricting the cross-validation between respondents we would require for a detailed, comprehensive and robust analysis of mechanisms of administrational trust in the Flemish administration. Therefore, our exploration highlights that more specific operationalisations of interorganisational interactions are required to gain deeper understanding of the mechanisms of administrational trust. Third, our exploration highlights that respondents do not explicitly distinguish 'reasons' for administrational trust from 'reasons' for administrational distrust. An interesting question for further explanatory research is therefore whether trusted and distrusted interactions are explained by similar, or different mechanisms. Finally, some interaction aspects discussed here have been argued to be possibly interdependent. Managerial strategies targeting a particular interaction aspect should therefore always take stock of potential side effects on other interaction aspects, which affect particular dimensions in boundary spanners' trust process.

> 3.7. **Chapter conclusion: lessons from three explorations of administrational trust and distrust in Flemish public administration**

In this chapter we have explored administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration on the basis of data from the 2013 COBRA survey and nine exploratory interviews. The objective of this exploratory chapter was two-fold: first, we sought to answer the first, exploratory research question. Second, we sought to familiarise ourselves with the empirical reality of the Flemish administration in order to develop adequate theoretical and methodological frameworks for research questions two and three in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

In the first exploration, we sought to answer the exploratory research question 'What are the roles of administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration?'. Three main conclusions can be drawn in this respect. Our first conclusion is that administrational trust and distrust can be both functional and dysfunctional because they can both have positive and negative consequences for public administration systems. Trust is considered to be functional because it allows efficient and effective cooperation, open communication and flexibility. Distrust is considered functional because it allows predictable costs, critical perspectives and the identification of conflicting objectives. Trust is considered dysfunctional because it

leads to unpredictable costs, groupthink and possible comparative short-term disadvantages in high-risk contexts. Finally, distrust is considered to be dysfunctional in interorganisational interactions because it produces high opportunity and transaction costs, long-term relational deterioration, and can lead to compartmentalisation and lack of cooperation in public administration. Our second conclusion is that the role of administrational trust and distrust is dependent on how trust and distrust are 'used' in interorganisational interactions. Trust is considered to be functional when it is a basic attitude in interactions -trust as 'rule'- while distrust is considered to be functional when it is a reflexive attitude -distrust as a 'reasonable exception'-. On the other hand, trust is seen to be dysfunctional when it is absolute and uncritical -trust as 'dogma'- and distrust is seen as dysfunctional when it is the basic attitude in interactions -distrust as 'rule' -. Our third conclusion is that the role of administrational trust and distrust depends also on the context of interorganisational interactions in public administration. While interorganisational trust was argued to be functional in contingent environments, even in the absence of specific 'reasons' to trust in the interorganisational interaction, distrust was argued to be functional in such environments only when specific reasons to distrust were present in the interorganisational interaction. In other words, functional trust requires only the absence of objective reasons to distrust, while functional distrust requires the presence of objective reasons to distrust. The conclusions lead us to argue that administrational trust should not be treated as an 'applause concept', as both administrational trust and distrust can be functional or dysfunctional, depending on how and under which contexts they are used. The choice regarding what *ought* to be the distribution of administrational trust and distrust in public administration is therefore in part normative, and thus the area of autonomous moral decision-making faculties.

Our second exploration prospected the descriptive research question 'what is the distribution of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration?' with the ambition to focus our empirical research on the most prevalent 'trust problems' in the subsequent steps of our study. The actual question we answered in the second exploration was therefore reformulated as 'which interorganisational interactions in the Flemish public administration are particularly characterised as trust problems'? The question was explored on the basis the of COBRA survey and exploratory senior civil servant interviews. The survey led us to conclude that 'interorganisational trust in horizontal departments' was significantly lower than both 'interorganisational trust in other agencies of the same policy area' and 'interorganisational trust in political principals'. The exploratory interviews affirmed that relations with horizontal departments constitute relevant cases of 'trust problems' for the further steps of our research.

The third exploration sought to prospect the explanatory research question 'which mechanisms explain interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration?', with the ambition to become more acquainted with the empirical reality of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration, so that more sophisticated theoretical and methodological frameworks may be developed to empirically investigate and answer the third research question in subsequent chapters of this dissertation. To this aim, we first

explored the three dimensions of the trust process in interorganisational interactions between departments and agencies of the Flemish administration on the basis the COBRA survey, and secondly explored which interaction aspects were considered to be 'reasons' for administrational trust and distrust in various interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration on the basis of exploratory senior civil servant interviews. First, our exploration of the dimensions of the trust process pointed out that the answer patterns varied significantly between respondents in different organisational types and between respondents of different sexes. Rather unexpectedly, the exploration did not support the universal trust model. Although rejecting the universal trust model on the basis of these exploratory findings and crude measures would be premature, our exploration does emphasise the necessity to treat the universal trust model as a theoretical model that remains to be tested in the empirical context of public administration, albeit through more advanced and sophisticated methods. Second, we explored which macro-, meso- and micro-level interaction aspects were considered as 'reasons' for administrational trust and distrust in various interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration. Formal institutional aspects, informal institutional aspects, calculative interaction aspects, relational interaction aspects and individual personality aspects were all argued to affect interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration. The conceptual framework we developed in the previous chapter therefore seems to be an appropriate guide for the development of specific hypotheses in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

As a final, but important note, we caution the reader not to over-interpret the exploratory findings. The findings presented in this chapter should not be interpreted as anything more than exploratory observations. This is especially important regarding the second and the third research questions, the nature of which goes beyond the scope of exploratory research. We outline a number of clear limitations, which limit the extrapolation of the findings beyond those of a purely exploratory study. First, the external validity of this exploration is limited. On the one hand, we have only focused on senior and high-level civil servants, which represent only a limited subgroup of boundary spanners in the Flemish administration. Although we argue that this limitation does not obstruct this chapter from reaching its exploratory objectives, the findings should therefore not be considered to be representative for all boundary spanners in the Flemish administration. On the other hand, while the COBRA survey is representative of senior civil servants in both departments and agencies, our exploratory interviews were only conducted with senior civil servants in Flemish departments and did not include senior civil servants of Flemish agencies. While this was deemed appropriate for our broad exploratory purposes, it limits the extent to which the findings can be generalised to senior civil servants in the Flemish administration. Further steps in our research require larger survey samples and need to incorporate a wider variety of boundary spanners in order to conduct analyses that are more robust and have a larger extent of explanatory power. A second limitation of this exploration is the internal validity of the measures used in the COBRA survey, particularly regarding the mechanisms of administrational trust. On the one hand, we have argued that our subsequent research

should favour multidimensional tried and tested measurement instruments regarding the dimensions of the universal trust process. On the other hand, our exploration pointed out that more specific operationalisations of interorganisational interactions are required to gain deeper understanding of the mechanisms of administrational trust. In sum, it is important to acknowledge that the findings presented in this chapter have to be regarded in light of its limited exploratory ambitions.

Nonetheless, we believe the results of our exploration are interesting and useful guides for the theoretical and methodological development of our further investigation regarding research questions two and three. In the two remaining chapters of this section, we will develop the theoretical and methodological frameworks by which these questions will be approached.

4. Conjecturing administrational trust: A theoretical framework

> 4.1.   **Introduction: a theoretical framework for administrational trust**

As we have ended the previous chapter by noting that the second and the third research question go beyond the scope of exploratory research, we focus our attention in the current chapter on the construction of a theoretical framework for these questions. This effort is built upon the insights gathered in our exploratory investigation and on additional literature, and aims to develop a set of coherent hypotheses on the basis of which to approach these two remaining research questions.

In this chapter, we first discuss our theoretical expectations regarding research question two under proposition A. Considering that research question two is descriptive and thus does not formally require hypothesis-development, we will discuss proposition A relatively briefly. The chapter focuses mainly on the development of hypotheses for the explanatory research question, which requires the examination of theoretical propositions regarding the internal dynamics of the interorganisational trust process on the one hand (propositions B and C), and theoretical discussion related to trust-supporting macro-meso and micro-level interaction aspects on the other hand (propositions D and E). For each of these theoretical propositions, we will develop a set of hypotheses to test the proposition in the empirical reality of the Flemish administration. We conclude this chapter with an overview of the developed hypotheses.

> 4.2.   **A theoretical framework for the distribution of administrational trust**

In the conceptual chapter of this dissertation, we have discussed three conceptual perspectives regarding the distribution of administrational trust and distrust. The first perspective was the 'trade-off' perspective, in which an individuals' trust and distrust are presented as one bipolar construct. The second perspective was the 'quadrant' perspective, which proposes that trust and distrust are conceptually distinct, but linked relational phenomena, and that ambivalence in the attitude of an individual (such as high trust, high distrust or low trust, low distrust) has been severely underestimated in complex interorganisational interactions. Third, we discussed a 'truncated quadrants' perspective, which is based on an empirical application of the 'quadrant' perspective as a Weberian ideal-type model which found that individuals' trust and distrust are negatively related, but low trust, low distrust and high trust, high distrust may occur 'to some extent'. On the basis of our conceptual discussion, we concluded that the debate remained open, and that neither the 'trade-off' perspective, nor the 'quadrants' perspective, nor a possible third 'truncated quandrants' perspective on trust and distrust in relationships have managed to fully convince trust researchers. We will therefore develop a hypothesis to test the most conservative of the three perspectives in the empirical reality of the Flemish administration.

Although the conceptual thought experiment of separate trust and distrust concepts has attracted trust researchers, empirical support for the hypothesis that they are separate constructs is relatively limited. In the construction of testable hypotheses, the principle of Ockham's razor states that among competing hypotheses, the hypothesis with the fewest assumptions should be selected. We therefore propose that a boundary spanners' administrational trust is the direct opposite of their distrust in a particular interaction, thus, that the relation between administrational trust and distrust is characterised by an absolute trade-off. Hypothesis HA1 follows from this central proposition, and proposes a (near-) perfect negative relationship between the measures for administrational trust and administrational distrust, when both are measured as distinct concepts.

Proposition A: Administrational trust and administrational distrust are opposites, rather than distinct constructs.

- **HA1**: When measured as two distinct concepts, the relationship between a boundary spanners' administrational trust and administrational distrust will be characterised by a (near-)perfect negative relationship.

> 4.3.   **A theoretical framework for the mechanisms of administrational trust**

In the conceptual chapter, we have argued that boundary spanners' subjective trust evaluations are the constitutive elements of interorganisational trust, and are affected by their perceptions about interaction-specific characteristics of the interorganisational interactions in which they are engaged, as well as by characteristics of boundary spanners' own personality. Thus, we have proposed that the 'mechanisms' of administrational trust and distrust can be deconstructed as the internal dynamics of the subjective trust process on the one hand, and the effect of interaction-specific aspects upon the trust process on the other hand. We will refer to the former as the 'internal dynamics of the trust process', and to the latter as 'interaction-specific reasons for the trust process'. Here, we will develop specific hypotheses regarding both of these elements. The presence of the three dimensions in boundary spanner's trust process is discussed under proposition B. The expected relations between these three dimensions are discussed under proposition C. The presence of macro-, meso- and micro- level interaction aspects in trusted and distrusted interactions is discussed under proposition D. Finally, the relationships between these interaction aspects and the trust process are discussed under proposition E.

- Internal dynamics of the trust process:
    - Proposition B: The dimensions of the trust process (perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability, and risk-taking behaviour) in trusted and distrusted interactions
    - Proposition C: The relations between the dimensions of the trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions
- Interaction-specific reasons for the trust process

- o Proposition D: The presence of macro- (formal and informal institutions), meso- (calculative and relational interaction motivations) and micro- (the boundary spanners' predispositions to trust others) level interaction aspects in trusted and distrusted interactions
- o Proposition E: The relations between these interaction aspects and the trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions

> 4.3.1. *Internal dynamics of the trust process: propositions B and C*

We have described the trust process as a multidimensional construct which is not only a "*psychological state based on perceptions and on perceived motives and intentions of others, but also a manifestation of behaviour towards these others*" (Costa, 2003: 600). The trust process was described as beginning with the trustors' perceptions of trustee trustworthiness (positive expectations), which positively affects the dimension of trustors' intentional willingness to suspend vulnerability ('the leap of faith'), which positively affects the dimension of trustors' risk-taking behaviour in the interaction, the experience of which then feeds back information to the trustor and updates their perceptions of the trustee's trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995; Dietz and den Hartog, 2006; McEvily et al., 2003; Dietz, 2011; Skinner et al., 2013; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012). Dietz (2011) has argued that this causal process represents a 'universal sequence', now well accepted in trust research, and which can be applied to all 'trust problems'.

> 4.3.1.1. *Proposition B: trust process dimensions in trusted and distrusted interactions*

Since we have proposed that distrust is the polar opposite of trust in proposition A, it logically follows that it can be studied through the same theoretical process, on the basis of which we expect that all three dimensions of the trust process are significantly stronger in highly trusted interactions than in highly distrusted interactions. This is also explicitly stated in Schoorman et al. 's (2007: 350) reflection about Mayer et al.'s (1995) seminal article, which grounded the 'universal' model described above: "*We do agree that you might trust your colleague to produce a literature review but may need to verify his/her ability to deliver in the classroom by reviewing his/her lecture notes and presentation. Our model says that you don't need different constructs to account for this*".

On the basis of this logic, we therefore propose that all three dimensions of the trust process will be found to differ significantly between trusted interorganisational interactions and distrusted interorganisational interactions. Hypotheses B1, B2 and B3 follow from this proposition, as shown below.

Proposition B: Trusted and distrusted interactions can be studied through the universal trust process, in which we expect that all three trust process dimensions will be significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.

- **HB1**: The perceived trustworthiness is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.
- **HB2**: The willingness to suspend vulnerability is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.
- **HB3**: Risk-taking behaviour is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.

> 4.3.1.2.   *Proposition C: trust process interdimensional dynamics in trusted and distrusted interactions*

The three dimensions of the trust process have been argued to be positively and causally related to each other. According to Dietz (2011: 215), the positive causal relation between perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability, and risk-taking behaviour is universal to all trust encounters: he argues that "*there is only one essential 'trust sequence', and this sequence is it*". McEvily and Tortoriello concluded their overview of trust measurements by stating that contributions to the cumulative evidence about the nature, causes, and consequences of interorganisational trust should "*recognise that trust is composed of different components and to explicitly incorporate the relationships among components into theoretical and empirical models of trust*" (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011: 40). Building upon the previous discussion and the previous propositions, in which it is argued that the trust process is governed by the same internal dynamics in trusted and in distrusted interactions, we postulate proposition C, in which we expect that the model of a causal sequence of perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and trusting behaviour will be equally valid for highly trusted interactions as for highly distrusted interactions.

Proposition C: There is a universal causal sequence of trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour which will apply to both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions.

- **HC1:** There is a positive direct relation between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions
- **HC2:** There is a positive direct relation between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions.
- **HC3:** There is a positive direct relation between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness when controlling for willingness to suspend vulnerability (feedback loop) in both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions.

We discuss our argumentation for this proposition and these hypotheses below. While ample theoretical arguments have been made in support of this causal chain between perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability and behavioural expressions of trust, McEvily and Tortoriello (2011: 40) argue that only few studies have actually attempted to empirically validate the entire causal chain. Parts of the causal chain have been investigated, for instance in empirical research by Mayer et al. (1995) and Mayer and Davis (1999), which suggests that perceptions about trustworthiness lead to decisions regarding the willingness to be vulnerable, which in turn translate into a variety of trusting behaviours. Dirks and Ferrin (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of 93 articles examining antecedents and consequences of trust, but did not follow the conceptualisations suggested by Mayer et al.'s (1995) model and treated 'trust' as an amalgam of willingness to suspend vulnerability, ability, benevolence, and integrity, making it difficult to assert the validity of the 'universal trust process' on the basis of their analysis. In addition, their review only focused on employees' trust in their leaders. Colquit et al. (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of 132 independent samples about trust in both leaders and co-workers, and did so within the framework of the 'universal trust model'

Relationship between perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability

Perceived trustworthiness, or positive expectations about the counterpart's ability, integrity and benevolence (Mayer et al., 1995), is argued to affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability as trust is presented as a cognitive process in which *"we cognitively choose whom we will trust in which respects and under which circumstances, and we base the choice on what we take to be "good reasons," constituting evidence of trustworthiness"* (Lewis and Weigert, 1985: 970). Colquit et al. (2007) argue that perceived ability captures the 'can do' aspect of perceived trustworthiness by describing whether the trustee has the skills and abilities needed to act in an appropriate fashion, while perceived integrity and benevolence capture the 'will do' aspect of perceived trustworthiness by describing whether the trustee will choose to use those skills and abilities to act in the best interest of the trustor. Perceived ability can be considered to be a very rational 'good reason' to suspend vulnerability in an interaction. Colquit et al. (2007) argue that perceived integrity is also mainly a rational 'good reason' to suspend vulnerability, as a sense of fairness or moral character provides the long-term predictability that helps individuals cope with uncertainty (Lind, 2001). Perceived benevolence is argued to be both a rational and an emotional 'good reason' to suspend vulnerability, as it can create an emotional attachment to the trustee, with caring and supportiveness fostering a reciprocation of positive affect. Trust scholars have suggested that the willingness to suspend vulnerability is both cognitive and affective and thus affected by both aspects of perceived trustworthiness (Flores and Solomon, 1998; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Lewis and Weigert, 1985; McAllister, 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998; Shapiro et al., 1992). However, Lewis and Weigert (1985: 971) note that the willingness to suspend vulnerability is not the automatic consequence of perceived trustworthiness, as perceived trustworthiness *"only opens the door to trust without actually constituting it. The cognitive element in trust is characterized by a cognitive "leap" beyond the expectations that reason and experience alone would warrant—they simply serve as the platform from which the leap is made."* Nonetheless, perceived trustworthiness is expected to be a strong predictor of the willingness to suspend vulnerability, albeit in a probabilistic logic (Nooteboom, Berger and Noorderhaven, 1997), which renders the willingness to suspend vulnerability more than mere hopefulness, blind faith or gullibility (McEvily, Perrone and Zaheer, 2003; Heyns and Rothmann, 2015). Indeed, Colquit et al. (2007) find that perceived ability, benevolence and integrity were all positive and significant predictors of the willingness to suspend vulnerability in their meta-analysis, and these findings were confirmed in Heyns and Rothmann's (2015) research on trust between leaders and followers. On the basis of this discussion, we will thus hypothesise that perceived trustworthiness positively affects the willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration.

Relationship between willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour

The argument that the willingness to suspend vulnerability will affect risk-taking behaviour can be explained on the basis of a more general theory about how human action is formed on the basis of underlying attitudinal constructs: the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein

and Ajzen, 1975). The TRA is suggested as the underlying 'nomological framework' in Currall and Judge's (1995) study of trust between organisational boundary role persons, and is a seminal model for the prediction of behaviour on the basis of individual intentions and attitudes. The main argument of the TRA is that behavioural intentions are the antecedents of actual behaviour, and that these intentions are a function of individual attitudes and subjective norms in individuals' environments. Any variables that influence behavioural intentions or behaviour are only expected to do so to the extent that they affect either individuals' attitudes or the (perceptions of) subjective norms (Madden, Ellen and Ajzen, 1992). However, TRA operates under three boundary conditions, namely the degree to which the measures of intention and behaviour correspond with respect to their levels of specificity, the stability of intentions between time of measurement and the performance of the behaviour, and the degree to which the behaviour is under the volitional control of the individual (Madden et al., 1992). In other words, TRA is most accurate when measures of intention and behaviour relate to the same topic, when little time passes between measurement of intention and measurement of behaviour, and when individuals are free to behave as they wish. This last assumption may be valid for some interpersonal situations, but may be argued to be problematic in the case of boundary spanners in public administration, who rarely entail full volitional control over the risk-taking behaviour they engage in on behalf of their organisations. Indeed, in our exploration of the dimensions of interorganisational trust, we argued that the observed lack of a positive relationship between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour might be due to the obligatory nature of interorganisational risk-taking behaviour in public administration, such as in formal obligations to cooperate, hierarchical instructions to share information, or regulations and procedures regarding openness of information. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) improves upon the TRA as it relaxes the boundary condition of pure volitional control by including 'perceived behavioural control' as an external variable in the model which affects behaviour directly (due to individuals' actual behavioural control), as well as indirectly (through behavioural intentions, due to the hypothesis that more perceived behavioural control will motivate individuals to actually conduct the behaviour) (Madden et al., 1992).

Figure 8: Theory of Reasoned Action (A) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (B)
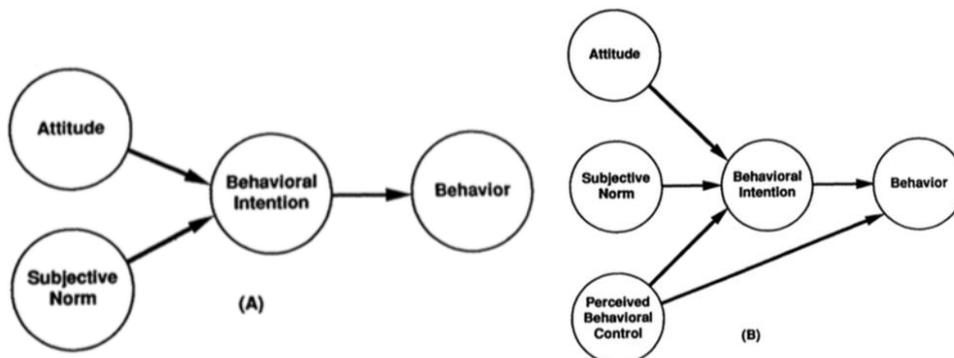
(Adopted from Madden et al., 1992)

However, while Colquit et al.'s (2007) meta-analytical findings certainly suggest a positive relationship between willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, they are not consistent with the TRA or TPB, since perceived trustworthiness was also found to affect risk-taking behaviour directly, without mediation by the willingness to suspend vulnerability (as we will discuss below, this direct relationship may be due to a feedback loop between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness). Also, as Currall and Judge (1995) argue, risk-taking behaviour becomes more likely when a trustor is willing to suspend vulnerability, but it does not occur automatically, as it may also occur in the absence of any intention to suspend vulnerability (for instance when it is enforced by regulations or social peers) or it may be absent in the presence of strong intentions to suspend vulnerability (for instance when it is explicitly forbidden by normative rules and formal or social sanctions). Nonetheless, on the basis of this discussion, we can hypothesise that the willingness to suspend vulnerability is a strong positive predictor for risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration.

Feedback loop between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness

Finally, it has been argued that the experience of engaging in risk-taking behaviour will update the trustor's perceptions of the counterpart's trustworthiness (Mayer et al. 1995), thus establishing a feedback loop which renders trust a cyclically dynamic process (Dietz, 2011). The feedback loop is part of the learning curve (Mayer and Davis, 1999), which allows the trustor to evaluate outcomes of previous vulnerability in a subsequent re-appraisal of trustworthiness (Mayer and Gavin, 2005; Heyns and Rothmann, 2015). Schoorman, Wood and Bruer (2015) argue that once an actor takes a risk in a relationship they experience the outcomes of doing so, which can be positive if the other party delivers on their commitment, or negative if the trust is betrayed. In both cases there is a feedback loop that updates the judgement of ability, benevolence, and integrity. A positively perceived result will increase trustworthiness, while a negatively perceived result will decrease trustworthiness. For instance, the literature on trust repair (e.g., Gillespie & Dietz, 2009; Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009), argues that when a betrayal occurs, the trustor generally makes an attribution as to which factor (ability, benevolence or integrity) they had misjudged led to the betrayal (one important insight from this literature is that relationship recovery is more likely in case of a perceived misjudgement of ability, while recovery is less likely in case of a perceived misjudgement of benevolence). The incorporation of this feedback loop has been argued to make the model of the universal trust process particularly relevant to explain the development of inter-team trust over time (Lewicki, Tomlinson and Gillespie, 2006). Niklas Luhmann (1972) has argued that the destructive force of distrust lies to a strong extent in its "*inherent tendency to endorse and reinforce itself in social interaction*" because "*a person who distrusts becomes more dependent on less information*" (Luhmann 1979: 72). Since distrust leads to relational withdrawal, it leaves actors "*little energy to explore and adapt to [their] environment in an objective and unprejudiced manner, and hence allow him fewer opportunities for learning.*" Therefore, Luhmann contends that distrust has an inherent tendency to endorse and reinforce itself, because it does not produce the relational information that might contradict it. This feedback loop, in combination with

Gouldners' (1960) norm of reciprocity (infra), explains why virtuous cycles of trust and vicious cycles of distrust may emerge in social relations and interorganisational interactions (Vlaar et al. 2007; Zand 1972).

Therefore, we can hypothesise a direct relationship between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness in interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration.

> 4.3.2. *Interaction-specific reasons for the trust process: propositions D and E*

In the conceptual chapter, we have argued that boundary spanners' perceptions about interaction-specific aspects and elements of their individual personalities shape their subjective trust evaluations (Beccerra and Gupta, 1999), and therefore shape interorganisational trust. In this respect, interaction-specific aspects on three analytical levels were considered to constitute probable 'reasons of trust': the level of the institutions which encompass interorganisational interactions (macro-level), the level of the interaction itself (meso-level) and the level of boundary spanners' personal characteristics (micro-level). As will be explained in this paragraph, we will focus on the macro- and meso-level interaction aspects, and consider the micro-level aspects as control variables in our inquiry. Empirical understanding about the presence of these interaction-specific aspects and about the ways in which they affect boundary spanners' subjective trust evaluations are crucial in order to answer the third research question. We will develop relevant propositions and hypotheses regarding explanations of interorganisational trust on the basis of these interaction aspects in the following paragraphs.

In proposition D we focus on what kind of interaction aspects are associated with interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration. Building upon proposition A and propositions B and C, we propose that interaction aspects which are argued to positively affect interorganisational trust, will be found to be present to a larger degree in trusted interorganisational interactions than in distrusted interorganisational interactions.

> **Proposition D:** Trusted interactions are associated with a stronger presence of trust reasons on the macro and meso- level of interorganisational interactions than distrusted interactions.
> - **HD1:** Formal institutional frameworks which are clear about mutual rights, functions and obligations, and informal institutional frameworks which create a 'culture of trustfulness', will occur to greater extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.
> - **HD2:** Perceived risks, interaction costs (asset specificity), and perceived counterpart opportunistic motivations occur to lesser extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.
> - **HD3:** Reciprocal trust, value identification, good interpersonal relationships, and an equal power distribution occur to greater extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.

In proposition E, we focus on how these interaction aspects affect the interorganisational trust process in the Flemish administration. Building upon proposition A, B, C and D we propose that interaction aspects which are found to affect the trust process in trusted interactions, will be found have a similar effect on the trust process in distrusted interactions (proposition E). While proposition D thus focuses on predicting the

descriptive presence of macro- and meso-level interaction aspects, proposition E predicts the impact of these interaction aspects on the interorganisational trust process.

Proposition E: Trust reasons on the macro and meso level of interorganisational interactions are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in both trusted and distrusted interactions.

- **HE1:** Formal institutional frameworks which are clear about mutual rights, functions and obligations, and informal institutional frameworks which create a 'culture of trustfulness', are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions and general control variables are kept constant.

- **HE2:** Perceived risks, interaction costs (asset specificity), and perceived counterpart opportunistic motivations are negatively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions, general control variables, organisational and personal utility preferences are kept constant.

- **HE3:** Reciprocal trust, value identification, good interpersonal relationship and an equal power distribution are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions, general control variables and relational familiarity are kept constant.

As the trust process has been argued to integrate micro-level psychological processes and meso-level relational dynamics with macro-level organisational, societal and institutional forms (Saunders, Skinner and Lewicki, 2010), our focus on macro- and meso- level interaction aspects particularly highlights that explanations of interorganisational trust have been approached from various theoretical perspectives. (Neo)-institutional theory (NIT), Transaction Cost Economics, (TCE) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) have been used to respectively focus on how the institutional, rational-economic and social embeddedness aspects of interorganisational interactions may shape interorganisational trust and distrust, and are often seen as complementary rather than competitive explanations of interorganisational trust (Zhong et al., 2014; Ring and Van de Ven, 1992; Rousseau et al., 1998; Zaheer and Harris, 2006; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012). In the following paragraphs, we draw from these theories, the trust literature and from the lessons learned in the third exploration, to explain the propositions introduced above in further detail. However, before we engage in this discussion we emphasise that the presence of 'reasons for trust' on the macro- and meso- (and micro-) level of interorganisational interactions should be considered as probabilistic enablers, rather than mechanistic determinants for administrational trust.

> 4.3.2.1. *Macro-level interaction aspects*

In the conceptual chapter, we have argued that macro-level interaction aspects may support or impede interorganisational trust. Under macro-level interaction aspects, we understand the institutions that encompass interorganisational interactions, which can be defined as "*systems of established and prevalent social rules that structure social interactions*" (Hodgson, 2006: 2). There is a rich body of literature discussing macro-level reasons of trust. Scholarship regarding institutional reasons of trust (e.g., Bachmann, 2001; Hagen and Choe, 1998; Sitkin and Roth, 1993; Zucker, 1986; Sydow, 2006; Perrone et al., 2003; Bachman and Inkpen, 2011; Lane and Bachmann, 1996; Lane and Bachmann, 1998; Sztompka, 1998),

trust and institutionalised control (e.g.,Weibel, 2007; Costa and Bijlsma-Frankema, 2007; Shapiro, 1987;) or structural approaches to trust repair (Dirks, Lewicki, and Zaheer, 2009; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009) emphasises the importance of institutional characteristics as reasons of trust. In this paragraph, we will first focus on what kind of institutions are expected to support or impede trust, following Bachman and Inkpen's (2011) distinction between formal and informal institutions for this discussion. Second, we will explain why these formal and informal institutions are argued to affect interorganisational trust.

Formal macro-level aspects are argued to be crucial institutional aspects that shape individuals' subjective trust evaluations. Here, we consider formal rules and formal roles in interorganisational interactions. Formal rules rest on shared understandings and sanctions regarding inappropriate behaviour. Rule-based practices exert both direct and subtle influences, not only on individuals' perceptions of their own honesty and trustworthiness, but also on their expectations and beliefs regarding other organisational members' honesty and trustworthiness. Thus, rule-based trust is a potent organisational resource that might facilitate spontaneous coordination and cooperation (Kramer, 1999). Roles have been argued to serve as proxies for knowledge about other organisational members (Kramer, 1999). Individuals can adopt a sort of presumptive trust based on their knowledge of role relations, even in the absence of personalised knowledge. Such role-based trust develops from people's common knowledge regarding the barriers to entry into organisational roles, their presumptions about training and socialisation processes that role occupants undergo, and their perceptions of various accountability mechanisms intended to ensure role compliance (Kramer, 1999). This is a form of institution-based trust, as it is not the specific person in the role that is trusted, but rather the system of expertise that produces and maintains role-appropriate behaviour of role occupants. But what kind of formal rules and roles can be expected to support trust? The very 'reason of rules' (Brennan and Buchanan, 2008) is argued to allow actors to enter in transactions and interactions with each other and have some sense of trust in each other while doing so. Sztompka (1998) proposes that formal institutions can support the development of trust when they have a number of substantive and operational characteristics. In terms of their substantive characteristics, formal institutions need to be transparent, stable and morally justifiable, provide normative certainty about what is right and wrong, enable accountability of those in power, allow enactment of rights and enforcement of duties, and safeguard autonomy. In addition to these 'substantive conditions', Sztompka (1998) argues that the consistent and sparing use of formal institutions are two essential 'operational conditions' to stimulate a culture of trust in the institutional environment. Likewise, Ring and Van de Ven (1994) argue that the strength of institution-based trust lies mainly in the presence of formal rules and roles, rather than in their actualisation. Even when rules, roles and sanctions are available, they should be used sparingly and predictably, so that they "*remain in the shadows, as a distant protective framework for spontaneous trustful actions*" (Sztompka, 1998: 29). In our third exploration, respondents provided several macro-level 'reasons' for interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration. Interorganisational trust was argued to be supported by clear and consistent institutional rules and structures when they delineate boundaries of

interorganisational cooperative arenas and allow consistent but flexible administrative management and political steering. Ambiguous formal rules that allow actors to interpret rules according to their own interests were argued to engender administrational distrust. Institutional roles were argued to support interorganisational trust through clear and transparent definitions of boundary role positions and mandates of the boundary spanners, because they allow boundary spanners to make credible commitments toward each other on behalf of their organisations. Furthermore, clear roles in interorganisational interactions were argued to improve interorganisational trust by guiding the selection, promotion and evaluation of competent boundary spanners. However, institutional roles were argued to be a source of interorganisational distrust when overlapping role definitions without clear task divisions enable task competition and mutual suspicion in interorganisational relationships.

Second, macro-level informal institutional aspects, such as routines and perceived normative frameworks of influential referents, are also considered to form and shape individual trust evaluations. Routines can be defined as regularly and habitually performed programmes of actions and procedures (Möllering, 2006b), which render trust a 'social fact' in interactions, giving it a relatively stable character (Sztompka, 1998). When reciprocal confidence in members' socialisation into and continued adherence to a certain routine of relational exchange is high, mutual trust can become a taken-for-granted attitude in organisations. Perceived normative frameworks can be defined as a respondents' belief that salient normative referents think the respondent should or should not trust the other boundary spanner, and the motivation of the respondent to comply with those norms (Currall and Judge, 1995). Such normative referents help establish a trusting 'social mood' (Kampen et al., 2003; Van De Walle, 2004) or a "*culture of trustfulness*" (Sztompka, 1998) which goes beyond the individual as a typical orientation of a group or a trait of human collectivities, affecting individual trust evaluations through the mechanism of normative isomorphism. Thus, expressions of interorganisational trust by normative referents exerts external pressures on individual boundary spanners' subjective trust evaluations, and boundary spanners' subjective trust evaluations will exert such pressures on other individuals who consider them to be normative referents as well. Therefore, interorganisational trust is not only an individual characteristic of boundary spanners, but can become a 'social fact' in communities and organisations. In our exploratory interviews, respondents emphasised the importance of interorganisational routines for building interorganisational trust but also stressed that distrust can become a routine and socialise organisational members, permitting its organisational reproduction and perpetuation. Perceived norms of political and administrative referents were argued to exert normative pressures for trust or distrust on organisational boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions. Boundary spanners' perceptions of such normative frameworks may be more important in this respect than the actual normative preferences held by political and administrative leaders.

On the basis of this discussion we thus expect that formal institutional frameworks which are clear about mutual rights, functions and obligations, and informal institutional frameworks which create a taken-for-

granted 'culture of trustfulness', will occur more frequently in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions, which we have summarised in hypothesis HD1.

Second, we discuss why these institutions are argued to affect interorganisational trust. The theoretical underpinning of arguments about institution-based trust can be found in (neo-)institutional theories. However, despite extensive theoretical discussions drawing on neo-institutional theory, (neo)-functionalism and structuration theory (Reed, 2001), empirical research about institution-based trust is not often found in interorganisational trust research in general (Bachman and Inkpen, 2011) or in public administration research in specific. Literature on 'institution-based trust' (Zucker, 1986; Bachmann and Zaheer, 2008; Bachmann and Inkpen, 2011; Rousseau et al., 1998) views interorganisational trust in light of formal systems and informal cultural norms that provide institutional assurances for trust development (Zhong et al., 2014), and suggests that institutions enable trust on the basis of "*internal organising principles and practices*" (Perrone et al., 2003: 428) in (interorganisational) interactions. These internal organising principles and practices can be argued to support trust due to a logic of appropriateness or a logic of consequences. On the one hand, institutions are argued to affect the trust process through a logic of consequences, as they shape institutional templates (Bachmann and Inkpen, 2011), which may add to, or even substitute for direct knowledge or experience within a particular interaction, thus providing a trustor with good reasons to consider a counterpart trustworthy, be willing to suspend vulnerability, and engage in risk-taking behaviour. This is why institution-based trust has been argued to play an important role in large and fragmented organisations, where formal and informal norms of behaviour are argued to form a bridge between unfamiliar actors (Sydow, 2006) by establishing a 'world in common' (Zucker, 1986). In this respect, Sztompka (1998) proposes that, in order to support trust, institutions should be transparent, stable and morally justifiable, provide normative certainty and accountability of power, allow enactment of rights and enforcement of duties, and safeguard autonomy and are used consistently and sparingly. On the other hand, institutions are argued to affect the trust process through a logic of appropriateness, by socialising boundary spanners through coercive, mimetic or normative isomorphism, a "*constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions*" (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983: 149), into trusting a particular counterpart. Coercive isomorphism occurs when formal or informal pressure is exerted to adopt a certain mode of organisation or behaviour. Mimetic isomorphism occurs when high uncertainty and goal ambiguity drive individuals to adopt principles or behaviours that are already in general use in their institutional environment. Finally, normative isomorphism occurs when salient normative frameworks exert informal pressures on individuals to conform within their environments or networks (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983).

On the basis of this discussion we may thus expect that institutional frameworks which are clear about mutual rights, functions and obligations and the normative acceptability of trust will positively affect the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in both trusted and distrusted interactions. We have expressed this expectation in hypothesis HE1.

In the conceptual chapter we briefly discussed calculative meso-level interaction aspects, by which we refer to those interaction aspects which affect boundary spanners' *"on-going, market-oriented, economic calculation whose value is derived by determining the outcomes resulting from creating and sustaining the relationship relative to the costs of maintaining or severing it"* (Lewicki and Bunker 1996: 120). The theoretical underpinnings connecting these meso-level calculative interaction aspects with interorganisational trust are found in Rational Action Theories, such as Transaction Cost Economics, which view trust as a quasi-rational calculation of perceived gains and losses (Bromily & Harris, 2006), in which an organisation will not trust its counterpart unless the calculated benefits of the interaction outweigh the calculated costs (Williamson, 1993). For instance, Coleman (1990) has argued that a person will place trust only if the expected gain from trusting is higher than the expected loss (Lindenberg, 2000).

The idea of calculus-based trust presents trust as a utilitarian strategy in which trustors rationally weigh information about the costs and benefits of certain courses of action with the aim of maximizing their organisational or individual utility in the particular setting of a specific interaction. Calculative interaction aspects may thus relate to perceptions about the costs, benefits, and particular risks of the interorganisational interaction, perceptions about the counterparts' interests and opportunities to engage in 'self-interest seeking with guile' (Williamson, 1985), and they depend upon the trustors' particular utility preferences. Calculus-based trust is very prominent in Hardin's (2001) work on trust as an 'encapsulated interest', in which it is argued that trust is placed in an actor when it is perceived that the actor has a benefit in continuing a certain relationship. This calculation is particularly considered to depend on the availability of credible information about the risks, costs and benefits in the interaction (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996). Such credible information may stem from direct relational knowledge about the trustee (for instance through accumulated relational knowledge about the trustee), but may also result from other sources, such as formal institutional rules, third-party reports and rumours about the trustee's reputation. Thus, any information about high risks, high costs and low benefits in an interaction is expected to negatively affect the trustors' willingness to suspend vulnerability (Schoorman et al., 2007). In relations where resources are exchanged between actors, the costs of transactions are often operationalised as the extent to which invested assets are difficult to gather and transfer (asset specificity) (Zhong et al., 2014; Williamson, 1985; Zaheer et al., 1998). Furthermore, as the trustor invests in specific assets that are not easy to deploy outside of the specific interaction with the trustee, the trustor becomes more vulnerable to the opportunistic behaviour of the trustee. Transaction Cost Economics thus considers asset specificity as a long-lasting exchange hazard to interorganisational relationships (Williamson, 1993), and hypothesises a negative relationship between asset specificity and interorganisational trust (Zhong et al., 2014; Katsikeas, Skarmeas and Bello, 2009; Gainey and Klaas, 2003).

Our exploration raised the importance of the availability of clear information about the counterpart and about potential benefits and costs of any interorganisational interaction in order for trust to emerge in the

interaction. Since the trustor calculatively considers such information in line with their own personal and organisational utility preferences, it is important to account for the extent to which the trustor considers such personal or organisational costs and benefits in their trust evaluation. Calculative administrational distrust was argued to be grounded in a fear of opportunistic bureau maximisers. One respondent raised that 'credible information' about the counterpart was collected through rumours, which was also discussed by Zaheer and Venkatraman (1995), who argue that information about potential costs and benefits of cooperation can spread through the 'grapevine' and constitute credible evidence for the existence of benefits and costs of trusting or distrusting certain counterparts. The perceived risk in highly threatening or competitive policy environments was also argued to exacerbate the likelihood of costs, and thus to negatively affect interorganisational trust.

This discussion leads us to expect that in trusted interactions, perceptions of risks, costs (asset specificity), and information about the counterparts' interests to behave opportunistically, occur less frequently than in distrusted interactions, which is expressed in hypothesis HD2. Furthermore, we expect that, when controlled for organisational and personal utility preferences, these elements will negatively affect the dimensions of the trust process in both trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions, as expressed in hypothesis HE2.

> 4.3.2.3. *Meso-level relational interaction aspects*

In the conceptual chapter, we have introduced the argument that meso-level relational interaction aspects also affect (interorganisational) trust. Relation-based trust is argued to develop slowly, as a result of repeated experiences with interactions in risky and uncertain environments, and rests upon reciprocated interpersonal care, concern and emotional attachment between boundary spanners, who establish a personal bond through interpersonal familiarity across their professional interaction experiences (Rousseau et al., 1998).

Relational reasons for trust find their essence in repeated interactions between organisational boundary spanners, and are supported by boundary spanners' positive experiences with other boundary spanners, which foster the development of relational familiarity, emotional attachments, reciprocated interpersonal care and concern, and value identification. Interpersonal familiarity between boundary spanners is therefore argued to be crucial for relation-based trust to develop, as previous experiences with trusting behaviour (Zand, 1972) are argued to accumulate and constitute relational evidence that may affect the trust process in future iterations. Ring and Van de Ven (1994; 101) argue that "*increases in trust between parties, which are produced through an accumulation of prior interactions that were judged by the parties as being efficient and equitable, increase the likelihood that parties may be willing to make more significant and risky investments in future transactions*" (Ring and Van de Ven, 1994: 101). Ostrom (1998) argues that as the interpersonal familiarity between boundary spanners grows, calculative considerations become internalised relational heuristics through repeated cycles of exchange and cumulative fulfilment of expectations in interactions. While much research has thus suggested a positive relationship between

familiarity and trust, it has also been argued that familiarity is negatively related to trust as long-standing relations plagued with negative experiences may evoke reciprocal responses (Ferrin & Dirks, 2003; Uzzi, 1997), or that the relationship between familiarity and trust is characterised by a non-lineair U-shaped curve, as familiarity initially supports functional trust but breeds dysfunctional trust after a certain threshold due to redundant information, loosened monitoring (Uzzi, 1997), and relational inertia (Fang, Palmatier, Scheer, & Li, 2008), which eventually erodes interorganisational trust (Ferrin & Dirks, 2003; Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006; Ghoshal & Moran, 1996; Zhong et al., 2014). Rather than a determinant of interorganisational trust as such, interpersonal familiarity can thus be considered as an enabler or incubator for other relational interaction aspects that support relation-based trust, such as value identification, interpersonal relationships and social norms of trust (reciprocity), and a 'social memory' that helps partners understand and interpret each others' habits, customs and expectations (Zhong et al., 2014). Value identification in particular has been argued to be an important component of relational reasons of trust (Rousseau et al., 1998; Sako, 1991; Uzzi, 1997).

Reciprocity has been argued to be another important relational source of trust (Blau, 1964), and is argued to develop over time in interorganisational relations as interpersonal familiarity between boundary spanners increases (Zhong et al., 2014). The norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) is an important argument for the emergence of virtuous cycles of trust and vicious cycles of distrust (together with the feedback loop in the internal dynamics of the trust process, supra), as it implies that the parties involved in social exchanges understand that a favour received in the present creates an expectation of some repayment in the future. He further argues that the norm of reciprocity is culturally universal, that people feel guilty when they ignore it, and that people who fail to reciprocate will experience disapproval from others (Koeszegi, 2004). For example, caring actions on the part of one exchange partner create a sense of indebtedness on the part of the other, which may lead to beneficial attitudes and behaviours directed toward the caring partner (Colquitt et al., 2007) as individuals react to positive actions of others with positive responses and to negative actions with negative responses. Such reciprocity is particularly important in social exchange relations, which involve the exchange of vaguely specified, diffuse future obligations and occur over a more open-ended time frame, while they have been argued to be less central to economic exchanges, which are contractual in nature and involve the exchange of exact quantities specified in advance (Blau, 1964). Ostrom and Walker (2003) have argued that expressions of trust in risk-taking behaviour can be interpreted as relational signals of trustworthiness by the counterpart, and Ostrom (1998) has argued that since trust will be reciprocated with trust and distrust will be reciprocated with distrust in social exchange interactions, both may become trapped in self-reinforcing cycles. Furthermore, the norm of reciprocity is argued to create an 'illusion of control' over the other partner's behaviour, and experimental research has supported the hypothesis that this 'illusion of control' is an important motive for risk-taking behaviour in sequential and interdependent games (Hayashi et al., 1999;

Karp et al., 1993; Yamagishi and Yamagishi, 1994). We may thus expect that when a trustor perceives that they are trusted by the trustee, they are more likely to trust the trustee in return as well.

Furthermore, as boundary spanners are the faces of organisations in interorganisational interactions and establish a personal bond, develop reciprocated interpersonal care and concern, and form emotional attachments (Rousseau et al., 1998) good interpersonal relationships between boundary spanners are argued to contribute to the level of interorganisational trust (Shaw, 2003).

Finally, power equality has been argued to be an important relational determinant of (interorganisational) trust, as the amount of power that one actor has over another can affect the extent to which it is willing to make itself vulnerable to the other actor (Bachmann, 2001). Ceteris paribus, the party who has more power in the relationship will likely perceive—by virtue of that power—less risk and, thus, will engage in more risk-taking actions (Schoorman et al., 2007). Rothstein and Uslaner (2005: 52) have argued in their studies of societal trust, that *"when resources and opportunities are distributed more equally, people are more likely to perceive a common stake with others and to see themselves as part of a larger social order"*. The equal distribution of power in interorganisational relationships can therefore be argued to be an important relational source of interorganisational trust.

In our exploratory interviews, the respondents extensively emphasised the importance interpersonal relational dynamics between boundary spanners. Relational trust was argued to stem from positive experiences in repeated interactions while relational distrust was argued to be established by repeated negative experiences. Our respondents also argued that while relational interaction aspects support the development of interpersonal trust between boundary spanners, this trust (or distrust) becomes 'interorganisational' when boundary spanners act on behalf of their respective organisations in particular interactions, or when interpersonal relational experiences institutionalise and affect other organisational boundary spanners. The latter was argued to be particularly relevant for interpersonal relations between senior civil servants, who act as normative referents for other organisational boundary spanners.

We thus expect that relationally embedded reciprocal trust, value identification, good interpersonal relationships, and equal distributions of power, will occur to greater extent in trusted than in distrusted interactions. This expectation is expressed in hypothesis HD3. Furthermore, we expect that these elements, when controlled for indicators of familiarity, will positively affect all dimensions of the trust process in trusted interactions and in distrusted interactions. We have expressed this latter expectation as hypothesis HE3.

> 4.3.3.   *Control variables for mechanisms of the trust process*

While the macro- and meso-level aspects discussed in the previous paragraphs are specific to various interactions a trustor engages in, the boundary spanners' individual characteristics remain constant across interactions. Therefore, the focus of our research lies on the interaction-specific macro- and meso-level characteristics described in the previous paragraphs, while we will consider respondent-specific

characteristics as general control variables which may affect interorganisational trust, regardless of the specific interaction the boundary spanner is engaged in. Here, we will therefore briefly discuss micro-level predispositions to trust, respondent age, education, sex, seniority in the Flemish administration, supervisory status and organisational formal autonomy.

First, aspects of individual boundary spanners' personality, which stem from psychological (Sztompka, 1998), sociological (Glanville and Paxton, 2007) or even physiological (Zak, 2006) configurations, are argued to affect trust. In particular, it is argued that boundary spanners' individual predispositions to trust or distrust their fellow human beings also affect their subjective evaluations in particular interactions (Rotter 1967). These individual predispositions are argued to be relatively stable over time (Frazier et al., 2013), and have also been discussed as individual trustfulness (Sztompka, 1998), dispositional trust (McKnight et al. 1998), generalised willingness to trust others (Frazier et al., 2013) or individual propensity to trust (Mayer et al., 1995). In their meta-analysis, Heyns and Rothmann (2015) note that previous research about the effect of micro-level predispositions on the willingness to suspend vulnerability has rendered mixed results. Research by McKnight et al. (1998) and Mayer and Gavin (2005) suggested that trusting predispositions were a weak predictor of the willingness to suspend vulnerability, while Colquitt et al. (2007) and Searle et al. (2011) found that individual predispositions were important predictors for the willingness to suspend vulnerability. Extant research has suggested a positive relationship between trusting predispositions and perceived trustworthiness (Heyns and Rothman, 2015), which suggests that propensity to trust might prejudice beliefs in the trustworthiness of others (Gill, Boles, Finegan and McNally, 2005; Kosugi & Yamagishi, 1998; McKnight et al., 1998), because individuals with high levels of generalised trust in others are subject to a confirmation bias, in which they "*generally select, interpret, and recall information to be consistent with their prior beliefs or theories* (McKnight et al., 1998: 484). However, research suggests that while predispositions to trust may be initially important for the trust process, they are less important than the other interaction aspects we have discussed in the previous paragraphs. Research by Gill et al. (2005) suggests that an individual's disposition to trust correlates with the willingness to suspend vulnerability when information about the counterparts' trustworthiness is ambiguous, but does not correlate with intention to trust when information about trustworthiness is clear. Research about trust in government by Van Engen, Van Loon and Tummers (2014) also suggests that personal characteristics are less important than whether individuals perceive government policies to be meaningful and contributing to their own work (which can be considered as a meso-level calculative interaction aspect). In our exploration, respondents argued that the boundary spanners' individual characteristics were considered to be very important factors for the emergence of interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish public administration. Furthermore, respondents argued that individual characteristics of boundary spanners, especially of influential referents such as administrative or political leaders, may exert normative pressures on other boundary spanners. As such, personal predispositions were argued to affect interorganisational trust by affecting boundary spanners' personal subjective trust

evaluations, and in the case of influential normative referents, by exerting normative pressures on the subjective trust evaluations of other organisational boundary spanners.

Second, 'demographic' determinants are suggested to affect trust evaluations in general, and will thus be treated as control variables in our research. Respondent age has been related to trusting attitudes, for instance in research about trust in government. While negative relations have been shown by authors such as King (1997), Dalton (2005) and Van de Walle (2007), others such as Anderson and Tverdova (2003) and Christensen and Laegried (2005) report positive correlations between age and trust. Respondent education has been demonstrated to have a positive effect on trust in general (King, 1997). Extant evidence on the relationship between respondent sex and trust is inconclusive. Some authors have argued that women are generally more trusting of others than men (Norris, 2001). In their empirical study of civil servants' trust in their own organisations, Carnevale and Wechsler (1992) have reported that female employees report higher levels of trust in their own organisation than male employees, which they explained on the basis of women's higher extent of commitment, their stronger emphasis on attachment, relatedness, caring and cooperation and lower extent of cynicism. However, others have reported that men trust civil servants more than women do (Anderson and Tverdova, 2003; Houston and Harding, 2013-14), and most experimental evidence from 'trust games' seems to indicate that men trust more than women do, although women are more trustworthy (Rau, forthcoming). In our own exploration, we found that male respondents were significantly more positive regarding the direct trust question (p<.05) and regarding the trustworthiness index measure (p<.1) than women.

Finally, we consider three 'professional' variables: the respondents' supervisory status in their own organisation, the respondents' seniority, and the formal autonomy of their organisation in the Flemish administration. Carnevale and Wechsler (1992) hypothesised and found a positive relationship between respondents' supervisory status and trust in their own organisation, explaining this relationship due to the greater identification of supervisors with the values and interests of their own organisations. Applying this argumentation to interorganisational trust, we may expect that the supervisory status of boundary spanners in their own organisations may affect the value/utility framework in which they make their subjective trust evaluations, thus rendering it necessary that we control for supervisory status when investigating the mechanisms of interorganisational trust. Carnevale and Wechsler (1992) further hypothesised that the seniority of civil servants in their organisation would positively affect trust in their own organisation, as civil servants accumulate relational familiarity within their organisations. A similar argument may apply for seniority in the Flemish administration and interorganisational trust. .Although Carnevale and Wechsler (1992) found no empirical evidence for their hypothesis, we will adopt seniority as a control variable in our investigation of mechanisms of interorganisational trust. Finally, Van Thiel and Yesilkagit (2011) have argued that the extent of organisational autonomy may impact interorganisational relationships between organisations in public administration. Our own exploration also showed significant differences regarding the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process between organisations with

different extents of formal autonomy. Thus, we will also consider the organisations' formal autonomy as a control variable in our investigation of the mechanisms of interorganisational trust.

> 4.3.3.1.   *Interdependency between macro-, meso-, and micro-level interaction aspects*

It is important to note that the interaction aspects discussed in the previous paragraphs may be analytically separated, but are empirically interdependent. Both within and between the categories, interaction aspects may influence one another and function as multiple reasons in trust evaluations. Dietz (2011) argues that in some rare situations, trust can be based exclusively on institutions (macro) or interactions (meso), but most decisions to trust are informed by multiple reasons of evidence. Weibel (2003: 668) similarly argues that "*interpersonal trust is influenced by the institutional framework, but the institutional arrangement never completely determines the quality of social interaction*".

First, interdependency can be argued to exist within the macro- and meso-level interaction aspect categories. For instance, relation-based trust does not at all exclude calculus-based trust, but may complement it. For example, interpersonal familiarity may be a source of credible information about costs, benefits and risks in an interaction, on the basis of which calculus-based trust is supported in interactions. However, while relation-based trust may thus build on or enter into rational calculations, it is argued to go beyond mere calculation, as it acquires value outside a strict self-interested discourse (Braithwaite and Levi 1998).

Second, interdependency can be argued to exist between macro- and meso-level interaction aspects. For instance, the potential for meso-level calculative aspects to support interorganisational trust might depend on the institutional framework that encompasses interorganisational interactions. Collective action theory suggests that institutional rules support calculative reasons for trust because they sustain coercive structures that permit the realisation of trustworthy actions among individuals (Six, 2014). According to Olson (1971), rational self-interested actors will not act to achieve their common or group interests unless there are institutional structures that bind actors together and force them to stand on trustworthy grounds (Dasgupta, 1988; see also Brennan and Buchanan, 2008). Institutionalised mechanisms, like systems of audit or control, provide credible third-party information to actors about counterparts, which can feed into calculative considerations. The presence of institutional incentive structures for cooperative interorganisational behaviour, like performance bonuses, may influence boundary spanners' perceptions of the costs and benefits to trusting behaviour in the interorganisational interaction. Macro-level interaction aspects can also be argued to affect relational interaction aspects and relation-based trust. Institutions encapsulate relations between actors as a social frame, a historical, particular and concrete product of relational inter-subjectivity and therefore support the reflexivity that lies at the basis of relational reasons for trust (Six, 2014). In other words, institutions can support relation-based trust by establishing "*shared meaning as a fundamental precondition of the possibility of social action*" (Lane and Bachmann, 1996: 370). For instance, value convergence between organisations can be the result of institutional role expectations or informal norms. The relational balance of power between organisations can be enshrined in formal rules

or in self-evident, long-standing institutional routines. Furthermore, institutionalised feedback structures in interorganisational interaction processes can enable and support experience-based learning and reciprocity between organisations, elements which are considered essential to building relation-based trust. Neo-institutionalists conceptualise any social interaction as developed through institutionalised patterns of behaviour. In this perspective, meso-level considerations can never exist in separation from their institutional environment. Thus, any meso-level consideration is essentially seen as institution-based, "*following from collectively accepted norms and not from socially disembedded individuals' rational (or indeed irrational) decisions*" (Bachmann and Inkpen, 2011: 13).

> 4.4.   Chapter conclusion: a theoretical framework for administrational trust and distrust

In this chapter, we have developed the expectations, propositions and hypotheses which will allow us to scientifically address our second and third research questions. Proposition A was linked to research question two (describing administrational trust and distrust), proposing that boundary spanners' administrational trust and distrust in a particular interaction are perfect opposites, and therefore best described according to a trade-off perspective. Propositions B, C, D and E were linked to research question three (explaining administrational trust and distrust), with propositions B and C relating to the internal dynamics of the interorganisational trust process and propositions D and E relating to the interaction-specific aspects argued to affect the interorganisational trust process. Proposition B specifies that the three trust process dimensions (perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour), will be significantly higher in interactions that are characterised by administrational trust than in interactions that are characterised by administrational distrust. Proposition C proposes that the interdimensional relations between the three trust process dimensions are positive, both in interactions characterised by administrational trust and in interactions characterised by administrational distrust. Proposition D postulated that boundary spanners perceive a greater presence of macro- and meso-level 'reasons for trust' in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. Finally, we argued in proposition E that particular macro- and meso- level 'reasons for trust' are associated to the interorganisational trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions. The propositions and the hypotheses associated to these propositions are summarised in the following table. Having thus developed our propositions and hypotheses, we will now develop a research design to test these hypotheses in the empirical reality of interorganisational interactions in the Flemish public administration.

Table 16: Propositions and hypotheses for administrational trust and distrust

Formulated propositions	Derived hypotheses
Proposition A: Administrational trust and administrational distrust are opposites, rather than distinct constructs.	• **HA1:** When measured as two distinct concepts, the relationship between a boundary spanners' administrational trust and administrational distrust will be characterised by a (near-) perfect negative relationship.
Proposition B: Trusted and distrusted interactions can be studied through the universal trust process, in which we expect that all three trust process dimensions will be significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.	• **HB1:** The perceived trustworthiness is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. • **HB2:** The willingness to suspend vulnerability' is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. • **HB3:** Risk-taking behaviour is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.
Proposition C: There is a universal causal sequence of trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour which will apply to both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions.	• **HC1:** There is a positive direct relation between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions • **HC2:** There is a positive direct relation between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions. • **HC3:** There is a positive direct relation between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness when controlling for willingness to suspend vulnerability (feedback loop) in both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions.
Proposition D: Trusted interactions are associated with a stronger presence of trust reasons on the macro and meso- level of interorganisational interactions than distrusted interactions.	• **HD1:** Formal institutional frameworks which are clear about mutual rights, functions and obligations, and informal institutional frameworks which create a 'culture of trustfulness', will occur to greater extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. • **HD2:** Perceived risks, interaction costs (asset specificity), and perceived counterpart opportunistic motivations occur to lesser extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. • **HD3:** Reciprocal trust, value identification, good interpersonal relationships, and an equal power distribution occur to greater extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.
Proposition E: Trust reasons on the macro and meso level of interorganisational interactions are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in both trusted and distrusted interactions.	• **HE1:** Formal institutional frameworks which are clear about mutual rights, functions and obligations, and informal institutional frameworks which create a 'culture of trustfulness', are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions and general control variables are kept constant. • **HE2:** Perceived risks, interaction costs (asset specificity), and perceived counterpart opportunistic motivations are negatively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions, general control variables, organisational and personal utility preferences are kept constant. • **HE3:** Reciprocal trust, value identification, good interpersonal relationship and an equal power distribution are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions, general control variables and relational familiarity are kept constant.

5. Navigating trust research:
A research design for administrational trust in the Flemish administration

Introduction

C. Wright Mills (1959: 27, quoted in Sartori, 1970) argued that "*to have mastered 'theory' and 'method' is to have become a conscious thinker. (…) To be mastered by 'method' or 'theory' is to be kept from working*". Although we do not wish to be kept from working for too long, we must contend that any serious piece of social science research rests upon a methodology that is logically consistent with the research questions on the one hand and able to assess the proposed theoretical answers to those questions on the other hand. Sartori (1970 : 1033) identified methodology as "*a concern with the logical structure and procedure of scientific enquiry (…) there is no methodology without logos, without thinking about thinking*". Methodology therefore goes beyond mere statistics, experiments or interviews. Methodology is the framework in which these techniques are rationally and strategically selected and sequenced in order to provide the most appropriate answer to the research questions at hand (Haverland and Yanow 2012).

This chapter aims to build a methodological framework comprising and sequencing appropriate methods, to enable us to consider the theoretical conjectures elaborated in the previous chapter. As such, it is the last component to be developed before we will enter the empirical discussion of administrational trust in the Flemish public administration. We begin this chapter with a discussion of different methods used in trust research. Second, we will discuss the methodological requirements raised by our research questions regarding the research object, units of analysis and the units of observation. Third, we argue that these requirements raised by the research questions can only be met with a mixed method research design. Fourth, we introduce our four-phase mixed method research design for our three research questions, and discuss each of these four phases.

> 5.2. **Methodology and methods in trust research**

We start with a discussion of methodology and methods in trust research. For this discussion, we will follow Haverland and Yanow's (2012) distinction between the terms 'method' and 'methodology'. We will refer to 'methods' in this text when we mean the tools and techniques that are used to carry out research: surveys, experiments, interviews, observations, etcetera. We use 'methodology' to refer to philosophical positions that underpin and inform our choice of methods. In other words, methods refer to tools and methodology refers to the underlying ontological and epistemological foundations of the choice for those tools.

Kenneth Waltz stated that "*once a methodology is adopted, the choice of methods becomes merely a tactical matter*" (quoted in Moses and Knutsen, 2007: 4). Methodologies are ways of knowing about a certain concept, and thus comprise the ontological (the 'reality status' of a concept) and epistemological (the

empirical 'knowability' of a concept) positions of the researcher regarding the object of knowledge. The choice of the right methods for our research should therefore be grounded in a solid consideration of our methodological position in approaching the question of administrational trust in the Flemish administration.

In the accumulated body of trust research, various methods have been used to study trust. Lyon et al. (2012) argue that the trust research community is characterised by a relative methodological openness and pluralism, because it is constantly reminded of how no single method can provide the perfect understanding of a complex phenomenon such as trust. As is the case for social science research in general, two contending methodological positions can be identified in trust research: on the one hand, positivist methodologies are based on realist ontological and objective epistemological positions. On the other hand, constructivist methodologies are based on inter-subjective ontological and phenomenological epistemological positions. The differences between positivist and constructivist ways of knowing have implications for the approach to the central research questions, the character of concepts, the development of hypotheses, and the choice of methods. In the following paragraphs, we discuss these positivist and constructivist methodological frameworks and their associated methods in trust research.

> 5.2.1.   *Trust research in the positivist methodological tradition*

The positivist paradigm is based on a realist ontological and an objective epistemological position. Research framed in the positivist methodology takes a realist ontological perspective, meaning that reality is presupposed to exist independently of the observer. The positivist methodology therefore also contains an objective epistemological perspective: since reality exists independently of the observer, it can also be known and measured objectively. The aim of positivist research is usually not only to describe, but to explain relations between independent and dependent variables.

Positivist methodological frameworks are mainly directed at theory testing, by drawing on deductive logics of inquiry to formulate hypotheses. This means that positivist methodologies need a clear conceptual framework in which definitions are provided for all used concepts. Concepts need to be defined and operationalised in order to make them 'observable', for instance through the use of indicators (Haverland and Yanow, 2012). Case selection is intentional and based on the particular properties cases have in relation to a theory or a population (Blatter and Haverland, 2012; Haverland and Yanow, 2012).

Positivist methodology is populated by both quantitative and qualitative methods. Traditionally, positivist methodology in the social sciences has been characterised by a fierce debate between the small-N (qualitative) and the large-N (quantitative) schools. Lieberman (2005: p. 436) defines these approaches as follows: A **large-N** approach is *"a mode of analysis in which the primary causal inferences are derived from statistical analyses which ultimately lead to quantitative estimates of the robustness of a theoretical model"*. A **small-N** approach is *"a mode of analysis in which causal inferences are derived from qualitative comparisons*

of cases and/or process tracing of causal chains within cases across time, and in which the relationship between theory and facts is captured largely in narrative form".

We will first discuss large-N (quantitative methods) approaches in trust research and then discuss small-N (qualitative methods) approaches in trust research.

> 5.2.1.1. *Quantitative trust research methods in the positivist methodological tradition*

Large-N (or quantitative) approaches in trust research typically comprise experiments, panel studies, and cross-sectional survey research.

Laboratory experiments are particularly useful to explore the basic cognitive processes of trust in a controlled setting (Kramer, 2012). Experimental research about trust, such as that conducted by Zand (1972) and Strickland (1958), lies at the heart of trust research, and experimental setups to assess trust such as the 'Prisoner's Dilemma' have long been favoured by behavioural economists and psychologists. The development of early-stage 'Prisoner Dilemma' experiments led to more sophisticated 'trust games', which are based to a stronger extent on the willingness of a person to make themselves vulnerable to the actions of another. Experimental designs have been criticised for the over-interpretation of behavioural cooperation or non-cooperation choices as indicators of underlying constructs of trust and distrust (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2012). While such experiments allow causal models to be tested, the applicability of experimental situations to real-life situations is questionable, and their feasibility for field research is rather limited (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2012). Also, critics of experimental methods in trust research argued that the development of trust may be best studied when repeated interactions occur over a sustained period of time, so that participants have time to develop a meaningful level of trust. A final argument against experimental methods in trust studies is that participants must be engaged in a way that is important and salient to them—i.e., for trust to matter participants must have something valuable to gain or to lose with realistic and salient value to their own lives. Trust experiments are rare in public administration but remain popular in other research fields, such as in neuro-economics, where experiments have been used to examine the role of hormones on trust (Lyon et al. 2012). In public administration, the work of Grimmelikhuijsen is an exception, as it is one of the only public administration studies of trust (trust of citizens in governments) to adopt experimental methods to date (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012).

Quantitative longitudinal studies are useful to capture the temporal element in trust research, although this is argued to be a rare focus in current research (Lyon et al., 2012). Longitudinal research regarding trust requires respondents to answer the same question(s) at multiple points in time, after which the answer can be compared over time. The time dimension allows researchers to make conclusions regarding the causality of observed relationships. The standard question on generalised trust ('generally speaking, do you believe that most people can be trusted or can't you be too careful in dealing with people?') is argued to be particularly pervasive because it is well-suited for longitudinal research. For instance, the use of this question permits comparison of answers across time, going back to 1948 for Germany and to 1960 for the

United States. Although the question might not be perfect, this feature has provided it with numerous defenders in the scientific discussion on trust measures (Uslaner, 2012). In interorganisational research, longitudinal efforts to measure trust are relatively rare. A good example of longitudinal research is Serva, Fuller and Mayer's (2005) study on the reciprocal nature of trust in interacting teams. These authors conducted a six-week longitudinal study on a student sample with measurements at four points in time. The authors found that risk-taking actions exhibited by team A, predict the counterpart team B's perceptions of trustworthiness, its subsequent willingness to suspend vulnerability, and its subsequent risk-taking behaviour with respect to team A. However, the study illustrates difficulties in the feasibility of longitudinal studies for organisational research, as the authors had to rely on a student sample for data collection, which raises concerns of generalisability to other populations, especially in professional (inter)organisational contexts.

Quantitative cross-sectional surveys are extensively used in trust research. Research on generalised societal trust on the basis of similar questions does not only allow comparison over time, but also allows intercultural comparisons about trusting attitudes (Uslaner, 2012). Other surveys focus on trust in interactions with a specific counterpart or on measuring the frequency of trusting interactions and their nature. Cross-sectional survey designs are often criticised for only being able to identify correlations but not causality. According to critics of cross-sectional survey research, any study of complex phenomena and causal processes requires closer qualitative study in order to prevent spurious results and to identify the causal direction of the relationship between variables (Lieberman 2005). Furthermore, it is argued that cross-sectional designs are unable to capture the evolutionary nature of trust development, decline and repair (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2012). Also, McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) note that the lack of convergence and replication of survey measures in trust research is striking. In their review of 171 papers, they found 129 unique measures of trust. Less than half of the measures identified were based on an existing instrument, and there was considerable heterogeneity in the frequency of replication of the original instruments. Only few measures (22 out of 129 unique measures) were found to be replicated more than once, but their replication was rarely verbatim[13]. The sobering conclusion of their review was therefore that there is very little accuracy in the way that measures of trust are being replicated in the organisational literature, and the authors warn that "u*nless the 'Balkanisation' of measures that is currently endemic to the field is replaced by a more coherent and unified approach, we believe that the potential will be severely constrained*" (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2001: 42). Although these reservations against cross-sectional survey-based research are persistent, there are examples of excellent cross-sectional work on interorganisational trust such as Currall

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[13] For instance, the most replicated instrument was McAllister's instrument of cognitive and affective trust. Of the 12 replications McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) identified, only three were verbatim; 5 were non-verbatim, and 4 papers did not report sufficient information to make an assessment of the measure used. Typical characteristics of non-verbatim replications were measures adopting less than half of the original items, the combination of two or more existing instruments, and measures adding several new items to existing instruments.

and Judge's (1995) work on boundary spanner trust, or Zaheer et al. 's (1998) influential study on the effects of interorganisational and interpersonal trust on the performance of interorganisational partnerships.

Finally, **vignette studies** combine survey research with experimental research. A vignette study presents a hypothetical scenario to the participant which provides the frame for the participant's subsequent decision. The participant evaluates a series of vignettes in which, like experimental designs, explanatory variables are manipulated in order to examine possible effects on the dependent variable(s) of the study (Barrera et al., 2012). Vignette studies can be a low-cost alternative to real laboratory experiments, but they suffer from a number of pertinent disadvantages to laboratory experiments. As the situations presented in vignette studies are only hypothetical, it is likely that the incentives are only of low salience as they do not have any real consequences for participant's daily lives. Furthermore, stated intentions do not necessarily reflect actual observed behaviour. Third, similar to experiments, vignette scenarios can be perceived to be rather artificial by participants, which may compromise the validity of responses (Barerra et al., 2012).

> 5.2.1.2.   *Qualitative trust research methods in the positivist methodological tradition*

Quantitative methods are usually argued to provide thinner insights that are generalisable to a wider set of cases in a population, whereas qualitative methods are argued to be better at generating deeper understanding about fewer cases (Lieberman, 2005). In their highly influential work on designing social inquiry, King, Keohane and Verba (1994) argued that there should be one unified inferential logic of dependent and independent variable-based modelling that unites all social science, which is often clearest in quantitative work, but should also apply to qualitative work (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2009). Qualitative or 'small-N' approaches, to trust research in a positivist methodological framework comprise methods such as case studies, comparative case studies, card sort/in-depth interviewing, and critical incident technique.

Gerring (2007) argues that the term "**case study**" is a conceptual morass because too many different themes have been packed into it. The term might indicate "*(a) that the method is qualitative, small-N, (b) that the research is holistic, thick (a more or less comprehensive examination of a phenomenon), (c) that it utilizes a particular type of evidence (e.g. ethnographic, clinical, non-experimental, non-survey-based, participant-observation, process-tracing, historical, textual, or field research), (d) that its method of evidence gathering is naturalistic (a "real life context"), (e) that the topic is diffuse (case and context are difficult to distinguish), (f) that it employs triangulation ("multiple sources of evidence"), (g) that the research investigates the properties of a single observation, or (h) that the research investigates the properties of a single phenomenon, instance, or example*" (Gerring, 2007: 17). In short, it is the intensive study of a single case where the goal is to shed light on a larger class of cases. As argued earlier, the selection of cases in a positivist case study is an intentional process of theory-driven sampling. Yin (1994) presents different single case designs, such as the critical case, the average case, the revelatory case and the embedded single case design. Single case studies are rather common in trust research, as the context-dependency of trust and the necessity of building rapport between the researcher and the respondent in order to make sure that

the respondent is willing to 'open up' and discuss the sensitive issues of trust and distrust (Lyon, 2012), often require a very focused research. Some good examples of single case studies in trust research include Khodyakov's (2007) study of trust and control in creative organisations, in which he examined a conductorless orchestra, Sitkin and Roth's (1993) study of legalistic remedies to manage trust/distrust in the case of HIV-infected employees, Child's (1998) study of trust in Sino-foreign international strategic alliances or Lyon's (2006) study of trust in the food trading system in Ghana. In public administration research, Edelenbos and Klijn (2007) conducted a noteworthy study of trust in complex-decision making networks which focused on the public-private partnership "Sijtwende" as a single case. Data collection in case studies may be based on different methods such as in-depth interviewing, participatory observation, document analysis, card sorts, critical incident technique, etcetera.

Comparative case studies involve the selection of multiple cases to test a hypothesis or uncover the (causal) mechanics behind an (assumed) correlation. The deductively developed hypothesis would be that the dependent variable co-varies with the independent variable in the two cases selected, and the comparative case study provides the researcher the opportunity to qualitatively investigate the (causal) mechanics of the (lack of) observed co-variation between the dependent and the independent variables. Comparative case studies are therefore particularly fit for hypothesis testing in positivist methodological traditions. Some good examples of comparative case studies in trust research are Lane and Bachmann's (1996) comparative study of the role of stable institutions on trust in German and British supplier relations. Furthermore, Arrighetti, Bachmann and Deakin (1997) conducted a comparative analysis of Germany, Britain and Italy regarding the impact of contract law for long-term, cooperative relationships and fostering trust. Six and Sorge (2008) compared two consultancy firms with different trust policies but otherwise similar characteristics in a relatively simple, but elegant research design. Malin Tillmar's (2006) cross-cultural comparative case study between Swedish and Tanzanian small businesses, focused on the (institutional) context-dependency of trust and cooperation, is another interesting example of comparative case research.

Card sorts have been used in combination with **in-depth interviewing** to generate a rich understanding of trust, distrust and the reasons underlying these phenomena (Saunders and Thornhill, 2003; 2004). A card sort/in-depth interview method integrates a constrained card sort (categories for sorting are predefined by the researcher) of a variety of possible items with a subsequent qualitative in-depth individual interview to explore and understand the participant's underlying reasons for their categorisation (Saunders, 2012). It is worth noting that card sort methods can be used in both positivist and constructivist methodological traditions. In positivist methodological traditions, the researcher predefines the categories that are available to sort the items (constrained sort), whereas constructivist research would rather allow the participant to construct the categories for the card sort themselves. Saunders (2012) argues that card sort methods can bring distinct advantages to trust research, as they help to avoid the problem of participant sensitisation to the topic of the study. Furthermore, it is argued that card sorts are particularly helpful to

build rapport and trust between the researcher and the participants, as participants actively enjoy the playful activity of physically sorting cards into different categories, which helps break down barriers between the researcher and the participant. Finally, Saunders (2012) argues that another distinct advantage of the card sort method is that allowing participants to 'think aloud' while sorting the cards in the different categories, can help to emphasise the research focus on the participants' views and the meanings they attribute to particular feelings (Saunders, 2012). While card sorting is a relatively popular data-gathering technique in social psychological research (Whaley and Longoria, 2009), it is not commonly used by trust researchers, the work of Saunders and Thornhill (2004) being an exception. A variation of the card sort/in depth interview method can be found in the board game method that is presented by Meuthel (2012), which aims to enable simultaneous collection of quantitative data (rank order) and qualitative data (definitions, reasons for rank order) in a cross-cultural context. Meuthel argues that this method presents data collection as an opportunity for the participants to reflect upon their own subjective trust theories, and that participants felt like they had learned something they did not know before, after each iteration of the board game method.

Critical Incident Technique (CIT) is a method that can be applied to study trust in both the positivist and the constructivist methodological traditions. Münscher and Kühlmann (2012) argue that CIT has become increasingly important for trust research. It is predominantly used for theory development in exploratory research, but has also been used for hypothesis-testing (Chell, 1998) and is also used in mixed-method studies (Münscher and Kühlmann, 2012). The goal of the original method as it was developed by Flanagan (1954: 329, cited in Münscher and Kühlmann, 2012: 162) was to collect detailed descriptions of real-life situations in order to determine critical requirements for effective behaviour. Recent applications of CIT do not only focus on behaviour but also use the method to determine influencing factors of cognitive processes or attitudes. While the original approach to data collection in CIT was based on direct observation, the main data collection tool in CIT studies today is the interview (Gremler, 2004), in which respondents are asked to describe incidents that were critical for a decision or a particular attitude, while the interviewer is free to asks questions of clarification to generate rich data. Drawbacks to the CIT are that selected respondents need to have relevant experience for the topic being studied, and must be willing to report on these experiences. Münscher and Kühlmann (2012) argue that it can be very difficult to get respondents to provide usable CI's due to the sensitive nature of many 'critical' incidents[14]. However, CIT can also hold significant advantages for trust research, as it allows investigation of both 'positive' and 'negative' critical incidents that would give a better understanding of the nature of trust development (Butler, 1991).

[14] In an analysis of CIT research, Gremler (2004) found that the average number of incidents collected per respondent was only 1,3.

Trust research in the constructivist methodological tradition

Constructivist methodologies build on the ontological assumption that social realities are socially constructed ideas and do not exist as independent, objective realities. This assumption leads them to employ an epistemological position that is radically different from that of the positivist: the constructivist's epistemological position is a phenomenological one. Here it is argued that due to the inter-subjective nature of social reality, researchers cannot observe social reality independently and from an external perspective, and research-related knowledge can thus only be developed in interaction with actors within their own settings and situations (Haverland and Yanow, 2012) and on the basis of the respondents' frame of reference, rather than the frames of reference employed by the researcher.

Whereas the main aim of positivist research is to uncover causal antecedents and/or consequences of a particular phenomenon, constructivist research aims to provide insight into the reasons, meaning and social sense-making mechanisms behind a particular phenomenon. The aim is not to provide formal causal assertions, but to "*gain access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live, so that we can (...) converse with them*" (Geertz, 1973: 24; Haverland and Yanow, 2012).

Even in the positivist methodological tradition, scholars have argued that trust is an evidentiary phenomenon that constantly changes with evidence in favour of, or against, further trust. The role of subjective evaluations, reflexive reasoning and continuous subjective updating and recalibration of 'trust loops' make trust an appropriate subject for interpretive approaches which take inter-subjective ontological and phenomenological epistemological positions. Bachmann (2012) argues that the accumulated trust research has provided the research community with the insight that trust is a very context-dependent phenomenon, and that this fundamental insight should now inspire researchers to investigate trust using more context-sensitive and sense-making approaches which reject the positivist paradigm in trust research. To that extent, he compares trust research to research regarding power and risk, as "*most scholars who research power or risk would hardly step back from the fundamental insight that there is no universal order of phenomena and relations to be revealed in the social sciences, as is the case for the natural sciences, and that our theoretical approaches as well as our empirical research methods should reflect that*" (Bachman, 2012: 131). Ashleigh and Meyer (2012) contend that most scholars have been consumed with extracting rational functionality from the complex and intangible concept of trust, whereas others have been critical of the 'functionality' of trust, arguing in favour of a move towards interpretive and reflexive hermeneutic frameworks and methods (Möllering, 2001).

Interpretive methodological frameworks focus on bringing in the participants' own sense-making frameworks. Therefore, they do not rely as much on predefined concepts and theories as positivist methodological approaches. Whereas a conceptual framework is usually the starting point of research in the positivist methodological tradition, a set of new concepts or a new theory to provide insight into actors' sense-making regarding certain phenomena in the social world could be the end product of a research in the constructivist methodological tradition. Constructivist research attempts to tap into the

everyday theories and concepts used by situational participants. Interpretive research therefore does not start from hypotheses and exact research questions, but rather from 'puzzles' that arise from tensions between the researchers' expectations and experiences in the empirical reality (Haverland and Yanow, 2012).

As the goal of interpretive research is to generate 'deep' rather than 'broad' and generalisable understanding of a phenomenon, it is mainly focused on the use of qualitative techniques, although quantification (of qualitative data) can be used to analyse, present and interpret data in this methodological tradition as well. Furthermore, it is important to note that qualitative methods discussed in this text under the positivist methodological tradition are also applied in the constructivist methodological tradition. Case studies, in depth interviewing, card sorts, and CIT can be very instrumental methods to generate a better understanding of the inter-subjective nature of trust and distrust. The difference in the application of these methods in different methodological traditions therefore lies mainly in the researcher's positioning, assumptions, and in the questions asked and answered through the use of these methods. For instance, comparative case study methods in the constructivist methodological tradition will not 'select' cases in order to maximise variation on the 'independent variable' in order to test a particular 'hypothesis'. Instead, the goal would be to find out what the entity studied is a case of (Haverland and Yanow, 2012), or to gain insight into the way in which actors define, understand and make sense of relations of trust or distrust in their respective but varying environments.

Whereas some qualitative methods can therefore be used in both positivist and constructivist methodologies, other methods are more particular to the constructivist search for sense-making processes behind the social phenomena of trust and distrust. A selection of such specific interpretive methods is discussed in the following paragraph.

> 5.2.2.1.   *Qualitative trust research methods in the constructivist methodological tradition*

The role of the researcher in the participant's sense-making process is crucial in the inter-subjective ontological perspective on trust, as research can change the social reality of trust simply by talking about it. Saunders (2012) argues that discussing trust can lead to stress or behavioural change, and discussing critical incidents is a sensitive topic that can cause distress for the respondents: it raises the question whether there are different views of the same situation and whether research can potentially affect the relationship it seeks to uncover in a negative of positive way. Qualitative methods in the constructivist methodological tradition are particularly sensitive to this consideration. The constructivist qualitative trust research methods discussed here are the hermeneutic method, repertory grid and narrative analysis.

The hermeneutic method is argued to be particularly suitable to study trust from a constructivist perspective because it allows the researcher to "*internalize the situation of the persons they study, to 'relive' and experience what the object has experienced before, and, hence, to understand the acts of the trustee*" through careful analysis of texts and acts (Breeman, 2012: 150). Central to the hermeneutic

method is a 'dialogue' with the text, in which the researcher glides back and forth between their initial interpretation of the text and new interpretations that arise from "*asking questions about the text, and listening to it, in a dialogic form*" (Breeman, 2012: 154). Breeman argues that it is not easy to find trust studies that explicitly use a hermeneutic approach, due to the fierce competition with more positivistic approaches. However, in research disciplines where the positivist paradigm is less dominant, such as in religious studies, the hermeneutic method is frequently used in the study of trust (Breeman, 2012).

Repertory grids are argued to be a powerful method for macro-level comparative studies into trust. Bachmann (2012) argues that simplifications rooted in a positivist epistemology are widely recognised as naïve and inappropriate (especially in the study of intercultural differences in trust), and that the trust research field has now matured enough to move away "*from the conventional one questionnaire fits all*" approach (Bachmann, 2012: 130). The word 'trust', its translation in other cultural contexts and the concepts and constructs associated with it, are considered to be socially constructed and therefore very much culture-specific. Bachmann (2012) champions the repertory grid method for culturally comparative trust studies on the basis of the claim that it has no leaning toward positivist universalism, yet escapes the dangers of too far-reaching constructivist attempts where the object of study is dissolved into purely subjective contributions. Repertory grid interviewing is based on the idea of giving a minimal input by the interviewer and receiving a maximum amount of output by the participant in the interview session. The method is developed by Kelly (1995) on the basis of his personal construct theory, in which it is argued that "*individuals actively construe a network of constructs that are representations of their own truth of the world as they (and only they) understand it*" (Ashleigh and Meyer, 2012: 139). The grid is developed using concrete and discrete representations of the domain one wants to explore (elements). These elements must be real and observable (e.g. people, objects, locations, activities), homogeneous, (drawn from the same category, so one set of elements should not mix nouns and people) and finally, elements should not be evaluative. Pairs of these elements are picked randomly and the interviewee is asked whether these elements are considered to be similar or dissimilar with regard to trust (for instance, are John and Jane similar or dissimilar regarding trust?) (1). The respondent is then asked why the elements suggested are similar or dissimilar, which will result in a construct (for instance, the respondent may say that they are similar in 'honesty') (2). This process is repeated until all elements are tested and a list of constructs is created. Finally, the interviewer tests all constructs against all elements, asking the respondent whether each construct can be associated to each element (3). All elements therefore receive a construct-based profile (4) and are then presented on a cognitive map, where elements with similar construct based profiles are closer to each other (5) (Ashleigh and Meyer, 2012; Bachmann, 2012). The construction of these 'cognitive maps' is the goal of the repertory grid method. Furthermore, depending on the purpose of the analysis, cognitive maps can be quantified to some extent by giving the elements a standardised score on the map and calculating the distances between different elements or conducting cluster analyses of the elements (although some interpretive purists therefore consider repertory grids not to be a strictly

phenomenological approach). Cognitive maps are particularly useful to compare the meaning of concepts between different organisations, groups or cultures, and provide a measured way to examine the influence of context on the concept of trust, its conditions and its consequences.

Narrative analysis is argued to be a good complementary approach to repertory grid analysis for trust research. Ashleigh and Meyer (2012: 141) argue that narrative analysis "*is valued predominantly for its usefulness in understanding the construction of meaning and its ability to allow individuals to make sense of observed situations, events, and experiences*". While there appears to be recognition that narrative is the primary means by which people make sense of the world and how individuals inhabit it, narrative analysis as a method lacks a clear definition and has been described as a "*melting pot with a state of near-anarchy in the field*" (Ashleigh and Meyer, 2012: 140). Regardless of the lack of a definition for narrative as a method, a narrative can be considered to bring activities together and then organise them in a coherent whole. It "*creates meaning through a certain (temporal or causal) sequence (plot line) by highlighting certain people (characters) and through a moral endpoint*" (Abma, 2002: 7) and its basic features are argued to be time, sequence, voice, and point of view (Ashleigh and Meyer, 2012). As there appears to be no standardised comparator to verify the methodological approach taken in narrative analysis, a lot of discretion is left to the individual researcher to create their own understanding and method to analyse gathered narratives. However, as notions of research reliability and validity mainly fit within the positivist methodology and have a somewhat 'awkward' role in the constructivist methodological tradition (the paradigm of which rejects the existence of absolute ontological truths and epistemological claims to knowing those truths) its 'validity' as a research method can only be demonstrated through its wide use across a range of disciplines in a number of different ways to study trust (Ashleigh and Meyer, 2012).

> 5.2.3.   *Our methodological position: critical realism*

In this paragraph we will introduce our own methodological position. Our study is positioned primarily in the positivist methodological school, meaning that we make the a priori assumption that administrational trust is a real phenomenon in public administration (realist ontology, meaning that interorganisational trust exists independently of ourselves as observers) but is in part constructed inter-subjectively by boundary spanners, and that we can develop a fuller understanding of this phenomenon through the use of objective measures and instruments (objectivist epistemology). However, our conceptual and theoretical discussion in the previous chapters, as well as the overview of methodological perspectives regarding trust discussed in the previous paragraphs of the current chapter, suggest that we must also be critical toward 'pure' positivist perspectives regarding the study of trust in public administration. In that sense, we follow Pollitt and Bouckaert (2009), who resist both the radical scientific orthodoxy of strict positivists on the one hand and radical social constructivists on the other hand and decide to pitch their tent in the "*large, fertile and quite well-populated land that lies between these two poles*" (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2009: 172), which they denominate as the land of critical realism.

The critical realist position entails that our perspective is grounded in an realist social ontology, as we argue that social reality contains objectified social structures which exist independently of their subjective construction and observation. At the same time however, we embrace the constructivist notion that this independent reality is only part of the story, as trust and distrust are to certain extent constructed through inter-subjective interactions between boundary spanners who are encompassed by these objective realities, in the sense that social structures do not operate independently and mechanistically behind the backs of social actors. A critical realist perspective therefore entails the ontological position that reality is both objectively and subjectively constructed, as social interaction is determined by formal and social institutional structures on the one hand, and by social agency based on phenomenological inter-subjectivity on the other hand (Reed, 2001). The objective reality of trust and distrust is embedded in objective social structures, but it is also continuously interpreted, reformulated and reshaped through inter-subjective mechanisms. In epistemological terms, this entails that we can objectively 'know' administrational trust only to some extent, but complete objective knowledge about administrational trust lies beyond the reach of the positivist methodology. Our knowledge of the social reality of trust is informed and improved by objective measures and positivist research, but it cannot be completely separated from subjective worldviews and trust theories held by the participants, or the researchers.

The general point is that critical realism embraces a more "*catholic and diverse concept of causes than either the orthodox variables paradigm or the radical constructivists*" (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2009: 181) due to its acknowledgement that realist explanations depend on the interactions between specific mechanisms and specific contexts. Our discussion of the three methodological positions is summarised in the following table.

Table 17: Summary of methodological positions

	Positivist methodology	Critical realism	Constructivist methodology
Ontology	Realist	Reality is both objectively and subjectively constructed (Reed, 2001)	Social constructivist
Epistemology	Objective	Assumption of objectivity in research can expand knowledge, but knowledge cannot be separated from subjective worldviews and theories held by respondents and researchers.	Phenomenological, inter-subjective
Main activity	Deductively testing causal hypotheses derived from general theories	Looking for explanations of how key processes operate within specified contexts to produce particular outputs	Inductively exploring multiple, socially constructed meanings
Typical methods	(Statistical) testing of relationships between dependent and independent variables	Thick descriptions, but disciplined within broad theoretical or conceptual frameworks	Interpretations of language and texts. Egalitarian and participative research processes
Ambitions	Generalisations about stable, cause-and effect relationships between variables	Small and medium-sized generalisations applicable across a limited number of clearly-specified contexts	Local understandings, sometimes arriving at inter-subjective, consensual interpretations through participative discussion

(Adapted based on Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2009: 183)

Rousseau et al. (1998: 393) have argued that "a *phenomenon as complex as trust requires theory and research methodology that is able to reflect the many facets and levels of the concept*". This was demonstrated in the theoretical discussion of the previous chapter as well as in the methodological

discussion of the current chapter. For our research design, a critical realist perspective is therefore most appropriate, as it allows us to acknowledge the value of constructivist research and present positivist methods with due humility regarding their potential to gain a better understanding of (administrational) trust. As mixing positivist and constructivist methodologies would be logically inconsistent because both traditions are associated with conflicting ontological and epistemological notions (Haverland and Yanow, 2012), we focus our research on a positivist examination of administrational trust and distrust, but do so within a critical realist methodological perspective. This means that our assumption is that administrational trust is (at least in part) objectively 'real' and that we can develop a fuller (albeit incomplete) understanding of this 'reality' through the use of 'objective' measures, instruments and deductively developed general conceptual frameworks. However, we also acknowledge fully that our study foregoes the inter-subjective nature of administrational trust in doing so. This methodological consciousness requires us to consider the limitations, weaknesses, and inabilities of positivist methods to understand the inter-subjective nature of administrational trust. Our critical realist position therefore entails a 'humbled' positivist ontological and epistemological perspective on administrational trust in the Flemish government.

> 5.3.   **A conscious choice of methods: specifying requirements for the research design**

In order to determine which research methods are most appropriate to study the research questions of this dissertation, we need to examine which requirements the questions raise for the research design and how the hypotheses can be tested. This section therefore starts from the research questions and the research expectations to specify the required research object, units of analysis and units of observation, in order to arrive at a conscious choice of research methods, and ultimately, the appropriate research design[15].

> 5.3.1.   *Revised research questions*

In the conceptual chapter of this dissertation, we have argued for the need to focus on interorganisational interactions which can be characterised as 'trust problems'. In our exploratory research, we screened the occurrence of interorganisational trust problems in the Flemish administration on the basis of an exploratory senior civil servant survey (n=45) and exploratory senior civil servant interviews (n=9). This exploration indicated that within the Flemish administration, interorganisational trust problems primarily occurred in interactions with departments of the three horizontal policy areas.

Therefore, we can further specify our research questions, in order to make them sufficiently specific in order to define the required research object, units of analysis and units of observation.

[15]   We remind the reader that RQ1: "What is the role of interorganisational trust in a public administration context?" was already answered in the exploratory chapter of this dissertation

- RQ2: What is the distribution of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration?
  - Revised RQ2: What is the distribution of administrational trust and distrust in interorganisational interactions with the horizontal departments of the Flemish administration? (Descriptive)
- RQ3: Which mechanisms explain interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration ?
  - Revised RQ3: Which mechanisms explain administrational trust in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments of the Flemish administration? (Explanatory)

> 5.3.2.   *Research object*

On the basis of our exploration, interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments were selected as the research objects in the revised research questions two and three. As Zaheer et al. (1998: 142) defined interorganisational trust as *"the extent of trust placed in the partner organisation by the members of a focal organisation"*, we should focus on the subjective trust evaluations of boundary spanners (trustor) in interorganisational interactions with the horizontal departments (trustee) in the Flemish administration.

> 5.3.3.   *Units of analysis*

The unit of analysis in trust research may be operationalised in a diffuse or a specific way. On the one hand, trust can be operationalised as a diffuse and general attitude of groups towards an abstract object (Bouckaert et al., 2002; Van De Walle, 2004). This perspective is exemplified in classical survey questions that gauge trust in abstract referents, such as ' trust in government' (2012), or ' trust in other people'. The advantage of the diffuse operationalisation is that is it applicable to a large number of people, and thus particularly suited for survey research. On the other hand, the unit of analysis can be operationalised in a very specific way (Gillespie, 2012). According to this perspective, trust *"is not a global feeling of warmth or affection, but the conscious regulation of one's dependence on another that will vary with the task, the situation and the other person"* (Zand, 1972: 230). It is a *"three-part relation that restricts any claim of trust to particular parties and to particular matters"* (Hardin, 2002: 7) or, even more specific, *"a four-place predicate in which a trustor (1) trusts a trustee (2) in some respect (3) under some conditions (4)"* (Nooteboom, 2002: 259). The advantage of more specific operationalisations of the unit of analysis is that they can yield more complex and rich explanations of trust in specific interactions, and are thus more appropriate for qualitative approaches.

In other words, the challenge is to operationalise interorganisational relations with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration which are sufficiently broad to answer the descriptive RQ2, yet sufficiently specific to answer the explanatory RQ3. As mentioned in the exploratory chapter, departments are generally responsible for policy preparation, monitoring and evaluation in their policy area. The three 'horizontal' departments in particular have the additional responsibility of collecting entities' data for horizontal use, for instance in centralised Management Information Systems. After discussion of the exploratory research results with the senior civil servant of a particular horizontal department, we decided

to operationalise these four primary responsibilities of the three horizontal departments as the units of analysis for our research, as they are collectively sufficiently broad for description of administrational trust and distrust in the horizontal departments, but individually sufficiently specific to compare and explain the mechanisms of administrational trust in critical cases of interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments. Table 18 summarises the resulting 12 units of analysis.

Table 18: Units of analysis

	Department DAR	Department BZ	Department FB
Collection and use of data for horizontal use	Item 1	Item 5	Item 9
Monitoring of horizontal policy	Item 2	Item 6	Item 10
Preparation of horizontal policy	Item 3	Item 7	Item 11
Evaluation of horizontal policy	Item 4	Item 8	Item 12

> 5.3.4.   *Units of observation*

During the exploratory phase of our research, we have treated senior civil servants as our units of observation. This was justified at that point because senior civil servants were considered to be key informants regarding general notions of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration. However, due to the re-specifications of the research object and the units of analysis discussed in the previous paragraphs, we must also shift our units of observation. The logical consequence of the discussion in the two previous paragraphs is that the required units of observations are boundary spanners in these twelve interorganisational interactions with the horizontal departments. As interorganisational trust is built, experienced and expressed by boundary spanners, extant research on interorganisational trust has often argued that boundary spanners are the most appropriate units of observation (Currall and Judge, 1995; Ring and Van de Ven, 1994; Zaheer et al. 1998, Perrone et al. 2003). Organisational boundary spanners can be identified as civil servants in *"jobs or roles that require them to come in direct contact with the employees of other organisations"*[16]. However, Agranoff (2003) argues that it is important to recognise that not all agency administrators are caught up in interorganisational interaction, networking or collaborative activity. *"Indeed, with the exception of agency boundary spanners, many public agency administrators spend as little as 15 to 20 percent of their time in all types of cross-agency work, including involvement in networks"* (Agranoff, 2013: 197). Our research design must thus allow us to identify the particular civil servants in the Flemish administration who regularly act as boundary spanners in the twelve specified interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments.

Now that the requirements for the research design are specified on the basis of the research questions, we are ready to discuss which research methods are most appropriate for this study of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration.

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[16]   Adapted from http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/boundary-roles.html#ixzz2a49Asl3m

> 5.4.   **Identifying the appropriate design: the argument for a mixed-method approach**

The previous discussion elucidates that the research design must be able to 1) describe boundary spanners' administrational trust and distrust in horizontal departments, 2) in twelve relatively specific interorganisational interactions with the 'horizontal' departments, 3) and allow comparison and explanation of mechanisms of administrational trust in 'critical case units'. These methodological requirements can only be obtained through a research design that combines the descriptive broadness and generalisability of large-N approaches with the depth of qualitative explanations in small-N approaches. Barrera et al. (2012) argue that no single method is entirely superior for the purpose of testing hypotheses regarding the social mechanisms of trust, and that a multi-method approach would be most fitting as a research strategy into the mechanisms of trust. We follow this argumentation, and therefore propose a mixed-method research design that allows integration of quantitative and qualitative research findings.

Mixed method research designs are a specific form of multi-method research. They can be defined as "*research (designs) in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study, program or inquiry*" (Tashakkori and Creswel, 2007: 4). The emphasis on integration sets mixed method research apart from multi-method research and data triangulation, in which multiple sources are used to gather and check data, but integration is not of central interest. Integration can take the form of comparing, contrasting, building on or embedding one type of conclusion with the other (Creswell and Tashakkori, 2007).

It is important to note that there is little objection to mixing quantitative and qualitative methods within the same methodological paradigm (Haverland and Yanow, 2012) to research a single question. We agree with Denscombe (2008: 273) who argues "*any simply quantitative-qualitative distinction hardly does justice to the variety of epistemological and ontological assumptions that underpin the term*". However, mixing quantitative and qualitative methods based on constructivist assumptions with quantitative or qualitative methods based on positivist assumptions is considered to be problematic, because doing so would combine incompatible ontological and epistemological positions regarding the same question.

Mixed method designs have significant strengths compared to both mono and multi-method designs. A frequent argument is that the integration between quantitative and qualitative methods provides a better understanding of a phenomenon than a mere combination of both methods. Five specific advantages of mixing methods can be identified: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989). Triangulation (the use of several methods to investigate a phenomenon of interest) was the "*intellectual wedge that broke the methodological hegemony of mono-method purists*" (Molina-Azorín, 2010: 9), although triangulation is not strictly considered as a MMRD because it lacks integration between quantitative and qualitative methods. Complementarity refers to seeking to illustrate or clarify the results obtained by one method by using the other. Development refers to using a different method to expand on the insights gathered by other methods. Initiation reframes research questions due to paradoxes and contradictions that might be found between different

methodological studies. Finally, expansion seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods (Greene et al., 1989). Molina-Azorín (2010) suggests a number of other strengths of mixed method designs such as participant enrichment, instrument fidelity, treatment integrity and significance enhancement. Mixed method designs are also argued to enable better inferences because they can test quantitative correlations through qualitative in-depth interviewing, and thus provide a more complete causal explanation of the phenomenon under inquiry (Molina-Azorín, 2010).

These advantages are illustrated when we consider that within the positivist methodological tradition, the main problem of qualitative studies is considered to be "*many variables, small number of cases*" (Lijphart, 1971: 685). In research situations with an intermediate number of cases, a conscious thinker should therefore recognise and take advantage of the possibilities and limitations of the small-N comparative method. Lijphart (1971) proposes to achieve this objective by combining the advantages of statistical and qualitative methods to steer case selection in comparative analyses toward cases that are actually comparable. This strategy requires a case selection that is based on a rather extensive comparative knowledge about relevant case characteristics (Lijphart, 1971), for which a survey questionnaire can be used to identify comparable cases, which are then investigated through in-depth interviewing. As such, the strengths of large-N approaches (in which a set of variables is held constant in order to formulate general empirical relationships) are combined with the advantageous potential of small-N approaches (in terms of theory-building and explanation of observed relationships). By defining the case selection criteria from the outset, case studies and in-depth interview respondents can be selected deliberately for particular properties that they possess in relation to a postulated theory (Haverland and Yanow, 2012). Thus, positivist qualitative and quantitative methods are mixed, while constructivist and positivist methodologies remain clearly separated. Lieberman (2005) provides a good discussion of such mixing large-N and small-N research within a positivist methodological framework, and argues that whereas a mono-method case study usually only succeeds in providing analytical generalisation, a mixed-method case study can provide a limited form of statistical generalisation, beause the selected case is a sample of a wider population, and thus allows generalisation of explanations to the wider population on the basis of the empirical data collected in the sample (Yin, 1994).

While the strengths of mixed method designs are methodologically convincing, their weaknesses are mainly pragmatic. First of all, conducting the research is not easy. Mixed method designs are challenging because they require more work and take a longer time to complete because both aspects of the study need to be completed, often in sequential order, which contributes to a higher financial cost of mixed method designs compared to mono-method designs. Mixed method designs also require researchers to develop a broad set of skills, spanning both quantitative and qualitative methods (Molina-Azorín, 2010). A second important downside of mixed-method research is the potential for publication. Although the quantitative and the qualitative parts of the study can be published separately, doing so foregoes the idea of letting both components inform each other and report on the integration of insights. Page limits, journal

preferences towards a certain methodology and the appreciation of scholarly performance in terms of the amount of publications rather than the quality of publications are barriers argued to keep researchers from publishing mixed-method research. However, an overview of mixed-method publishing in business management research showed that mixed method articles generate more citations than non-mixed method studies (Molina-Azorin, 2010).

Regardless of these pragmatic considerations, we argue that a mixed method design is the most appropriate methodological approach to address the requirements of our research questions. Its implementation can be grounded in our methodological position of critical realism regarding the nature of interorganisational trust, it can provide a valuable contribution to the scientific debate on interorganisational trust in public administration, and it has the potential to provide a solid foundation for practically relevant insights about how to manage interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration. In the following paragraph, we will operationalise the mixed-method research design.

> 5.5. Operationalising our mixed-method research design

Figure 9 presents the operationalisation of our mixed-method research design, which progressively narrows the span while increasing the depth of our investigation with each subsequent research phase, in order to answer each of the three research questions. The figure shows the four phases of this research project in its rows, and presents the research questions in the columns. As such, the figure presents how the answer to each research question is grounded in the findings of each research phase.

The first phase comprised desk research in order to construct the conceptual definitions and frameworks to address the research questions in this project. In the second phase, an exploration of all three research questions was conducted in order to answer the exploratory research question, and get more acquainted with the empirical reality of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration in order to guide the current methodological discussion; in particular regarding particularly prevalent trust problems in the Flemish administration (interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments) and the development of quantitative and qualitative tools for the third and fourth research phases. In the third phase, an online boundary spanner survey was conducted, which focused on boundary spanners in interorganisational relations with the horizontal departments within the Flemish administration. The survey requested boundary spanners to assess their trust and distrust regarding a list of twelve possible interactions with horizontal departments, and requested them to choose a Reference Interaction (RI) for the most trusted (sample 1) and the most distrusted (sample 3) interaction from this list. The online survey then automatically presented items about the internal dynamics of the trust process and the interaction-specific determinants regarding both RI. In the fourth phase, twenty respondents were invited for qualitative interviews. Respondent selection was based on the RI selection question in the boundary spanner survey. Ten respondents who had selected the most frequently selected RI for trust, were invited for an interview about this RI (sample 2). Ten other respondents who had selected the most frequently selected RI for distrust, were invited for an interview about this RI (sample 4).

Figure 9: Our mixed-method research design
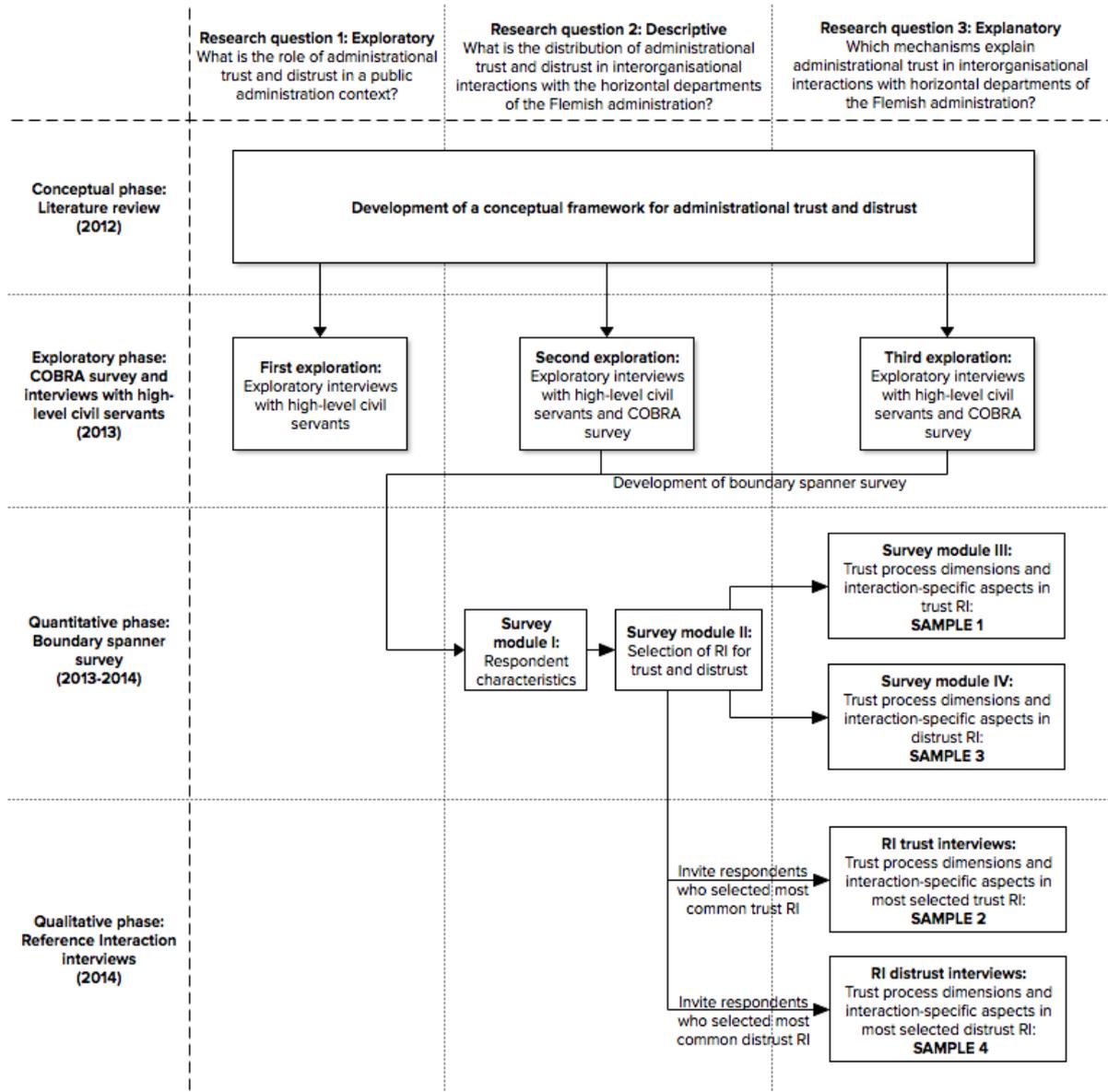
This research design thus seeks to combine the advantages of statistical and qualitative methods. The phase three boundary spanner survey seeks to provide descriptive data about trust and distrust in the horizontal department, provide quantitative correlations between internal dynamics and the interaction-specific reasons for interactions with horizontal departments, and to steer selection of two 'critical case units' for in-depth qualitative interviewing in phase four in order to deepen explanatory inferences. It thus mixes large-N and small-N research to provide a limited form of statistical generalisation, and corresponds to what Lieberman (2005) has described as a 'nested' mixed method analysis.

Table 19: Number of respondents and response rate in the four research phases

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
			Research phases	
N (response rate)	n/a	• Exploratory Interviews: 9 senior civil servants (response rate 90%) • COBRA Survey: 45 senior civil servants (response rate 69%)	• Boundary Spanner Survey: 145 boundary spanners (response rate unknown)	• Boundary Spanner Interviews: 16 boundary spanners (response rate 80%)

Table 19 provides a general overview of respondents in the four phases of this research design. In the following paragraphs, we will explain every phase of in this research design in further detail. We note that the first and second phases have already been reported in the previous chapters, and are thus discussed only briefly in what follows, as we will focus most of our attention on the elaboration of research phases three and four.

> 5.5.1. *Phase 1: the conceptual phase*

The first phase laid the conceptual and theoretical groundwork of our study, the results of which were presented in the second chapter of this dissertation. We defined administrational trust as "*a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions in public administration characterised by risk, dependency and uncertainty, comprising the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability, on the basis of positive expectations held about the counterpart organisation*". Second, we developed a conceptual framework in which administrational trust and distrust may both be considered to have functionalities and dysfunctionalities for public administration. Third, we discussed three perspectives on the basis of which the distribution of trust and distrust can be studied in interorganisational interactions. Finally, we discussed the universal trust process and the categories of interaction-specifc aspects that are considered to affect this process, on the basis of which we have constructed an analytical framework for the mechanisms of administrational trust.

> 5.5.2. *Phase 2: exploring administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration*

The second research phase sought to provide exploratory answers to the three research questions. Three explorations were conducted on the basis of empirical data collected through an exploratory survey (n=45) of senior civil servants and exploratory interviews (n=9) with senior civil servants in the Flemish administration. The methodological discussion of the survey and these interviews were reported in the exploratory chapter of this dissertation.

The objective of these explorations was to provide an answer to the first research question, and to familiarise ourselves with the empirical reality of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration in order to build adequate methods to investigate research questions two and three. In that sense, the exploratory research informed our choice of methods and their operationalisation in the research design presented here.

> 5.5.3.   *Phase 3: the boundary spanner survey*

The 'boundary spanner survey' was conducted between November 2013 and February 2014, and focused on boundary spanners in interorganisational relations with the horizontal departments within the Flemish administration. The survey consisted of five modules, of which four are relevant to this dissertation. Module I requested respondents to complete items regarding their personal characteristics and demographics. In module II, the survey requested boundary spanners to assert the level of their trust and distrust in twelve interactions with the three horizontal departments on Likert scales, and then requested respondents to select one Reference Interaction (RI) as 'most trusted' and one RI as the 'most distrusted' from this same list. In module III, the online survey software then automatically presented a list of Likert-scale items containing operationalisations of the interaction aspects and trust process dimensions for the respondents' selected RI of trust. In module IV, the survey software automatically presented the same list of items of interaction aspects and trust process dimensions for the respondents' selected RI of distrust. In other words, every respondents' most trusted and most distrusted RI was automatically presented as the referent regarding trust process dimensions and the presence of interaction-specific reasons for trust in a particular "*three-part relation that restricts any claim of trust to particular parties and to particular matters*" (Hardin, 2002:7). Figure 10 presents the structure of our boundary spanner survey schematically.

Figure 10: Structure of the boundary spanner survey
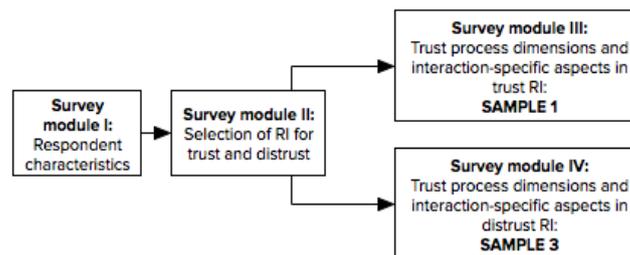
The boundary spanner survey was drafted on the basis of our conceptual framework and a literature review of existing measures. Two pre-tests of the survey were organised. In the first pre-test, the boundary spanner survey was internally tested by senior and junior researchers at the KU Leuven Public Governance Institute. In the second pre-test, the survey was discussed with Flemish civil servants in the project 'sounding board'[17]. In both pre-tests, we collected comments regarding question formulation and interpretation, survey length, structure or technical problems with the software, and adapted the survey to improve its designated weaknesses. The following comments to the draft survey were particularly

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[17]   'Sounding board' is a literal translation of the term 'klankbordgroep', which is used in the framework of the Policy Research Centre Governmental Organisation – Decisive Governance 2012-2015 to designate the group of civil servants with a mandate from the Flemish Government to follow up, reflect upon and discuss about a particular research project with the research team that is funded by the Flemish Government. The sounding board consists of civil servants from different functional levels and coming from different policy areas with different expertises.

important in that respect. First, the length of the draft survey was reduced, as its completion took our test group an average of 40 minutes, which was expected to be detrimental for the response rate[18]. Second, we added more emphasis on confidentiality, as some test respondents requested clarification on this issue. Third, a number of items were reformulated because they allowed multiple question interpretations. Fourth, we had the software consistently and explicitly mention the RI in every individual item prompt in module III and IV, whereas the draft version only mentioned the RI in the heading of modules III and IV. Fifth, we added 'not applicable' answer options to a number of questions as it was argued to be hard to answer some questions for respondents with relatively little boundary spanning experience. Finally, we added a free-text field at the end of the survey in order to allow respondents to voice comments and remarks about the questionnaire, or about the research more generally.

In the following paragraphs, we will discuss the four modules of the boundary spanner survey. A list of all survey items is attached to the annex of this dissertation.

> 5.5.3.1.   *Survey module I: personal characteristics*

Module I collected data on individual characteristics of the boundary spanners. As such, module I served as a relatively easy section to familiarise the respondents with the on-line survey environment and to ease them gently into the topic with questions about their generalised trust. Specifically, the first part contained questions regarding the respondent's age, sex, education, seniority, previous career experience, employment form, their general frequency of contact with horizontal departments, and the respondents' expectations about the impact of the research. Finally, this module contained items regarding respondents' micro-level predispositions to trust.

For our measurement of individual predispositions to trust, we adapted the instrument developed by Frazier et al. (2013), who follow Schoorman et al. (2007) in arguing that research on propensity to trust has suffered from lack of concise and rigorously validated scales. Frazier et al. (2013) address this concern through four studies in which they develop and test a concise four-item scale of propensity to trust, drawing on items suggested by McKnight et al. (2002) and Lee and Turban (2010). Their construct exhibits strong psychometric properties, internal consistency and high correlations with more elaborate item scales, indicating good content validity and convergent validity (Frazier et al., 2013). Furthermore, Frazier et al. (2013) confirmed the discriminant and predictive validity of this construct in a theoretical model, in which it was tested as an antecedent of trustworthiness (measured with the instrument proposed by

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[18]   The effect of survey length on response rates is quite contested. Some studies have shown that survey length did not influence response (Brown, 1965; Bruvold and Comer, 1988; Mason, Dressel and Bain, 1961). Other studies show that the longer the survey, the more likely it is that the response rate will be lower (Herberlien and Baumgartner, 1978; Steele, Schwendig and Kilpatrick, 1992; Yammarino, Skinner and Childers, 1991). Other authors, such as Eichner and Habermehl (1981), found that longer surveys generated a somewhat higher response rate than shorter surveys (Sheehan, 2001). However, methodological considerations of respondent fatigue suggest that data quality might suffer from overly long surveys, and the principle of parsimony and respect for the respondents' time all suggest giving preference to shorter surveys whenever possible and appropriate.

Mayer and Davis (1999)) and trust (measured with the instrument proposed by Mayer and Gavin (2005)). Finally, the authors confirmed the constructs' discriminant validity from the related construct of 'optimism', as propensity to trust captures one's general tendencies in social interactions with others rather than the generally positive worldview that is captured in optimism. Furthermore, since the measure was systematically validated in a convincing empirical setting of adult respondents across a range of different industries (Frazier et al., 2013), and empirically tested in a multidimensional theoretical framework of trust (Mayer et al., 1995), we consider this measure to be a well-developed and validated instrument. Therefore, we adopted the four items proposed by Frazier et al. (2013) to measure individual predispositions to trust.

The items adopted to measure the personal characteristics of our respondents in the boundary spanner survey are attached to the annex of this dissertation.

> 5.5.3.2. *Survey module II: the distribution of administrational trust and distrust in Flemish horizontal departments*

Module II first requested boundary spanners to assert the level of their trust in the twelve specific interactions with the three horizontal departments on a Likert scale, and then requested respondents to select one interaction on this list as their Reference Interaction (RI) for 'most trusted' interaction with a horizontal department. Then boundary spanners were requested to assert the level of their distrust for the same list of interactions with horizontal departments on a Likert scale, and to select one Reference Interaction (RI) for 'most distrusted' interaction. In the questions, we specified that "*trust can be seen as the intentional or effective suspension of vulnerability on the basis of positive expectations about another party. Trust can be associated with hope, faith, confidence and assurance*", and that "*distrust can be seen as the intentional or effective avoidance of vulnerability on the basis of negative expectations about another party. Distrust can be associated with fear, scepticism, cynicism and vigilance*", as per the discussion of trust and distrust presented in Lewicki et al. (1998).

The specific items of this second module are also attached in the annex of this dissertation.

> 5.5.3.3. *Survey modules III and IV: interaction aspects and trust process dimensions in trusted and distrusted interactions with Flemish horizontal departments*

Module III and module IV were identical in terms of their content: they both contained the same items about interaction aspects and trust process dimensions. The only difference between both modules was that the online survey software automatically displayed each boundary spanners' selected RI of trust as the referent for every question in module III, while it displayed each boundary spanners' selected RI of distrust as the referent for every question in module IV.

Since both modules are thus the same in terms of their content, they are discussed together in the following paragraphs. We first discuss our operationalisation of interaction aspects, and then discuss our

operationalisation of the trust process dimensions: perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability, and risk-taking behaviour.

Operationalisation of interaction-specific determinants: macro-, meso- and micro-level interaction aspects

While there has been significant attention for the development and validation of scales to measure micro-level predispositions to trust, no validated scales were found in the literature with which to measure the macro- and meso-level interaction aspects of interorganisational interactions we have discussed in relation to boundary spanners' interorganisational trust evaluations. Therefore, we developed our own set of items to measure the perceived presence of these interaction aspects in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. These items are included in the annex to this dissertation.

We developed measures to assess the perceived presence of macro-level interaction aspects according to a parsimonious reformulation of Sztompka's (1998) substantive criteria for trust-generating institutions (Sztompka 1998), as they were discussed in the theoretical chapter of this dissertation. This was operationalised as the existence of formal rules, formal roles, informal routines and informal salient norms in interorganisational interactions with the horizontal department, which are clear and allow enactment of rights and enforcement of duties and stimulate a 'culture of trust' in the interorganisational interaction.

We have developed measures to assess the perceived presence of meso-level calculative and relational interaction aspects on the basis of the discussion about these aspects in the theoretical chapter of this dissertation. We argued that calculative interaction aspects comprised (asymmetric) information at the trustor's disposal regarding the perceived risk, the asset specificity and the opportunistic motivations of the counterpart in a particular interaction. Control items were developed to assess the extent to which boundary spanners rely on organisational and personal cost-benefit considerations. Relational interaction aspects were argued to include reciprocity of trust and distrust, value identification, the quality of interpersonal relations, and power equality. Items measuring the control variable familiarity included measures for expectations on the basis of previous experiences and the age and frequency of the interorganisational interaction.

Regarding the measurement of micro-level 'predispositions to trust others', we have adopted the instrument proposed by Frazier et al. (2013), as discussed earlier.

Operationalisation of the trust process: perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour

McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) suggest that researchers should let their choice of measurement instrument for trust and its dimensions be guided by the theoretical models and the research questions that lead their study. As our study is based on the 'universal trust process' model, our measures should be able to

empirically measure all three of these dimensions in the empirical reality of the Flemish public administration. In their review of 129 unique measures of trust and its various dimensions, McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) use the 'universal trust proces' as a framework to outline five particular instruments which they consider to represent the 'state of the art' in trust measurement. Figure 11 shows how the five 'state of the art' measurement instruments relate to the three dimensions of our theoretical model of administrational trust (and distrust).

Figure 11: Trust process dimensions and 'state of the art' measurement instruments

(Source: Adopted from McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011: 39)

The five 'state of the art' measures they discuss are McAllister's (1995) 'Managerial Interpersonal Trust' instrument, Currall and Judge's (1995) 'Boundary Role Persons Trust' instrument, Cummings and Bromiley's (1996)' Organisational Trust Inventory', Mayer and Davis' (1999) 'Organisational Trust' instrument, and Gillespie's (2003) 'Behavioural Trust Inventory'.

For our measure of perceived trustworthiness, we will use Mayer and Davis' (1999) 'Organisational Trust' instrument, but expanded with a 'compliance' dimension. For our measures of willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, we will use an adapted version of Currall and Judge's (1995) 'Boundary Role Persons Trust' instrument. We explain the motivation for these choices and the adaptations in the following paragraphs.

Perceived trustworthiness: 'Organisational Trust' Instrument plus compliance

McEvily and Tortoriello (2011: 38) argue that "*for theories focusing on trustworthiness beliefs, or the individual characteristics upon which a subjective evaluation of a trustee's motives and intentions is made, the measures developed by McAllister (1995), Cummings and Bromiley (1996), and Mayer and Davis (1999) are all relevant options*". McAllister's (1995) measure primarily emphasises interpersonal cognition- based and affect-based beliefs about a counterpart's trustworthiness, while Cummings and Bromiley's (1996)

measure focuses on beliefs about whether the trustee makes good-faith efforts, is honest and refrains from opportunism in organisational interactions. Mayer and Davis's (1999) instrument focuses on a trustee's ability, benevolence and integrity in organisational interactions.

We have operationalised perceived trustworthiness in line with the 'Organisational Trust' instrument proposed by Mayer and Davis (1999). We outline our motivation for this choice here.

- First, we prefer it because it is methodologically most appropriate for our units of analysis. Mayer and Davis' (1999) instrument was designed to capture trust in a variety of organisational relationships and has been used in studies on a range of interorganisational authority and exchange relationships. The Cummings and Bromiley (1996) measure is argued to be well suited for relationships involving negotiation and exchange, but may be less applicable to relationships that primarily involve other types of activity (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011). McAllisters' (1995) instrument focuses on interpersonal trust rather than interorganisational trust, although McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) report some overlap between both perspectives.

- Second, we prefer Mayer and Davis' (1999) operationalisation because of its embeddedness in what has become a seminal theoretical framework in trust research. Mayer and Davis' (1999) 'Organisational Trust' instrument is grounded in their 'integrative approach to organisational trust' (Mayer et al. 1995), which introduced the theoretical model of trust as a relatively universal causal process in which 'perceived trustworthiness' subsequently leads to a willingness to be vulnerable and the behavioural consequences of that willingness (Mayer et al., 1995). As such, the instrument is most appropriate for our own theoretical framework.

- Third, we prefer the Mayer and Davis (1999) 'Organisational Trust' instrument because it is well-established in empirical trust research. In their analysis of 172 papers, McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) report that it is the second-most replicated instrument (the first being McAllister's 'Managerial Interpersonal Trust' instrument). A particularly relevant (non-verbatim) replication of the instrument was conducted by Beccera, Lunnan and Huemer (2008), who adapted the instrument to apply to interorganisational, rather than organisational interactions, and reported high internal consistency values for the trustworthiness measure and for the separate dimensions of integrity, benevolence and ability.

Considering that the 'Organisational Trust' instrument by Mayer and Davis (1999) is conceptually, theoretically and methodologically most appropriate for our research, and considering that it is well-established in empirical research on (inter)organisational trust, we hold that their operationalisation of trustworthiness is most suitable for our research design. However, we argue for an additional factor to Mayer and Davis' perceived ability, benevolence and integrity, considering the context-specific nature of this research into 'administrational trust'. Since the dimension of perceived trustworthiness can be seen to refer to expectations about a trustee's future performance (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012), we argue that the measure of perceived trustworthiness in the public sector should reflect different dimensions of public

sector performance. In this respect, Hood (1991) refers to three 'families of values' regarding the performance of administrative systems and organisations. He refers to 'sigma values' as "*administrative values connected with the matching of resources to narrowly defined tasks and circumstances in a competent and sparing fashion*" (Hood, 1991: 12). This value matches closely with Mayer et al.'s (1995) 'perceived ability', which they defined as the perceived skills, competences and other characteristics that allow the trustee to have influence in some domain and successfully complete a specific task. Second, Hood identifies 'theta values' as "*values broadly relating to the pursuit of honesty, fairness and mutuality through the prevention of distortion, inequity, bias, and abuse of office*" (Hood, 1991: 12). Theta values thus match closely with 'perceived integrity' and 'perceived benevolence', as the former was described by Mayer et al. (1995) as the belief that the trustee adheres to a set of values and principles that are acceptable to the trustor, and was closely related to fairness and justice, while the latter was described by Mayer et al. (1995) as the belief that the trustee wants to do good for reasons that are not egocentric, but because of care about the trustor's interests and needs and because of a genuine positive appreciation for the trustor. Finally, Hood suggests that the 'lambda values' "*relate to resilience, endurance, robustness, survival and adaptivity (…) to keep operating even in adverse 'worst case' conditions and to adapt rapidly in a crisis. Expectations of security and reliability are central to traditional public administration values*" (Hood, 1991: 14). These 'lambda values' are not reflected in the conceptualisation of perceived trustworthiness provided by Mayer et al. (1995), while they might be most distinctive for the public sector. Performance is seen as robustness and resiliency, guaranteeing that public organisations keep working predictably even in adverse 'worst case' scenarios (Van Dooren, Bouckaert, and Halligan 2010). Such predictability requires that organisations have a strong regime to fall back on in a 'worst case scenario', and will adhere to relevant written and unwritten procedures, management instructions, and the regulatory framework at all times. Therefore, we added an additional 'compliance' dimension to the 'organisational trust' instrument suggested by Mayer and Davis (1999) in order to reflect this distinctly public value in perceived trustworthiness.

Table 20: Aspects of performance and trustworthiness

Dimensions of performance in public sector organisations (Hood, 1991)	Corresponding dimensions of trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995)
Sigma: Product values	Ability
Theta: Process values	Integrity and Benevolence
Lambda: Regime values	No dimension, suggestion to add 'compliance'

In conclusion, we use Mayer and Davis' (1999) 'organisational trust' instrument, as adapted by Beccera et al. (2008) for application to interorganisational interactions, but expanded with four additional items aimed to capture 'lambda values' of perceived trustworthiness, which may be argued to be specific to the context of public administration. The items to measure perceived trustworthiness are attached in the annex to this dissertation.

The willingness to suspend vulnerability: 'Boundary Spanner Trust' instrument

Figure 11 shows that McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) suggest three 'state of the art' instruments to measure willingness to suspend vulnerability, namely Mayer and Davis (1999), Currall and Judge (1995) and Gillespie (2003). In what follows, we briefly present these three instruments and motivate why we selected Currall and Judge's (1995) 'Boundary Role Persons Trust' instrument to operationalise the willingness to suspend vulnerability in our research. Mayer and Davis' (1999) instrument is argued to be a good option because their four-item instrument was specifically developed to operationalise their multidimensional theoretical model of trust. Gillespie's (2003) ten-item 'Behavioural Trust Inventory' focuses on measuring the trustors' willingness to objectively being harmed if trust was violated. Gillespie identifies two dimensions to this willingness, namely 'reliance' and 'disclosure'. Currall and Judge (1995) focus specifically on capturing trust between organisational boundary spanners. These authors developed a multi-dimensional measure to capture individual boundary spanners' intentional and behavioural reliance on another person under a condition of risk. The authors identified four 'manifestations' of this intentional and behavioural reliance: open and honest communication, engaging in informal agreements, maintaining surveillance and coordinating interdependent tasks.

For the operationalisation of the willingness to suspend vulnerability in our own research, we have used the 'Boundary Role Persons Trust' instrument suggested by Currall and Judge (1995). Three major reasons were important in our preference for the 'Boundary Role Persons Trust' instrument:

- First, Currall and Judge's (1995) instrument is most appropriate for our study in methodological terms. As argued above, our research design defines the units of observation as boundary spanners in twelve identified interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish public administration. Currall and Judge's (1995) instrument is explicitly developed to measure trust in organisational boundary role relations. The authors suggest that researchers who wish to study different organisational contexts can adapt their items and dimensions to the relevant organisational context as "*these items are generic to all [Boundary Role Persons], and they can be used to measure [Boundary Role Person] trust in a variety of organisational settings*" (Currall and Judge, 1995: 167). This generic adaptability distinguishes Currall and Judge's (1995) measure from the measure suggested by Gillespie (2003), which is more specifically developed for measurement of interpersonal forms of intentional and behavioural trust in leadership[19]. Whereas Currall and Judge's (1995) instrument was also developed to measure trust between individuals, it focuses on individuals in organisational boundary role functions, which makes the instrument

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[19] For instance, Gillespie's disclose items "share your personal feelings with your leader" or "confide in your leader about personal issues that are affecting your work" are not appropriate or adaptable to the interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish public administration that are the focus of our study.

much more flexible and adaptable to different research contexts. For these reasons, we consider Currall and Judge's (1995) instrument to be the most appropriate in methodological terms for our study of organisational boundary spanner's subjective evaluations regarding interorganisational trust and distrust in the horizontal departments of the Flemish administration.

- Second, the Currall and Judge (1995) instrument is theoretically most appropriate for our study since it was developed in a similar theoretical framework. In particular, Currall and Judge (1995) use Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) as their theoretical framework. As introduced earlier, TRA broadly states that attitudes and perceived norms lead to behavioural intentions which lead to actual behaviour. Currall and Judge (1995) explicitly state that their measure corresponds to the 'behavioural intentions' construct in the TRA; the authors therefore distinguish trust as intended behaviour from actual behaviour. Their measure clearly distinguishes the intention to trust from its antecedents and its behavioural consequences. While a verbatim application of the instrument thus focuses on the willingness to suspend vulnerability, McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) note that the instrument could easily be applied to measure behavioural trust, by changing the item prompts from hypothetical to effective formulations (e.g. asking "would you…" vs. "do you…"). Therefore, the Currall and Judge (1995) measure conceptually distinguishes between the intentional and the behavioural dimensions of trust, but could be applied as an indicator for both dimensions, which makes it particularly appropriate for our research.

- Third, McEvily and Tortoriello (2011: 61) commend the validation processes employed by Currall and Judge (1995) and Gillespie (2003). The former in particular was argued to be "*quite comprehensive covering convergent, discriminant, between-sample and nomological validity*" (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011: 61). The measures for 'trust' in Mayer and Davis' (1999) instrument are criticised however, as "*trustworthiness and trust items (…) do not appear to have been developed with the same sort of detailed process*" (McEvily and Tororiello, 2011: 61). Indeed, the qualitiy of Mayer and Davis' trust measure is less pronounced than the quality of their trustworthiness measure.

Considering therefore that the 'Boundary Role Persons Trust' instrument by Currall and Judge (1995) is conceptually, theoretically and methodologically most appropriate for our research, and considering that it has been well-validated and is regarded highly in empirical research on (inter)organisational trust, and that it can also be applied to the behavioural dimensions of the trust process, we consider their measurement instrument to be the most appropriate for our research design. Our replication of Currall and Judge's (1995) instrument is however, not verbatim. Indeed, we made three adaptations to the measurement instrument in order to render it appropriate for our research design and context. First, we slightly adapted the items so that they could apply to a specific interorganisational interaction with a Flemish horizontal department. Second, we adapted the item prompts so that they would emphasise the difference between

willingness and actual behaviour to a stronger extent. Finally, we only adopted two of the four dimensions proposed by Currall and Judge (1995).

- First, we adapted the different items[20] to apply to particular Reference Interactions of interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. Currall and Judge's (1995) original instrument investigated trust between boundary role persons. However, Zaheer et al. (1998: 142) defined interorganisational trust as "*the extent of trust placed in the partner organisation by the members of a focal organisation*". Therefore, we adapted the items to refer to the RI's horizontal department, rather than to the individual counterpart boundary spanner in respondents' selected RI.

- Second, we adapted the item prompts[21] so that they would emphasise the difference between willingness and actual behaviour to a stronger extent. McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) suggest that Currall and Judge's (1995) instrument can be used to measure both the intentional and the behavioural dimensions of the trust process by having item prompts refer to either hypothetical or actual behaviour. The obvious advantage of this strategy is that the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour can be measured by repeating the same set of items, if they are accompanied by different item prompts. We have therefore reformulated the original item prompts so that they reflect the willingness to suspend vulnerability more clearly, introducing the items by asking respondents to 'please indicate what you would like to do if you would be completely free to choose to do so'.

- Finally, Currall and Judge (1995) identified four "*famil[ies] of manifestations of behavioural reliance on another person under a condition of risk*" in their measure of the willingness to suspend vulnerability, but we have only adopted two. The 'four families of manifestations' are 'open and honest communication with the counterpart', 'entering informal agreements with the counterpart', 'maintaining some form of surveillance over the counterpart', and 'engaging in task coordination with the counterpart' (Currall and Judge, 1995). We only adapted the 'open and honest communication' and 'surveillance' 'families of manifestation'. Three reasons motivate this choice.

  - First, Currall and Judge (1995) only intended the 'communication', 'surveillance', and 'informal agreement' items to be generically applicable measures for boundary spanner

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[20] The original items proposed by Currall and Judge (1995) consistently referred to [the counterpart boundary role person], whereas our adaptation consistently refers to "this organisation".

[21] The original item prompt proposed by Currall and Judge (1995) was "Answer the questions in terms of what you would actually do in dealing with the [counterpart Boundary Role Person]". Our adaptation for the intentional willingness to suspend vulnerability is "Please indicate what you would want to do regarding [reference interaction] if you would be completely free to choose to do so", while our adaptation for the behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability is "Please indicate what you usually do regarding [reference interaction]". The online survey software automatically displayed the respondents' selected RI in the [reference interaction] field.

trust across different organisational settings and tasks, and thus did not attempt to formulate an exhaustive list of possible manifestation of intentional or behavioural suspension of vulnerability. The 'task coordination' items were developed for the specific context of dyadic relations between school district superintendents and presidents of local teachers' unions in American public school districts, making them inappropriate for the 12 interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments of the Flemish administration that we seek to study in this dissertation. Currall and Judge (1995: 167) argue that *"researchers wishing to measure (boundary role person) trust in organizational contexts other than the one we studied, have two options. One option is to use items in communication, informal agreement and surveillance dimensions only. These items are generic to all (boundary role persons), and can be used to measure (boundary role person) trust in a variety of organizational settings"*. We therefore excluded the 'task coordination' set of items from our survey.

o   Second, the items in the 'informal agreement' dimension were applicable to some, but not all units of observation (respondents). Since our respondents span different functional levels in the Flemish administration, they have various levels of decision discretion in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments. Whereas some respondents might autonomously decide to engage in an 'informal agreement' with the counterpart horizontal department, others were expected not to have the same extent of authority and decision-making discretion. For this reason, we did not adopt the 'informal agreement' manifestation in our boundary spanner survey.

o   Third, the survey pre-test suggested the need for a significant reduction in the number of items in the questionnaire. Considering the previous arguments, and considering that due to the design of the survey, every item adopted for this measure also had to be adopted in three other parts of the survey[22], we considered it to be both pragmatically and methodologically appropriate to focus only on the dimensions of 'open and honest communication' and 'surveillance'.

Behavioural trust: 'Boundary Spanner Trust' instrument (behavioural prompt)

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, we followed the recommendation of McEvily et al. (2011) to use the same set of measures for the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, accompanied by different item prompts. In other words, the measures for risk-taking behaviour and the

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[22]   Any item adopted in the dimension of 'willingness to suspend vulnerability' should also be adopted as a measure of 'risk-taking behaviour'. Furthermore, any item that is adopted in module III (RI of trust) of the survey must also be adopted in module IV (RI of distrust), which means that every item adopted to measure the intention to suspend vulnerability increases the total length of the questionnaire by four items.

willingness to suspend vulnerability consisted of the same set of items, the only difference being that the item prompts were formulated in terms of actual behaviour for the former ('please indicate what you actually do') and in terms of hypothetical intentions for the latter ('please indicate what you would like to do if you would be completely free to choose to do so').

> 5.5.3.4.   *Respondent selection, response rate and validity*

The selection of respondents happened in three steps. In a first step, we screened all organisations of the Flemish administration[23] for divisions in which employees would likely be required to have regular interactions with the horizontal departments (for instance, HR-divisions, financial divisions, strategy divisions, knowledge management divisions, communication divisions, Senior Civil Servant support staff,…). In a second step, senior civil servants of organisations were pre-notified about upcoming invitations being sent to civil servants in their organisations requesting their participation in research about interorganisational trust[24]. In the third step, 767 employees of selected divisions received an email containing an introduction about the research and its importance[25], and an invitation to participate in a survey if they considered that they had relevant interaction experience with any of the horizontal departments (opt-in).

In other words, the invited civil servants were requested to opt-in for participation in the boundary spanner survey on the basis of their self-assessed status as boundary spanners for interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration.

Respondents who replied that they did not have a boundary spanner role were deleted from the survey population and received no further reminders to participate. Respondents who did not reply to our invitation, or refused to participate for other reasons, were not deleted from the research population, and received three reminders[26]. Sheehan (2001) argues that the optimal number of reminders must be discussed on the basis of a cost-effectiveness perspective, where the researcher must balance the cost of

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[23] Following the DVO-classification of the Flemish administration, which comprises all entities that resort under the Flemish Personnel Statute (VPS) of 13/01/2006.

[24] There is some discussion on the effect of pre-notification on response rate. Fox, Crask and Kim (1988), Haggett and Mitchell (1994) and Kanuk and Berenson (1975) all found that pre-notification increases response rates for postal mail surveys. Heberlein and Baumgartner (1978) found little or no effect, while Jobber and Sanderson (1983) found that pre-notification decreases response rates to mail surveys. However, regardless of the effect of pre-notification on the response rate, Mehta and Sivadas (1995) suggested that pre-notification is imperative from a perspective of decency and morality, as the practice of sending unsolicited e-mail surveys is morally unacceptable.

[25] The salience of the research issue for the research population has been found to have a strong positive relation with response rate for online surveys (Sheehan and McMillan, 1999; Watt, 1999). Salience is defined as the association of importance and/or timeliness with a specific topic (Martin, 1994). Heberlein and Baumgartner (1978) report that issue salience had more influence than other factors such as respondent contact and monetary incentives for mail survey response rates. Martin, (1994) and Roberson and Sundstrom (1990) similarly report that topic salience is a key influencer for mail survey response. Bean and Roszkowski (1995) suggested that salience has more influence on response rate than survey length.

[26] Reminders are generally considered to have positive effects on response rates (Comer and Kelly, 1982; Jobber, 1986; Murphy, Daley and Dalenberg, 1990, 1991; Yammarino, Skinner and Childers, 1991). Sheehan and Hoy (1997) found that a reminder message in an e-mail survey increases response by 25%. Multiple follow-ups are considered to yield higher response rates than one-time reminders (Heberlein and Baumgartner, 1978).

incremental contacts with the number of replies received. Table 21 therefore presents the four timeframes between each reminder, and shows when respondents completed the boundary spanner survey. This table clearly shows diminishing returns for each reminder sent. Every reminder yielded fewer completed surveys. Whereas 94 people completed the survey after the initial invitation, subsequent reminders yielded 31, 15 and 5 additional responses, respectively.

Table 21: Evolution of response rate (cumulative)

	Invitation (14/11/2013)	1st reminder (12/12/2013)	2nd reminder (15/01/2014)	3rd reminder (24/02/2014)	Deadline (03/03/2014)
Respondents addressed	767 (100%)	762 (100%)	679 (100%)	642 (100%)	616 (100%
Surveys opened	/	168 (22%)	261 (38,4%)	296 (46,1%)	321 (52,1%)
Completion of module II (required for RQ2)	/	107 (14%)	154 (22,7%)	174 (27,1%)	189 (30,7%)
Completion of full survey (required for RQ3)	/	94 (12,3%)	125 (18,4%)	140 (21,8%)	145 (23,5%)

On the basis of these observations, we considered the costs of further reminders to outweigh the benefits after the fourth reminder. 30% of the invited civil servants completed module II (which is relevant for RQ2) and 23,5% of the invited civil servants completed the full survey up to module IV (which is relevant for RQ3).

However, it is important to note that these 'response rates' are not necessarily as low as they seem, and thus, not necessarily problematic for the external validity of our study. The external validity of a study refers to the domain to which findings can be generalised (Yin, 1994). In survey sample logic, external validity is achieved by randomly selecting a sufficiently large number of respondents from a population of a known size, on the basis of the assumption that the random sample will provide a correct representation of the distribution of the characteristics and answers of the wider population. Given that the sample is (1) sufficiently large, (2) randomly selected and (3) the response rate is sufficiently high, observations made in the sample can be generalised to the population. However, since we did not know the size of the population of 'boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments', we could not employ a random sampling method and opted for a targeted opt-in sampling design instead. However, this implies that the response rate is an untrustworthy indicator for the external validity of our study. Figure 12 clarifies how our respondents, the unknown population of boundary spanners in our units of analysis, and the sample (invited respondents) are related.

Figure 12: The 'response rate' in a broader perspective[27]
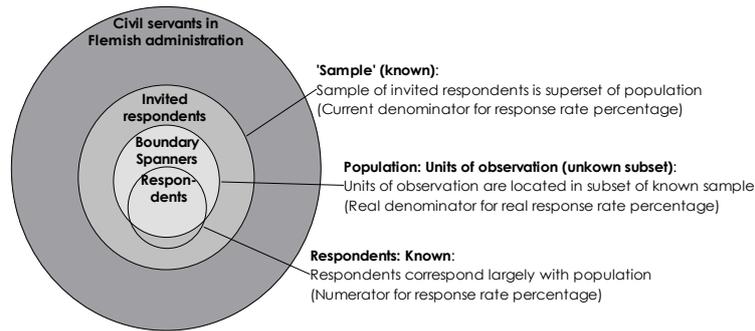
That means that in our survey, the (unknown) population is a subset of the (known) sample, rather than the other way around, as would be the case in the logic of random sampling. The consequence is that the 'response rate' mentioned above does not reflect how well we managed to capture the cooperation of boundary spanners in the Flemish administration. The population to which we seek to generalise our inferences is part of an a priori unknown subset of the civil servants we invited to participate in our research. Since we are restricted by the absence of a priori knowledge about the units of observation, we asked members of the 'superset' (individuals in functions that are associated with the radius of activities of horizontal departments) to opt-in if they considered themselves to be members of the research population (boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments). In other words, the actual denominator for the response rate is the unknown subset of boundary spanners. A better approximation of the response rate might be to consider the number of respondents who opened the survey as the denominator, and the number of respondents who completed the survey as the numerator. This approach suggests a response rate of 58% for RQ2 and 45% for RQ3.

> 5.5.4.   *Phase 4: Reference Interaction interviews*

In phase four, twenty respondents were invited for qualitative interviews based on their RI selection in the boundary spanner survey. Ten respondents were invited for interviews about the most frequently selected RI for interorganisational trust (the collection and use of horizontal information by B). The other ten interviews focused on interorganisational distrust, and were conducted with respondents who had chosen the most frequently selected RI for interorganisational distrust (the collection and use of horizontal information by A). For these interviews, plastic cards were prepared containing brief descriptions of the three dimensions of the trust process and particularly important interaction aspects in the boundary spanner survey. Respondents were requested to discuss the interaction aspects in relation to the three dimensions of the trust process in their particular RI, allowing us to analyse and compare how boundary

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[27] The figure serves illustrative purposes and is not intended to provide an accurate depiction of empirical reality

spanners described and related interaction aspects and the trust process dimensions for two qualitative samples. As such, the objective of this fourth phase was to deepen our insight into the mechanisms of administrational trust in the horizontal departments of the Flemish administration. Whereas quantitative methods aim at a more generalisable study of a larger number of cases, qualitative methods aim at more deep and context-sensitive investigation of a limited number of cases with the intention of explanation (Lieberman, 2005). The ambition of the fourth phase of our research is therefore particularly directed at explaining the mechanisms of administrational trust.

> 5.5.4.1.   *Qualitative causal process tracing through CSM*

Our approach can be described as causal process tracing (Blatter and Blume, 2008). Causal process tracing aims to follow the mechanisms that lead from prior conditions (and interventions) through to outcomes. According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2009: 188) this holds the potential to "*get behind the statistical correlations of the orthodox school and see into the 'black box' where this follows that and then leads into something different",* enabling a wider notion of causality than what a positivist methodology would generally allow by using a case or cases to trace processes in order to show quite detailed steps that lead from cause to consequence.

Two methodological instruments allowed us to 'get behind' statistical correlations and see into the black box of the mechanisms of interorganisational trust in Flemish horizontal departments. First, we 'got behind' the statistical findings by 'nesting' our respondent selection in the boundary spanner survey, and focusing our qualitative process analysis on those interactions that were most widely regarded as the most revealing cases for interorganisational trust on the one hand, and interorganisational distrust on the other hand. Second, we 'got behind' the statistical correlations by using an interview framework that constrained the interviews to the operationalisations of interaction aspects and trust process dimensions that we used in the boundary spanner survey. As such, the statistical correlations between measured constructs in the boundary spanner survey can be integrated with boundary spanners' qualitative explanations about and examples of causal relations between interaction aspects and the dimensions of the trust process. This constraining interview framework was established through the Card Sort Method (CSM), which is explained below.

Saunders (2012) argues that the Card Sort Method helps avoid participant sensitisation, builds rapport between researcher and respondent, allows more focus on the participants' perspectives, contexts of their interactions, and the meanings they attribute to particular feelings and opinions, and finally, that such playful methods are fun for the respondents. CSM enables researchers to predefine answer categories and allow subsequent in-depth interviewing to investigate a respondent's (causal) argumentation for choosing a particular answer (Saunders, 2012). We were primarily interested in respondents' causal argumentations regarding the relation between different interaction aspects and different dimensions of the trust process. Thus, each respondent was presented with a card describing one of the dimensions of the trust process, and was requested to discuss this dimension regarding their RI. Then, each respondent was dealt 15 cards

printed with the 'interaction aspects' of the boundary spanner survey, and with five blank cards which allowed respondents to add additional interaction aspects. Respondents were then asked to go through all cards, and to 'think aloud' while they selected the interaction aspects they considered to have a particularly important impact on the trust process dimension under discussion. This exercise was repeated for all three dimensions of the trust process (the order in which dimensions were discussed was randomised to avoid systematic question order effects). When the respondent argued that a particular interaction aspect was important for a particular dimension, we asked the respondent to give an example to illustrate the impact of the interaction aspect on the dimension in question, or to explain their choice more elaborately. The aim of this systematic follow-up question was to collect detailed descriptions of real-life situations about the causal impact of particular interaction aspects on the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process. We note that our initial method did not include a specific card for asset specificity, which was discussed in more general terms as the costs and benefits of the interaction, or for power equality which was discussed as a 'blank card'. An illustration of our application of the Card Sort Method is included in the annex to this dissertation.

We note that this approach is only possible with respondents who have significant experience with the topic being studied, and who are willing to report on these experiences (Münscher and Kühlmann, 2012). However, since our respondents were selected on the basis of the boundary spanner survey, we had sufficient prior information to ensure that the qualitative interview respondents were both representative of the larger survey sample, and had sufficient interaction experience with the horizontal department in their respective RI of interorganisational trust or distrust.

> 5.6.   **Chapter conclusion: a research design for administrational trust in the Flemish administration**

In this chapter, we have discussed the methodological positions that lie at the core of trust research, and argued how these different positions are connected to different research methods. We presented the research object, units of analysis and the units of observation in this research project in order to make a conscious choice of methods to investigate the distribution and mechanisms of administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration. We argued for the value of a mixed-method research design, consisting of four phases that progressively narrow the span and increase the depth of our investigation into administrational trust and distrust. The first phase comprised desk research in order to construct the conceptual definitions and the theoretical framework tools to address the research questions in this project. In the second phase, an exploration of all three research questions was conducted. In the third phase, an online boundary spanner survey was conducted, which focused on boundary spanners in interorganisational relations with the horizontal departments within the Flemish administration, and requested boundary spanners to choose a Reference Interaction (RI) for the most trusted (sample 1) and the most distrusted (sample 3) interaction from a list of twelve possible interactions with the horizontal departments. The online survey then automatically presented items about the internal dynamics of the trust process and the interaction-specific aspects regarding both RI. In the fourth phase, ten respondents

who had selected the most frequently selected RI for trust were invited for an interview about their trust in this RI (sample 2), and ten other respondents who had selected the most frequently selected RI for distrust were invited for an interview about their distrust in this RI (sample 4). The findings of sample 1 and sample 2 (RI of trust) will be combined and compared with the findings of sample 3 and sample 4 (RI of distrust) in the following chapters, in which we will provide an answer to the research questions of our study.

With the research design now established and comprehensively presented, we are ready to turn to the empirical core of our investigation. In the next section of this dissertation, we will put our mixed-method research design to work.

SECTION C:

ANCHORS AWEIGH: CROSSING THE EMPIRICAL SEAS

"But whom to love?

To trust and treasure?

Who won't betray us in the end?

And who'll be kind enough to measure

Our words and deeds as we intend?"

Alexander Poesjkin,

Yevgeni Onegin

THIS THIRD SECTION presents the core of our empirical investigation. The hypotheses developed in chapter 4 are tested through implementation of the research design developed in chapter 5.

Table 22: Objectives and results of section C

Chapter	Section objective:	Section result:
6	Describe the distribution of trusted and distrusted interactions in the Flemish administration	Three core findings: • Boundary spanners in the Flemish administration have 'rather much trust' and 'rather little distrust' in the horizontal departments. • Collective attitudes about administrational trust and distrust are polarised and do not provide a clear 'black-and-white' picture of trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions. • Individual boundary spanners' attitudes about administrational trust and distrust are not perfectly negatively related; there is limited ambivalence in individuals' trust/distrust attitudes regarding horizontal departments. Findings provide support for a 'truncated quadrant' perspective on the distribution of trust and distrust.
7	Compare dimensions of the trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions in the Flemish administration	Two core findings: • There is significantly more perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability, and (reported) risk-taking behaviour in RI of trust than in RI of distrust. • The internal dynamics of the trust process are similar in RI of trust and distrust, with exception of a feedback loop which was only empirically identified in RI of distrust. Perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability were positively related, but this relation is moderated by trustee-dependent / trustee-independent vulnerability ratio. Willingness to suspend vulnerability was highly correlated to risk-taking behaviour, but moderated by the boundary spanners' behavioural discretion.
8	Explain relationships between interaction aspects and trust process dimensions in trusted and distrusted interactions in the Flemish administration	Three core findings: • Various interaction aspects have direct impacts and indirect impacts on various dimensions of the trust process • Both presence and form of interaction aspects are important to understand their impact on the interorganisational trust process • Interaction aspects may be analytically separated, but are empirically interrelated.

Chapter 6 describes the distribution of administrational trust and distrust on the basis of empirical data gathered in the second module of the boundary spanner survey, and assesses which of the three theoretical perspectives regarding possible configurations of trust and distrust are most in line with the empirical reality of interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. Chapter 7 describes the interorganisational trust process in Reference Interactions (RI) of administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration, seeking to falsify whether these RI can be understood in terms of a universal trust process of three interrelated dimensions (perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability, and risk-taking behaviour). In chapter 8, we investigate how the interorganisational trust process is affected by macro-level (formal and informal institutional), meso-level (calculative and relational) and micro-level (personal) aspects of interorganisational interactions. Armed with conceptual, theoretical, and methodological frameworks, we set sail across the empirical sea of interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, collect and analyse data, and try to reach shore with clear findings about the distribution and mechanisms of interorganisational trust in horizontal departments within Flemish public administration.

6. Mapping the distribution of administrational trust and distrust: horizontal departments in the Flemish administration

> 6.1.   **Introduction**

In this chapter, we describe the distribution of administrational trust and distrust on the basis of empirical data gathered in the second module of the boundary spanner survey. In the theoretical chapter of this dissertation, we have discussed three distinct perspectives on possible configurations of administrational trust and distrust, and formulated the conservative proposition of a trade-off between administrational trust and distrust. This first proposition and its associated hypothesis are repeated here for the readers' convenience.

Proposition A: Administrational trust and administrational distrust are opposites, rather than distinct constructs.

- **HA1:** When measured as two distinct concepts, the relationship between a boundary spanners' administrational trust and administrational distrust will be characterised by a (near-)perfect negative relationship.

We start this chapter with a brief description of our methodology and sample. Second, we describe the distribution of interorganisational trust in the Flemish horizontal departments. Third, we discuss the distribution of interorganisational distrust in the Flemish horizontal departments. Finally, we examine how interorganisational trust is related to interorganisational distrust in order to assert proposition A.

> 6.2.   **Chapter methodology**

As argued in the methodological chapter of this dissertation, our examination of proposition A is based on data collected in module II of the boundary spanner survey.

> 6.2.1.   *Data collection*

Module II of the boundary spanner measures trust and distrust in interorganisational interactions with the departments DAR, BZ and FB (anonymised by random assignment of the letters A, B and C) concerning horizontal policy monitoring, horizontal policy preparation, horizontal policy evaluation and the collection and use of horizontal information. Module II consisted of four questions. First, boundary spanners were requested to indicate the extent of their trust in all of these interactions using Likert scales. Second, they were requested to select one 'Reference Interaction' (RI) for which their trust was strongest. Third, boundary spanners were requested to indicate the extent of their distrust in the interactions on Likert scales, and finally, they were requested to select one RI for which their distrust was strongest.

> 6.2.2.   *Description of sample*

Boundary spanner survey module II was completed by 189 respondents. Table 23 presents the numerical characteristics of the survey respondents. The average respondent is about 50 years old. The average extent of boundary spanning activity with horizontal departments is situated between 'at least every month' and 'multiple times a month', and the respondents are characterised by 'rather high to high' average generalised trust.

Table 23: Numerical descriptives of respondents in boundary spanner survey module II

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Age	189	50,33	8,80
Boundary spanning	189	3,15	1,79
Generalised trust index	189	5,57	0,88

Table 24 provides categorical descriptives for the respondents to survey module II. This table shows that the large majority of respondents is male, has a masters degree, has between 10 and 30 years of experience in the Flemish administration, was never employed in any of the horizontal departments and has a non-horizontal task. Respondents come from various functional levels but mainly from the A-level (no managerial tasks) and the middle management level, with a minority coming from the lower and top management levels. Finally, respondents come from diverse organisational types.

Table 24: Categorical descriptives of respondents in boundary spanner survey module II

Variable	Category	N	Percentage
Sex	Male	119	62,96
	Female	70	37,04
Education level	Higher Secondary	5	2,65
	Bachelor or equal	10	5,29
	Master or equal	164	86,77
	Ph.D	10	5,29
Years employed in Flemish adm.	<=10 years	31	16,40
	10-20 years	57	30,16
	20-30 years	69	36,51
	Over 30 years	32	16,93
Level	A-level	64	33,86
	Lower mgmt	13	6,88
	Middle mgmt	83	43,92
	Top mgmt	29	15,34
Ever employed in hor. dep.	No	155	82,45
	Yes	33	17,55
Organisational type	DEP	60	31,75
	IVAZRP	46	24,34
	IVARP	24	12,70
	EVAPRP	57	30,16
	Other	2	1,06
Organisational task nature	Horizontal	21	11,17
	Non- tangible vertical	97	51,60
	Tangible vertical	70	37,23

In the following paragraphs, we will examine how these respondents assessed their interorganisational trust and distrust in the three horizontal departments of the Flemish administration.

> 6.3. Administrational trust in horizontal departments of the Flemish administration

> 6.3.1. *Likert scale assessment*

First, we describe the distribution of administrational trust in horizontal departments as assessed through Likert scales for four interorganisational interactions with three horizontal departments. Table 25 provides an overview of the results, and also provides index measures for administrational trust, administrational trust per horizontal department, and administrational trust per interaction type. Figure 13 visualises these results for easier interpretation.

Table 25: Descriptive statistics of trust in interactions with horizontal departments

Measure	N	Mean	S.E.	95% C.I	
All interactions trust index (*)	185	4,92	0,07	4,79	5,05
Department A trust index (**)	180	4,81	0,08	4,65	4,97
Department B trust index (**)	152	4,79	0,08	4,63	4,96
Department C trust index (**)	159	5,08	0,08	4,91	5,24
Collection/use of information trust index (***)	184	5,00	0,07	4,85	5,14
Policy monitoring trust index (***)	185	4,98	0,07	4,85	5,12
Policy preparation trust index (***)	184	4,87	0,08	4,72	5,02
Policy evaluation trust index (***)	184	4,79	0,07	4,64	4,93
Trust in collection/use of horizontal info by A	177	4,90	0,09	4,71	5,08
Trust in monitoring of horizontal policy by A	176	4,86	0,09	4,69	5,04
Trust in preparation of horizontal policy by A	177	4,74	0,10	4,55	4,93
Trust in evaluation of horizontal policy by A	176	4,70	0,09	4,52	4,88
Trust in collection/use of horizontal info by B	152	4,97	0,09	4,80	5,15
Trust in monitoring of horizontal policy by B	151	4,85	0,09	4,67	5,02
Trust in preparation of horizontal policy by B	151	4,72	0,10	4,52	4,91
Trust in evaluation of horizontal policy by B	151	4,63	0,09	4,45	4,81
Trust in collection/use of horizontal info by C	159	5,09	0,09	4,91	5,28
Trust in monitoring of horizontal policy by C	157	5,20	0,09	5,02	5,37
Trust in preparation of horizontal policy by C	156	5,03	0,09	4,85	5,21
Trust in evaluation of horizontal policy by C	156	5,04	0,09	4,85	5,22

Scale minimum 1 (no trust), maximum 7 (complete trust); (*) index composed by averaging all items; (**) index composed by averaging items per horizontal department; (***) index composed by averaging items per interaction type

Figure 13: Descriptive graphs of trust in interactions with horizontal departments
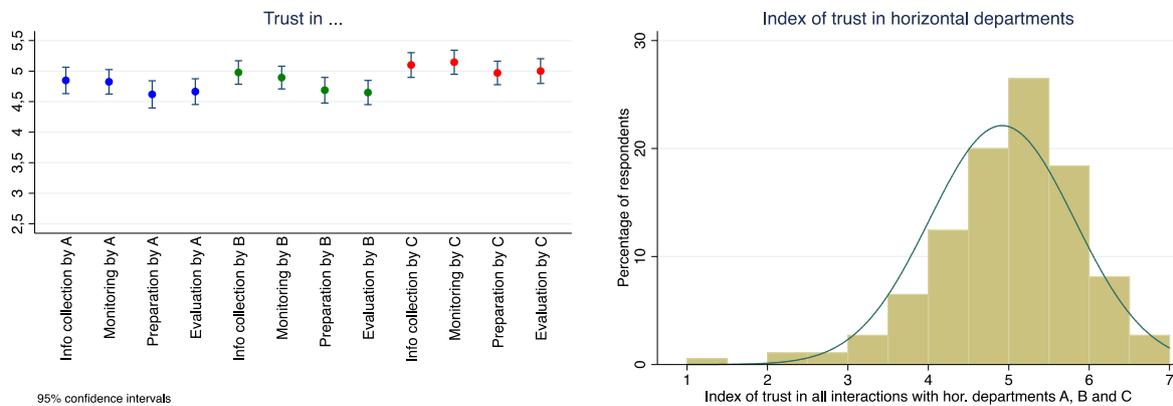
Scale minimum 1 (no trust), maximum 7 (complete trust);
index composed by averaging all items

The data show that our measure of administrational trust, both in its aggregate index and in its individual items, is negatively skewed. The histogram of the index measure of trust in horizontal departments has a longer tail on the left side, which means a higher concentration of responses on the right side of the answer scale, positioning the average extent of administrational trust to the right side of the answer scale's midpoint. The index measure of administrational trust received an average score of 4,92 on the seven-point scale, which approaches 'rather much trust' in horizontal departments.

Although the average scores for the individual measures gravitate around this average of 'rather much trust' in horizontal departments, some patterns of variation clearly emerge. We note that the highest average score for administrational trust is found for interactions with department C regarding the monitoring of policy implementation (average score of 5,20) while the lowest average score for administrational trust is reported for interactions with department B regarding the evaluation of policy (average score of 4,63). The difference between both scores is significant (p<.01). Table 26 summarises all significant differences between the individual measures of administrational trust discussed here, and illustrates that the mean administrational trust for various interorganisational interactions with department C is significantly higher than the mean administrational trust for various interorganisational interactions with departments A and B. The differences are most significant for interactions regarding policy preparation and policy evaluation, in which horizontal department C is trusted to a significantly larger extent than horizontal departments A and B.

Table 26: Confidence interval comparison for trust in interactions with horizontal departments

		Info A	Mo A	Pr A	Ev A	Info B	Mo B	Pr B	Ev B	Info C	Mo C	Pr C	Ev C
						Trust significantly higher							
Trust significantly lower	Info A												
	Mo A										**		
	Pr A									*	**		
	Ev A									**	***	*	*
	Info B												
	Mo B										**		
	Pr B									**	***	*	*
	Ev B					*				**	***	**	**
	Info C												
	Mo C												
	Pr C												
	Ev C												

Cells report difference between confidence intervals of varying width.
* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

When we consider the index measures for administrational trust for each horizontal department, we note that the average administrational trust in department C is higher than administrational trust in departments A and B. However, the difference is only statistically significant between department C and department B (p<.1). No statistically significant difference is found between the administrational trust index measures for department C and department A. No significant differences were found between the index measures for administrational trust regarding each interaction type, although averages are higher for interorganisational interactions concerning the collection and use of horizontal information and monitoring of horizontal policy than for policy preparation and policy evaluation. Figure 13 (left graph) also shows this as a recurring pattern for each horizontal department.

> 6.3.2.   *Reference Interaction selection frequencies*

Second, we describe administrational trust on the basis of the frequency by which respondents selected these twelve interactions as RI of high interorganisational trust in horizontal departments. Table 27 provides an overview of these RI selection frequencies. Interactions with department B regarding horizontal data collection were selected most frequently as references of interorganisational trust (18,99%), followed closely by interactions with department A regarding horizontal data collection (17,09%).

When we consider the selection per horizontal department, we see that interactions with horizontal department A are selected as RI of trust by 63 respondents (39,8%), interactions with horizontal department B are selected as RI of trust by 49 respondents (31%), and interactions with horizontal department C are selected as RI of trust by 46 respondents (29%). An aggregation of RI selection by interaction type shows that interactions regarding the collection and use of horizontal information are selected as RI of trust by 70 respondents (44,3%), interactions with horizontal departments regarding policy evaluation were selected as RI of trust by 18 respondents (11,3%), interactions regarding policy monitoring were selected as RI of trust by 40 respondents (25,3%), and interactions with horizontal departments regarding policy preparation were selected as RI of trust by 30 respondents (18,9%).

Table 27: Selection of Reference Interactions of trust in boundary spanner survey

RI of trust	N	Percentage
Info collection/use by B	30	18,99
Info collection/use by A	27	17,09
Policy monitoring by C	21	13,29
Policy preparation by A	18	11,39
Info collection/use by C	13	8,23
Policy monitoring by A	10	6,33
Policy monitoring by B	9	5,7
Policy evaluation by A	8	5,06
Policy evaluation by C	6	3,8
Policy preparation by B	6	3,8
Policy preparation by C	6	3,8
Policy evaluation by B	4	2,53
	158	100%

> 6.3.3.   *Intermediary conclusions: administrational trust in horizontal departments*

The previous discussion allows us to reach the following intermediary conclusions about the distribution of administrational trust in the Flemish horizontal departments:

- Boundary spanners in different administrative entities have, on average, rather much trust in the horizontal departments of the Flemish administration.
- Interactions with the horizontal departments regarding data collection and policy monitoring receive highest average administrational trust scores, and are also most frequently selected as RI of trust. Interactions with the horizontal departments regarding policy preparation and policy evaluation receive lowest average administrational trust scores, and are also least frequently selected as RI of trust.
- Interactions with department C receive highest administrational trust scores, but departments A and B are more frequently selected as a 'references' for high administrational trust.

> 6.4.   **Administrational distrust in horizontal departments of the Flemish administration**

> 6.4.1.   *Likert scale assessment*

The same procedure was used to assess the distribution of interorganisational distrust in the horizontal departments. First, Likert scales were used to assess the extent of interorganisational distrust in the horizontal departments. Table 28 provides an overview of respondents' assessments of interorganisational distrust for the individual items, as well as index measures for administrational distrust, administrational

distrust per horizontal department, and administrational distrust per interaction type. Figure 14 visualises these results.

Table 28: Descriptive statistics of distrust in interactions with horizontal departments

Measure	N	Mean	S.E.	95% C.I	
All interactions distrust index (*)	182	2,93	0,08	2,78	3,09
Department A distrust index A (**)	174	3,11	0,10	2,92	3,29
Department B distrust index (**)	149	2,84	0,10	2,65	3,04
Department C distrust index (**)	157	2,89	0,10	2,69	3,08
Collection/use of information distrust index (***)	181	2,86	0,09	2,69	3,03
Policy monitoring distrust index (***)	182	2,89	0,08	2,73	3,05
Policy preparation distrust index (***)	181	2,95	0,09	2,78	3,11
Policy evaluation distrust index (***)	181	3,06	0,08	2,89	3,23
Distrust in collection/use of horizontal info by A	173	3,01	0,11	2,80	3,22
Distrust in monitoring of horizontal policy by A	173	3,07	0,10	2,87	3,27
Distrust in preparation of horizontal policy by A	171	3,18	0,11	2,97	3,39
Distrust in evaluation of horizontal policy by A	171	3,24	0,10	3,04	3,44
Distrust in collection/use of horizontal info by B	147	2,71	0,11	2,50	2,93
Distrust in monitoring of horizontal policy by B	149	2,84	0,10	2,63	3,04
Distrust in preparation of horizontal policy by B	148	2,84	0,10	2,63	3,04
Distrust in evaluation of horizontal policy by B	149	2,99	0,11	2,78	3,20
Distrust in collection/use of horizontal info by C	157	2,88	0,11	2,67	3,09
Distrust in monitoring of horizontal policy by C	157	2,82	0,10	2,61	3,02
Distrust in preparation of horizontal policy by C	156	2,91	0,11	2,70	3,12
Distrust in evaluation of horizontal policy by C	154	2,95	0,10	2,75	3,16

Scale minimum 1 (no distrust), maximum 7 (complete distrust); (*) index composed by averaging all items; (**) index composed by averaging items per horizontal department; (***) index composed by averaging items per interaction type

Figure 14: Descriptive graphs of distrust in interactions with horizontal departments
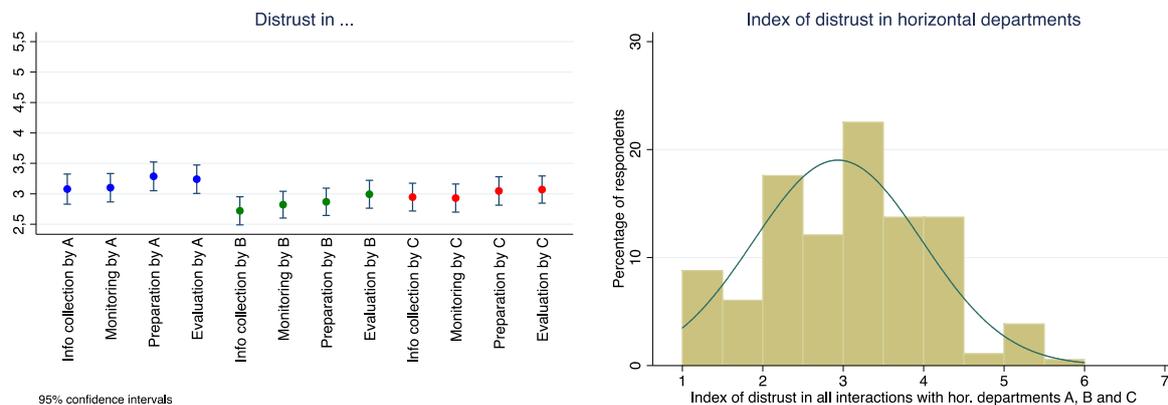
Scale minimum 1 (no distrust), maximum 7 (complete distrust);
Index composed by averaging all items

These findings show that administrational distrust, both in its aggregate index and in its individual items, is positively skewed; the histogram of the index measure of trust in horizontal departments has a longer tail on the right side, which means a higher concentration of responses on the left side of the answer scale. The average score for the index measure of administrational distrust is 2,93 on the seven-point scale, which indicates that boundary spanners in Flemish administrative entities have, on average, 'rather little distrust' in the horizontal departments.

While some patterns of variation emerge between these measures of administrational distrust, they are rather less pronounced than those found between the measures of administrational trust. For the individual measures of administrational distrust in specific interactions with specific horizontal departments, we note that the highest average administrational distrust is found for interactions with horizontal department A concerning policy evaluation (average score of 3,24). The lowest average score for administrational distrust is found for interactions with horizontal department B concerning the collection and use of horizontal information (average score of 2,71). Table 29 summarises the significant differences between all possible combinations of the four interaction types and the three horizontal departments for these measures of administrational distrust, showing that interactions with department A concerning policy evaluation and policy preparation are distrusted significantly more than other possible combinations of interaction types and horizontal departments.

Table 29: Confidence interval comparison for distrust in interactions with horizontal departments

		Info A	Mo A	Pr A	Ev A	Info B	Mo B	Pr B	Ev B	Info C	Mo C	Pr C	Ev C
						Distrust significantly higher							
Distrust significantly lower	Info A												
	Mo A												
	Pr A												
	Ev A												
	Info B		*	**	**								
	Mo B				*								
	Pr B				*								
	Ev B												
	Info C				*								
	Mo C			*	**								
	Pr C				*								
	Ev C												

Cells report difference between confidence intervals of varying width.
* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

Indeed, department A is consistently attributed the highest scores regarding administrational distrust. When we compare the index measures for administrational distrust for each horizontal department, we find that average administrational distrust in department A is higher than administrational distrust in departments B and C. However, the difference is not statistically significant. A comparison of the index measures for administrational distrust regarding each interaction type shows that the average extent of administrational distrust is higher for interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments regarding policy preparation and policy evaluation than for measures regarding the monitoring of horizontal information and the collection and use of horizontal information, but these differences were not found to be statistically significant.

> 6.4.2. *Reference Interaction selection frequencies*

Second, we will consider the frequency by which respondents selected the twelve interactions discussed above as RI of high interorganisational distrust in horizontal departments. Table 30 summarises these selection frequencies for RI of distrust. It is striking that data collection by department A is found to be the most frequently selected RI for distrust, considering that it was also the second most frequently selected RI for trust (supra). An aggregation of RI selections by horizontal department shows that interactions with horizontal department A were selected as RI of distrust by 65 respondents (44,8%), interactions with

horizontal department B were selected as RI of distrust by 44 respondents (30%), and interactions with horizontal department C were selected as RI of distrust by 36 respondents (24%). In other words, interactions with department A were selected most often as a reference for distrusted interorganisational interactions, in addition to also being selected most often as references for trusted interorganisational interactions, as argued in the previous paragraph. It would thus appear that interorganisational interactions with horizontal department A are rather contested, and characterised by diverging and polarised attitudes of boundary spanners involved in those interactions. An aggregation of RI selection by interaction type shows that interactions regarding the collection and use of horizontal data were selected as RI of distrust by 42 respondents (28,9%), interactions regarding policy evaluation were selected as RI of distrust by 39 respondents (26,9%), interactions regarding policy monitoring were selected as RI of distrust by 19 respondents (13,1%) and interactions regarding policy preparation were selected as RI of distrust by 45 respondents (31%).

Table 30: Selection of Reference Interactions of distrust in boundary spanner survey

RI of distrust	N	Percentage
Info collection/use by A	23	15,86
Policy preparation by A	20	13,79
Policy evaluation by A	15	10,34
Policy preparation by B	14	9,66
Policy evaluation by C	13	8,97
Policy evaluation by B	11	7,59
Policy preparation by C	11	7,59
Info collection/use by B	10	6,9
Info collection/use by C	9	6,21
Policy monitoring by B	9	6,21
Policy monitoring by A	7	4,83
Policy monitoring by C	3	2,07
	145	100%

> 6.4.3.   *Intermediary conclusions: administrational distrust in horizontal departments*

Our previous discussion allows us to formulate the following intermediary conclusions about the distribution of administrational distrust in the Flemish horizontal departments:

- Boundary spanners in different administrative entities have, on average, rather little distrust in the horizontal departments of the Flemish administration.

- Interactions with horizontal departments regarding policy preparation and policy evaluation receive highest average administrational distrust scores, but interactions regarding policy preparation and data collection were most frequently selected as RI of distrust. Interactions with horizontal departments regarding data collection and policy monitoring receive lower average administrational distrust scores, but interactions regarding policy evaluation and policy monitoring are least frequently selected as RI of distrust.

- Interactions with department A receive highest administrational distrust scores, and are also more frequently selected as a 'reference' for high administrational distrust.

Mapping administrational trust and distrust in horizontal departments of the Flemish administration

Proposition A postulated that interorganisational trust and distrust are characterised by a 'trade-off' relationship, on the basis of which we hypothesised that measures of interorganisational trust and interorganisational distrust should be characterised by a perfectly negative relationship. In order to test this hypothesis, we estimate the relationship between the composite index of the twelve measures of administrational trust in horizontal departments and the composite index of the twelve measures of administrational distrust in horizontal departments. Table 31 provides the Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficients for the relationship between both measures.

Table 31: Bivariate Pearson and Spearman correlations between administrational trust and distrust index measures

	All interactions trust index	All interactions distrust index
All interactions trust index	1	-0,7211***
All interactions distrust index	-0,7117***	1

* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

Pearson correlation coefficients below diagonal; non-parametric Spearman correlation coefficient above diagonal

The Pearson coefficient between interorganisational trust and interorganisational distrust (r = -.71, p<.01) does indicate a large negative correlation (Cohen, 1988; 1992), but the relation is by no means perfectly negative. The coefficient of determination for this model (R^2= .5065) suggests that about 50 percent of the variation in the index measure of distrust can be accounted for by the index measure for trust. Due to the skewed distribution of the index measures of administrational trust and distrust, we have also reported the non-parametric Spearman correlation coefficient (r_s = -.72, p<.01), the result of which resides in the same order of magnitude as the Pearson coefficient, thus confirming this finding. Figure 15 visualises this relationship between administrational trust and distrust in horizontal departments.

Figure 15: OLS regression of administrational trust and distrust index measures[28]

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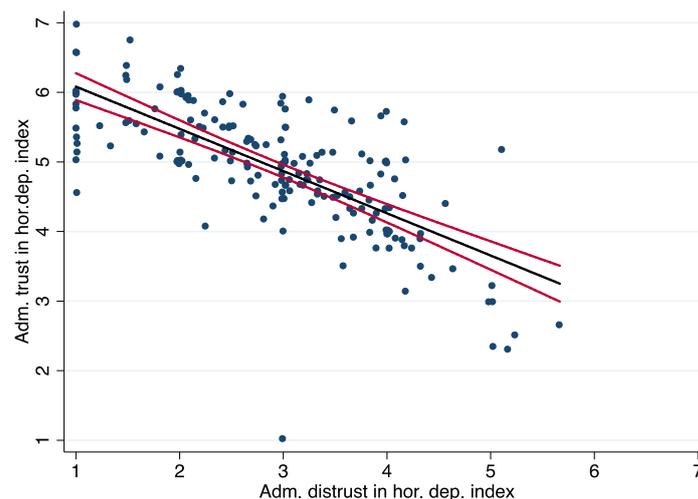
[28] The observations presented in this scatterplot are 'jittered' in order to allow a clearer visualisation of overlapping observations in the distribution. The scatterplot thus allows a minimal level of deviation for visualisation purposes.

While interorganisational trust and distrust thus appear to be strongly and negatively related, our findings refute hypothesis A1 and the related proposition A. We must thus conclude that the 'trade-off' perspective of trust and distrust (which presents both as opposite ends of a single continuum) does not provide an adequate perspective to describe and present the distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration.

The 'quadrants' perspective suggested by Lewicki et al. (1998) might then be considered to provide a more appropriate framework, as it argues that trust and distrust can occur in any of four possible configurations. In that respect, the 'quadrants' perspective can be understood as a Weberian ideal type model, against which social reality is interpreted and measured. Figure 16 thus present our composite index measures of administrational trust and distrust in the framework of the ideal-typical 'quadrant' framework.

Figure 16: Administrational trust and distrust index measures – the 'quadrant' perspective
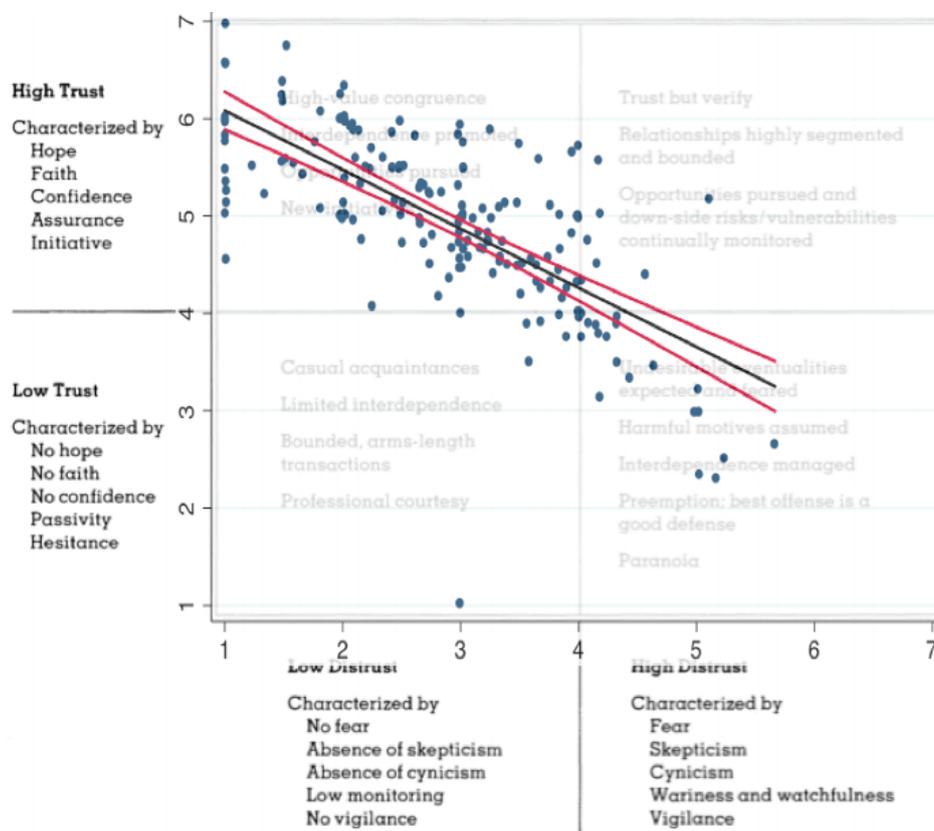
The large majority of observations are found in the two quadrants that represent the 'trade-off' perspective on trust and distrust. 76,92 percent of boundary spanners have 'high trust, low distrust' regarding horizontal departments. When placed in the 'quadrant' perspective, this overwhelming majority of boundary spanners are confident and unsuspicious, support rich and intense cooperative relationships, experience mutual value identification and positive appreciation, take relational initiative, and would engage in relational repair after conflicts (Lewicki, et al. 1998) in interorganisational interactions with Flemish horizontal departments. On the other hand, a small but substantial minority of 8,79 percent of respondents have 'low trust, high distrust' in horizontal departments. According to the 'quadrant'

perspective, this small but substantial minority of boundary spanners is extremely wary and watchful for damaging actions of horizontal departments, avoids cooperation with horizontal departments when possible, or attempts to limit vulnerability to horizontal departments where cooperation cannot be avoided, and interorganisational cooperation is difficult and associated with high transaction costs.

The 'high trust, high distrust' and the 'low trust, low distrust' quadrants, which are not present in the 'trade-off' perspective, are far less occupied. Only 2,75 percent of boundary spanners have 'low trust, low distrust' in the horizontal departments. A very small minority of boundary spanners is thus neither particularly willing nor unwilling to be vulnerable, neither confident nor wary, and feels no strong tendency to either disengage or engage in interaction with horizontal departments (Lewicki et al. 1998). Another small minority, amounting to 3,30 percent of boundary spanners, have 'high trust, high distrust' in the Flemish horizontal departments, and can thus be argued to feel confident about some facets of their interactions with horizontal departments while being suspicious about other facets at the same time, and to see objectives that are both common and competing in their interactions with horizontal departments.

However, it is important to note that 8,24 percent (or 16/182) of the observations could not be attributed to any of the four quadrants because they contained a mid-point value on either the measure of interorganisational trust or distrust, and thus fall right on the border between two or more quadrants. While the application of the 'quadrant' perspective thus allows for an interesting analysis of the distribution between interorganisational trust and distrust in horizontal department in the Flemish administration, the distribution of observations over the four quadrants is highly determined by the somewhat arbitrary position of the quadrant's boundaries. Our approach has been to define these boundaries as the mid-point value (corresponding to the neither high/neither low responses) of 7-point scales measuring boundary spanners' trust and distrust in horizontal departments. The weakness of this approach is that index measures with this exact value on either the x- or the y-axis cannot be attributed clearly to only one of the quadrants. In addition, this also means that the analysis presented above may be highly sensitive to shifts in the (arbitrary) position of the quadrant boundaries. Thus, we conducted a sensitivity analysis by shifting the boundaries of the quadrants on the y-axis and the x-axis with -0,1 and +0,1 scale units, and considered the extent to which doing so affected the distribution of observations over these quadrants. Table 32 shows the sensitivity analysis for the index measures of administrational trust and distrust.

Table 32: The quadrants perspective - sensitivity analysis for index measures

	Q1: high trust, low distrust	Q2: high trust, high distrust	Q3: low trust, low distrust	Q4: low trust, high distrust	n/a	Q1 + Q4	Q2 + Q3
Initial (see figure)	76,92%	3,3%	2,75%	8,79%	8,24%	85,71%	6,05%
Trust boundary +0,1	76,37%	3,3%	4,4%	9,34%	6,59%	85,71%	7,7%
Trust boundary -0,1	75,66%	8,47%	2,12%	7,41%	6,35%	83,07%	10,59%
Distrust boundary +0,1	80,77%	2,75%	3,85%	8,24%	4,4%	89,01%	6,6%
Distrust boundary -0,1	75,27%	8,24%	2,2%	9,89%	4,4%	85,16%	10,44%

The results of our sensitivity analysis show that any change in boundaries would result in an increase of the percentage of observations within the two quadrants that are specific to the 'quadrant' perspective (Q2 and Q3). In other words, the sensitivity analysis suggests that our initial mapping provides the most

conservative estimation of the percentage of observations in the 'high trust, high distrust' and the 'low trust, low distrust' quadrants. While the overwhelming majority of observations remain situated in the 'trade-off' quadrants, the sensitivity analysis suggests that between 6,05 and 10,59 percent of observations may fall in the two quadrants that are specific to the 'quadrants' perspective, and cannot be conceptualised in a 'trade-off' perspective.

Table 33 summarises the results of a similar 'mapping' for the index and individual measures of administrational trust and distrust in horizontal departments within the 'quadrants' framework. Considering the index measures per horizontal department, the table shows that interorganisational interactions with department B (index) are characterised by the greatest concentration of observations in the 'high trust, low distrust' quadrant. Interorganisational interactions with horizontal department A (index) are most contested, as this index measure is characterised by fewer observations in the 'high trust, low distrust' quadrant and more observations in the 'low trust, high distrust' quadrant. Considering the measures for the individual items, interactions with department C regarding the monitoring of horizontal policy have the greatest concentration of observations in the 'high trust, low distrust' quadrant. The greatest concentration of observations in the 'low trust, high distrust' category is found for interactions with department A regarding the collection and use of horizontal information. However, most importantly, the table shows a similar distributive pattern in all measured interactions. For all interorganisational interactions, a small, albeit substantial minority of observations fall within the two quadrants that are specific for the 'quadrants' perspective, while the overwhelming majority of observations fall within either the 'high trust, low distrust' or the 'high distrust, low trust' quadrants. If we leave out non-attributable observations, the 'high trust, low distrust' quadrant is most populous for all measures, followed by the 'high distrust, low trust' quadrant. Relatively few observations thus fall within the two quadrants that are specific to the 'quadrants' perspective. Sensitivity analyses conducted for these measures provided similar results to those reported for the index measures.

Table 33: Mapping administrational trust and distrust – applying the 'quadrant' perspective

Measure	Q1: high trust, low distrust	Q2: high trust, high distrust	Q3: low trust, low distrust	Q4: low trust, high distrust	n/a (*)
Full index measures (see figure)	76,92%	3,30%	2,75%	8,79%	8,24%
Department A index measures	66,09%	4,02%	1,72%	12,64%	15,52%
Department B index measures	68,92%	2,03%	1,35%	8,78%	18,92%
Department C index measures	67,52%	3,18%	1,27%	5,10%	22,93%
Collection/use of horizontal info by A	61,4%	3,51%	1,17%	11,7%	22,22%
Monitoring of horizontal policy by A	55,81%	3,49%	1,16%	7,56%	31,98%
Preparation of horizontal policy by A	51,46%	3,51%	1,17%	11,7%	32,16%
Evaluation of horizontal policy by A	51,76%	5,29%	1,76%	10,59%	30,59%
Collection/use of horizontal info by B	65,75%	1,37%	0,68%	4,79%	27,4%
Monitoring of horizontal policy by B	59,86%	2,04%	0,68%	5,44%	31,97%
Preparation of horizontal policy by B	58,5%	0,68%	2,72%	5,44%	32,65%
Evaluation of horizontal policy by B	53,38%	2,7%	2,7%	8,78%	32,43%
Collection/use of horizontal info by C	64,97%	2,55%	1,27%	5,1%	26,11%
Monitoring of horizontal policy by C	66,45%	2,58%	0,65%	3,87%	26,45%
Preparation of horizontal policy by C	62,75%	2,61%	0,65%	5,88%	28,1%
Evaluation of horizontal policy by C	58,94%	4,64%	1,32%	4,64%	30,46%

It is worth noting that the 'not attributable' category is smaller for composite measures, where mid-point scores occur less frequently due to averaging of individual measures in the index construction.

Our findings thus confirm Lewicki et al.'s (1998) postulation that each of the four quadrants may apply to modern, complex and professional relations, and thus provide a valuable perspective on the distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust in complex, multifaceted interactions, and the case for this 'quadrants' perspective is strengthened by our sensitivity analysis. However, our findings do not support Lewicki et al.'s (1998) postulation that 'high trust, high distrust' is the most prevalent attitudinal reality in complex, multifaceted interactions. Our findings, when interpreted in the 'quadrants' perspective, rather confirm the results reported by Saunders and Thornhill (2004), as boundary spanners with more trust were clearly found more likely to have less distrust (and vice versa), but a limited extent of instances were found to occur in which administrational trust and distrust were both relatively high or both relatively low. In other words, we conclude that the distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust in horizontal departments in the Flemish administration may be best described as a 'truncated' version of the 'quadrant' perspective.

> 6.6.   **Chapter conclusion: mapping administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration**

In this relatively short chapter, we have described the distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust in Flemish horizontal departments on the basis of quantitative evidence collected in module II of the boundary spanner survey. Three core findings emerge from our analysis. First, we conclude that boundary spanners in the Flemish administration have 'rather much trust' and 'rather little distrust' in the horizontal departments. Second, collective attitudes about administrational trust and distrust are polarised and do not provide a 'black-and-white' picture of trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions. Third, our findings suggest that individual boundary spanners' attitudes regarding administrational trust and distrust reveal a limited extent of ambivalence toward horizontal departments, as the measures are strongly but not perfectly negatively related. These findings lead us to reject both the 'trade-off' and the 'quadrants' perspectives as empirical models of the distribution of trust and distrust, rather supporting a 'truncated quadrants' model of the distribution of trust and distrust in the empirical reality of interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, which relies on the 'quadrant' perspective as an Weberian ideal-type framework rather than an actual empirical model.

First, we conclude that boundary spanners in the Flemish administration have 'rather much trust' and 'rather little distrust' in the horizontal departments. This is evidenced by above-midpoint Likert scale mean scores and negative skew in the distribution of administrational trust for all interactions with horizontal departments, and below-midpoint Likert scale mean scores and positive skew in the distribution of administrational distrust for all interactions with horizontal departments. The general index suggests that over 75% of the respondents has 'high trust, low distrust' in the Flemish horizontal departments, with the remaining 25% of observations characterised by 'high trust, high distrust', 'low trust, low distrust' and 'low trust, high distrust'. Considering this evidence, our conclusion is that horizontal departments in the Flemish administration are thus predominantly trusted by boundary spanners in other Flemish entities.

A second conclusion is that the collective attitudes about any particular counterpart are rather polarised. While some particular interactions are certainly more trusted or distrusted than others, the combined

evidence does not conclusively suggest that one particular horizontal department is more or less trusted or distrusted than others. While interactions with department C receive the highest average scores on administrational trust, they were least frequently selected as RI for high administrational trust. While interactions with department A received the highest average administrational distrust scores and were most frequently selected as RI for high administrational distrust, they were also most frequently selected as RI for administrational trust. These findings thus indicate that interorganisational trust and distrust in a specific interaction is respondent-specific, as one boundary spanner may have strong trust in a particular interorganisational interaction while another boundary spanner may have strong distrust in the very same interaction. This finding confronts us with the social constructivist nature of administrational trust and distrust, and challenges positivist assumptions about the ontological status of administrational trust and distrust and the possibility to investigate administrational trust and distrust using epistemologically 'objectivist' methods, such as the Likert scales and RI selection frequency tallies we have discussed in this chapter. However, within our own 'critical realist' position ('humbled positivists') we have emphasised that the assumption of objectivity is necessary to expand our knowledge about interorganisational trust and distrust but does not involve the rejection of subjective theories and worldviews held by the boundary spanners.

Third, our data suggests that individual boundary spanners' administrational trust and distrust evaluations may also be ambivalent, but that ambivalence is not commonplace as individual boundary spanners' attitudes of trust and distrust are negatively related, but not characterised by an absolute trade-off. Although the 'quadrant' perspective suggested by Lewicki et al. (1998) thus provides an interesting perspective on the distribution of trust and distrust, we argue that it is best understood as a Weberian ideal type model, against which social reality can be interpreted and measured. Our own findings, when interpreted in this ideal type model, are that the relationship between trust and distrust may be best presented by a 'truncated quadrants' perspective, which suggests that individual boundary spanners' extent of trust in a particular interorganisational interaction is negatively related to their extent of distrust in that particular interorganisational interaction, although 'high trust, high distrust' or 'low trust, low distrust' do occur to a limited extent.

This chapter provided an analysis of the distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust in Flemish horizontal departments, and has led us to identify reference interactions (RI) of trust and distrust. In addition to providing a mapping of administrational trust and distrust in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, these steps were essential to progress to the next chapter, in which we will closely examine RI of trust and RI of distrust in order to achieve a better understanding of the mechanisms of the interorganisational trust process in both cases.

7. Explaining mechanisms of administrational trust in the Flemish administration: internal dynamics of the trust process

> 7.1.   **Introduction**

In this chapter we will describe boundary spanners' trust evaluations in Reference Interactions (RI) of administrational trust and distrust with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, while we seek falsification of the hypotheses derived from propositions B and C. In the theoretical chapter of this dissertation, we have argued that trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions can be considered in terms of a universal process, consisting of three interrelated dimensions (perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability, and risk-taking behaviour). On the basis of our theoretical discussion, we expect that all three of these dimensions are significantly stronger in trusted than in distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration (proposition B), while we expect that the causal relations between these three dimensions are similarly present in trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration (proposition C). The propositions B and C, as well as their associated hypotheses, are repeated here.

Proposition B: Trusted and distrusted interactions can be studied through the universal trust process, in which we expect that all three trust process dimensions will be significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.

- **HB1**: The perceived trustworthiness is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.
- **HB2**: The willingness to suspend vulnerability is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.
- **HB3**: Risk-taking behaviour is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.

Proposition C: There is a universal causal sequence of trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour which will apply to both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions.

- **HC1**: There is a positive direct relation between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions
- **HC2**: There is a positive direct relation between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions.
- **HC3**: There is a positive direct relation between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness when controlling for willingness to suspend vulnerability (feedback loop) in both trusted and distrusted interactions.

We will first discuss the characteristics of the quantitative and the qualitative samples on the basis of which we will conduct our examination. We will then address proposition B by describing and comparing the three dimensions of the universal trust process in RI of interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration. Subsequently, we will address proposition C by describing how these dimensions of the interorganisational trust process relate to each other in RI of interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration. We conclude the chapter with a concise summary of our findings.

> 7.2.   **Chapter methodology**

As argued in the methodological chapter of this dissertation, the empirical evidence for this analysis stems from a nested combination of quantitative (samples 1 and 3) and qualitative (samples 2 and 4) evidence.

The collection of both this quantitative and qualitative evidence hinges on module II of the boundary spanner survey, where respondents were requested to select one RI for trust and one RI for distrust from a list of twelve possible interactions with horizontal departments.

> 7.2.1.   *Data collection*

The quantitative data was collected in modules III and IV of the boundary spanner survey, in which boundary spanners answered items measuring the three dimensions of the trust process for their selected RI of trust and distrust, respectively. The quantitative data discussed in this chapter thus describes the dimensions of the trust process in boundary spanners' selected RI of trust (sample 1) and distrust (sample 3) in the boundary spanner survey. The items used to measure the dimensions of the trust process were discussed in the methodological chapter of this dissertation. Control variables are used for respondent age, seniority, sex, education, managerial responsibilities and organisational formal autonomy. Respondent age and seniority (years worked for the Flemish administration) are both continuous variables measured in years. Respondent sex is a binary variable with female coded as 1, and male as zero. Education is a binary variable with masters' degree or higher coded as 1 and bachelors' degree or lower coded as zero. Managerial responsibilities is a binary variable coded as 1 for respondents in lower, middle or top management posititions, and zero for respondents without management responsibilities. Formal autonomy is a binary variable coded as 1 for entities with legal personality (IVARP and EVAPRP) and zero for entities without legal personality (departments and IVAZRP).

The qualitative data was collected in face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Respondents for these interviews were selected on the basis of their RI selection in survey module II. Half of the interviews focused on interorganisational trust, and were conducted with respondents who had chosen the most frequently selected RI for interorganisational trust in a horizontal department (the collection and use of horizontal information by B) (sample 2). The other half of the interviews focused on interorganisational distrust, and were conducted with respondents who had chosen the most frequently selected RI for interorganisational distrust in a horizontal department (the collection and use of horizontal information by A) (sample 4). In these interviews, each respondent was presented with three cards describing the dimensions of the trust process, and was requested to discuss these three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process for their respective RI. The qualitative card method was discussed in the methodological chapter of this dissertation.

The analysis in this chapter is thus based on evidence gathered from four samples, based on respondents' answers in module II of the survey: a quantitative RI of trust sample (sample 1, data collected in survey module III, n=158), a quantitative RI of distrust sample (sample 3, data collected in survey module IV, n=145), a qualitative 'most frequently selected RI of trust' sample (sample 2, data collected in interviews about trust, n=8), and a qualitative 'most frequently selected RI of distrust' sample (sample 4, data collected in interviews about distrust, n=8). We will discuss the characteristics of these samples in what follows.

Table 34 presents the four distinct samples that result from this methodological design, and on which our further analysis is based. We note that we have collected more completed answers for sample 1 (survey module III) than for sample 3 (survey module IV), which is likely due to respondent fatigue and subsequent dropout[29].

Table 34: Number of respondents in quantitative and qualitative samples

| | Reference interaction for trust | | Reference Interaction for distrust | |
	Sample 1 (Survey module III)	Sample 2 (Trust interviews)	Sample 3 (Survey module IV)	Sample 4 (Distrust interviews)
Info collection/use by A	27	0	23	8
Info collection/use by B	30	8	10	0
Info collection/use by C	13	0	9	0
Policy evaluation by A	8	0	15	0
Policy evaluation by B	4	0	11	0
Policy evaluation by C	6	0	13	0
Policy monitoring by A	10	0	7	0
Policy monitoring by B	9	0	9	0
Policy monitoring by C	21	0	3	0
Policy preparation by A	18	0	20	0
Policy preparation by B	6	0	14	0
Policy preparation by C	6	0	11	0
Total	158	8	145	8

Horizontal departments are anonymised in this table

As discussed in the previous chapter, information collection by horizontal department B was selected most frequently as referent of high interorganisational trust, whereas information collection by horizontal department A was selected most frequently as referent of high interorganisational distrust. The tables in annex present the numerical and categorical characteristics of the four samples, and show that these four samples are relatively comparable. All samples are characterised by 'rather high to high' micro-level predispositions to trust. The average respondent is about 50 years old, and average boundary spanning activity with horizontal departments is situated between 'at least every month' and 'multiple times a month' in all samples. Respondents come from various functional levels but mainly from the middle management level and level A (no managerial tasks), with a minority coming from the lower and top management levels. The large majority of respondents in all samples is male, has a masters' degree, and has between 10 and 30 years of experience in the Flemish administration, but we note that respondents with 20-30 years of seniority are overrepresented in sample 2. Respondents come from a diverse set of organisational types in all four samples, but we note that boundary spanners from internal agencies with a limited degree of autonomy (IVAZRP) are overrepresented in sample 2 and external agencies with a large degree of autonomy (EVAPRP) are overrepresented in sample 4.

Our analysis will consist of a comparison of the combined findings of sample 1 and sample 2 (RI of trust) with the combined findings of sample 3 and sample 4 (RI of distrust). Although perfect equality between

clx——————

[29] We further discuss these issues in the final chapter of this dissertation.

the four samples on all characteristics discussed above would have improved the comparability of the samples, we note that we have no reason to suspect that the diverging characteristics might distort our findings regarding the presence of the dimensions of interorganisational trust and their internal dynamics in the interorganisational trust process.

> 7.3.   Describing dimensions of the trust process in RI of trust and distrust

In this section, we will describe the presence of the three dimensions of the trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. We therefore examine proposition B, in which we have postulated that the three dimensions of the trust process will have a stronger presence in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. We start with a description of perceived trustworthiness, subsequently discuss the willingness to suspend vulnerability and finally describe (reported) risk-taking behaviour in RI of trust and distrust with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration.

> 7.3.1.   *Describing perceived trustworthiness*

The first dimension we discuss here is the perceived trustworthiness of the horizontal counterpart. Perceived trustworthiness was operationalised according to Mayer et al. (1995), who define perceived trustworthiness as positive expectations about counterparts, which are built upon perceptions about the ability, benevolence and integrity of a trustee in a specific relation. Perceived ability refers to the trustor's expectations regarding an organisation's competence to successfully complete a task, perceived benevolence refers to the extent to which the trustor believes the trustee cares about the trustor's interests and needs and wants to do good for reasons that are not egocentric, and perceived integrity refers to the belief that the trustee adheres to a set of values and principles of justice and fairness, which the trustor finds acceptable. We added perceived compliance with prior engagements in order to also capture 'lambda values' of perceived trustworthiness, which may be argued to be specific to the context of public administration.

> 7.3.1.1.   *Quantitative description of perceived trustworthiness: samples 1 and 3*

We have introduced our quantitative measurement of perceived trustworthiness in the methodological chapter of this dissertation. We use the Mayer and Davis (1999) measure as it was adapted for examination of interorganisational interactions by Beccera et al. (2008), extended by an additional four-item construct for perceived compliance with prior engagements. The Cronbach alpha values for our index measures of perceived ability (sample 1 α = .882; sample 3 α = .924), perceived benevolence (sample 1 α = .841; sample 3 α = .914), perceived integrity (sample 1 α = .869; sample 3 α = .906), perceived compliance (sample 1 α = .821; sample 3 α = .829) and the overall measure of perceived trustworthiness (sample 1 α = .945; sample 3 α = .954) indicate strong internal consistency, and thus suggest that our measures of perceived trustworthiness have good reliability (George and Mallery, 2003; Kline, 2000; Devellis, 2012; Hair et al., 1998).

Table 35 compares boundary spanners' answers regarding all individual items in the perceived trustworthiness measure, the four dimensional index scores as well as the overall index score for perceived trustworthiness in samples 1 and 3. First and foremost, the table supports all the expected differences in perceived trustworthiness for all measures. In the perceived trustworthiness index measure, boundary spanners in RI of trust agree significantly more with statements that the horizontal department is trustworthy (p<0,01). Furthermore, we find that this significant difference is present for all four sub-dimensions of perceived trustworthiness (p<0,01). This means that in RI of trust, boundary spanners consider the horizontal department to be more trustworthy in terms of its ability, benevolence, integrity and compliance than in RI of distrust. However, it is important to note that the horizontal departments are not perceived to be *untrustworthy* in the RI of distrust: rather, the mean values indicate that boundary spanners simply agreed to lesser extent with statements regarding the counterparts' perceived trustworthiness in RI of distrust than in RI of trust, with average answers which are neutral rather than negative about the perceived trustworthiness of the horizontal department in sample 3.

Table 35: Descriptive statistics of perceived trustworthiness in sample 1 and sample 3

Dimension measure	Sample 1 (trust)			Sample 3 (distrust)			Group diff.
	N	Mean	S.E.	N	Mean	S.E.	
Perceived trustworthiness index	158	4,85	0,06	145	4,19	0,07	S1>S3***
Perceived integrity index	158	4,94	0,07	145	4,24	0,08	S1>S3***
• Org. has a strong sense of justice	158	4,86	0,07	145	4,18	0,09	S1>S3***
• Org. tries hard to be fair in dealing with others	158	5,14	0,07	145	4,41	0,09	S1>S3***
• Sound principles seem to guide the behaviour of org.	157	5,03	0,08	145	4,28	0,09	S1>S3***
• We never have to worry whether org. will keep to its word	158	4,74	0,09	145	4,08	0,09	S1>S3***
Perceived ability index	158	5,10	0,07	145	4,44	0,09	S1>S3***
• Org. is very capable of performing its tasks	158	5,10	0,07	145	4,46	0,10	S1>S3***
• We feel very confident about org.'s competences	158	5,07	0,09	145	4,28	0,11	S1>S3***
• Org. is known to be successful at realising its ambitions	158	4,82	0,07	145	4,30	0,10	S1>S3***
• Org. has much knowledge about the tasks it conducts	158	5,42	0,07	145	4,72	0,10	S1>S3***
Perceived benevolence Index	158	4,35	0,07	145	3,65	0,09	S1>S3***
• Org. has attention for the issues we find important	158	4,54	0,09	145	3,70	0,10	S1>S3***
• Org. is very concerned about our interests	158	4,13	0,09	145	3,54	0,10	S1>S3***
• Our needs and desires are very important to org.	158	4,15	0,09	145	3,52	0,10	S1>S3***
• Org. would go out of its way to help us	158	4,56	0,09	145	3,82	0,10	S1>S3***
Perceived compliance Index	158	5,00	0,06	145	4,46	0,07	S1>S3***
• Org. adheres strictly to the relevant procedures	158	5,04	0,08	145	4,44	0,09	S1>S3***
• Org. has respect for the regulatory framework	158	5,46	0,07	145	4,85	0,09	S1>S3***
• Employees in org. won't do anything against mgmt's instruction	158	4,65	0,08	145	4,31	0,07	S1>S3***
• Org. respects the unwritten rules in our interaction	158	4,85	0,08	145	4,22	0,08	S1>S3***

1 completely disagree; 2 disagree; 3 rather disagree; 4 neither agree nor disagree; 5 rather agree; 6 agree; 7 completely agree
* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

Figure 17: Confidence intervals for perceived trustworthiness in samples 1 and 3
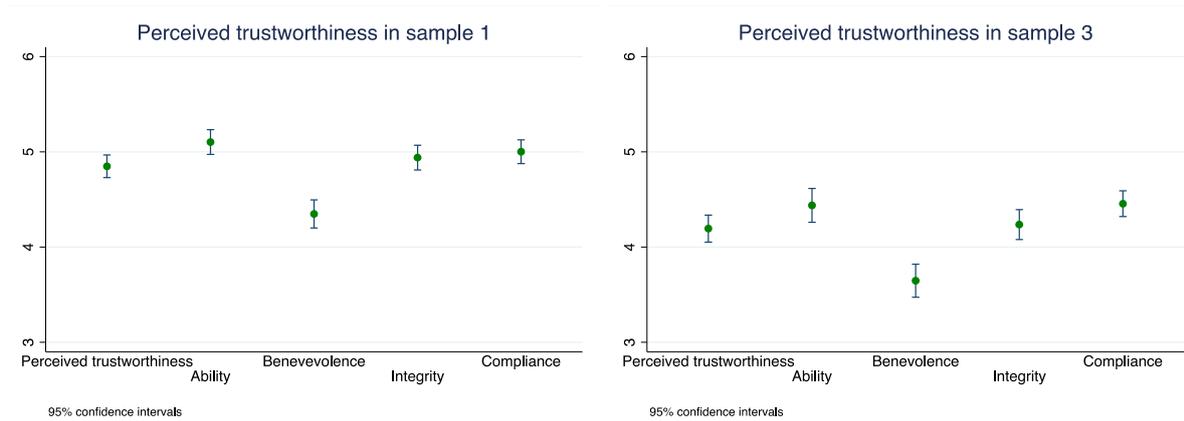
Figure 17 provides a graphical comparison of these confidence intervals, and shows the clear difference in perceived trustworthiness between sample 1 and sample 3. In addition, the figure also shows clearly that perceived benevolence received significantly lower scores than perceived ability, integrity and compliance in sample 1 and sample 3. In other words, the perceived extent of horizontal departments' non-egocentric concern about the interests and needs of the boundary spanners' organisations seems to be the weakest dimension of horizontal departments' perceived trustworthiness, in RI of both trust and distrust.

> 7.3.1.2. *Qualitative description of perceived trustworthiness: samples 2 and 4*

We will now provide a more detailed description of boundary spanners' perceptions of the trustworthiness of horizontal departments in RI of trust and distrust. For this description we turn to our interviews with boundary spanners in the most frequently selected RI of administrational trust (sample 2) and distrust (sample 4) in horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. Figure 18 shows that the distribution of perceived trustworthiness in samples 2 and 4 corresponds well with the distribution of perceived trustworthiness we observed in samples 1 and 3, although the confidence intervals are wider due to the smaller size of samples 2 and 4. Thus, we can argue that qualitative insights about perceived trustworthiness in the smaller samples 2 and 4 may generalise to the larger samples 1 and 4.

Figure 18: Confidence intervals for perceived trustworthiness in samples 2 and 4
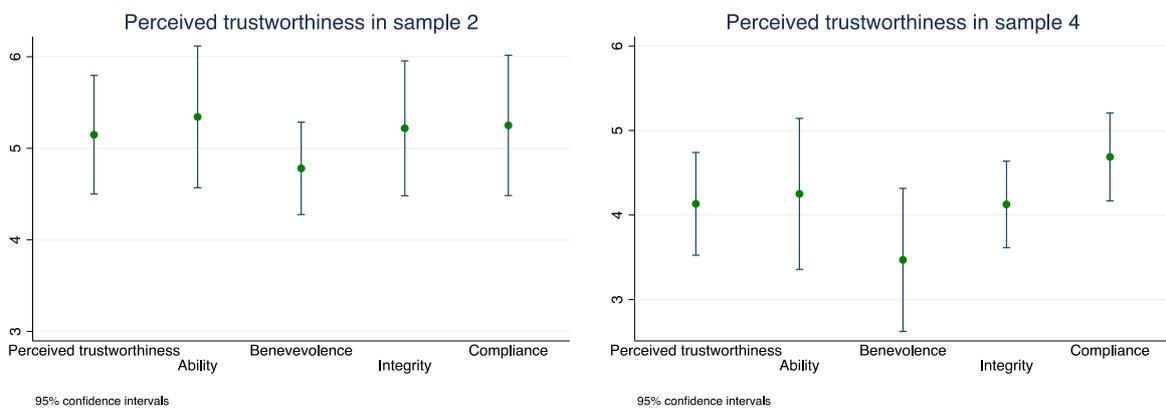
Our qualitative interviews confirm that boundary spanners in the trusted interaction (sample 2) argued that horizontal department B was competent, showed integrity, and complied to the relevant arrangements, and that horizontal department B managed to express an adequate extent of benevolence towards its partner organisations, which was considered a crucial challenge specific to the nature of horizontal departments' tasks (see quote 7.1). In interviews about the most frequently selected RI of distrust (sample 4), multiple boundary spanners emphasised this perceived benevolence as the main problem for department A's perceived trustworthiness. Some remarks were made about the perceived ability of horizontal department A, and few mentions were made regarding department A's perceived integrity and compliance.

Describing perceived ability in samples 2 and 4

Boundary spanners interviewed about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) clearly considered horizontal department B to be a competent actor, with sufficient authority and ability to complete the horizontal tasks of support and coordination it is entrusted with in the Flemish administration. In particular, respondents argued that they appreciated the horizontal departments' competence in making context-sensitive interpretations and aggregations of information supplied by the boundary spanners' organisation, the horizontal departments' practice of asking critical questions about data provided by the boundary spanners' organisation, and the added value brought to the boundary spanners' organisation by thorough reflection about organisational data in horizontal department B (see quote 7.2). However, these positive appreciations of department B's ability did not imply that boundary spanners believed that department B never made mistakes. On the contrary, boundary spanners argued that dealing with and learning from mistakes was an important characteristic of horizontal department B's perceived ability. It is interesting to note that some respondents mentioned that mistakes are a normal aspect of (interorganisational) cooperation, and may lead to further competence-building in department B when embedded in a learning process (see quote 7.3). Finally, while boundary spanners considered department B sufficiently able and competent to deal with its current horizontal tasks, some respondents argued that department B will need to continue developing existing and new competences in order to maintain ability to deal with new tasks it would be entrusted with due to announced public administration reforms. Respondents argued that such development of existing and new competences is particularly challenging for horizontal department B considering current budgetary limits in the Flemish public administration (see quote 7.4).

Boundary spanners interviewed about the most frequently selected RI of distrust (sample 4) had limited criticism regarding department A's perceived ability. While boundary spanners did not question department A's theoretical, technical, analytical or thematic competences, and while they expressed understanding for the challenging and complex tasks faced by horizontal department A (see quote 7.5), multiple respondents argued that department A lacked ability in two domains they considered to be 'core competences' for any horizontal department: understanding and responding to the needs of front-office organisations on the one hand, and communicating openly about problems, delays or failures in horizontal

projects on the other hand (see quote 7.6). As such, boundary spanners in sample 4 referred to a lack of ability to successfully act upon two other sub-dimensions of perceived trustworthiness: department A's ability to effectively organise benevolence (care about the needs of others by organising input) on the one hand, and department A's ability to communicate with integrity (transparency, openness, honesty) about the status of the horizontal projects it coordinates and manages.

Describing perceived benevolence in samples 2 and 4

Boundary spanners interviewed about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) were distinctly positive about the horizontal departments' perceived benevolence and frequently argued that department B distinguishes itself from other horizontal departments regarding its benevolence toward their organisations. The sample 2 boundary spanners considered department B to be open to criticism and feedback, and to be receptive to requests for contextualisation of organisational information in its analyses of aggregated horizontal information, unlike other horizontal departments. The boundary spanners considered department B to enter discussions with an open mind, to make active efforts to organise a space for discussion, participation and involvement in the collection and interpretation of organisational data, whereas other horizontal departments were considered to enter into discussions on the basis of 'faits accomplis', leaving little or no room for discussion. Although respondents did indicate that the nature of the discussions coordinated and managed by department B might allow more room for negotiation than the discussion coordinated by the other horizontal departments, they did emphasise that the open and participatory attitude of department B was perceived as a signal of benevolence toward their own organisations, which reassured them that their concerns could be taken into account in the collection, aggregation, analysis and presentation of organisational data (see quote 7.7). Furthermore, some boundary spanners emphasised that benevolence is a core competence for any horizontal entity, as the core challenge of horizontal coordination consists in taking the values and concerns of a variety of organisational entities into account, even when they contradict each other or conflict with the horizontal departments' own interests. In that respect, department B's benevolence was considered to include recognition and acknowledgement of conflicting organisational interests, as well as efforts to integrate such conflicting interests in their collection, analysis and presentation of organisational information. Some respondents therefore argued that benevolence is at the same time the greatest challenge and the most important competence for horizontal departments. On the one hand, benevolence was argued to be the greatest challenge for horizontal departments because it takes significant competences, resources, time and flexibility to reconcile many interests that sometimes appear incommensurable. On the other hand, benevolence was argued to be the core competence of horizontal departments because their aim is to build processes, structures, support and ownership within the entire Flemish administration, without losing track of the needs, particularities and identities of individual entities. Boundary spanners argued that department B attempted such benevolence when collecting, analysing and presenting horizontal information, even though its attempts were not always successful (see quote 7.8). Finally, one respondent mentioned that benevolence was also expressed through department B's involvement with the business of

their own organisation. For example, department B's boundary spanner went out of their way to attend an evening reception organised by the respondents' entity, as such showing that the respondents' concerns and the mutual partnership were (personally) important to department B's boundary spanner. Therefore, the respondent argued that department B's boundary spanner showed benevolence through rapport and engagement (see quote 7.9).

Boundary spanners interviewed about the most frequently selected RI of distrust (sample 4) considered the perceived benevolence of department A to be the most problematic sub-dimension of perceived trustworthiness. We discuss two issues regarding the lack of perceived benevolence in sample 4: a perceived incompatibility between a supply-driven one-size-fits-all approach and a demand-driven flexible approach to horizontal information collection, and a perception that department A lacked the willingness to understand the challenges and needs of front-office organisations. First, some boundary spanners argued that horizontal department A tended to favour a top-down one-size-fits-all approach to horizontal information collection, analysis and use, with very little leeway for any flexibility regarding the concerns of the administrative entities. Despite a few examples to the contrary, most boundary spanners argued that they did not know about any formal or informal possibilities to discuss their concerns about horizontal information collection, or provide department A with the necessary contextual information to make a more accurate interpretation of organisational information. Horizontal department A was thus considered to favour a top-down one-size-fits-all approach in its efforts to collect, aggregate and interpret information about the administrative entities, which led boundary spanners to be wary of any (political) conclusions that might be reached on the basis of information shared with department A. In other words, boundary spanners saw a fundamental incompatibility between department A's one-size-fits-all templates for the collection and interpretation of horizontal information, and its potential to act as a benevolent horizontal counterpart that cares about the context and particular interests of the boundary spanners' own administrative entity (see quote 7.10). Second, boundary spanners argued that when they themselves took the initiative to provide input and share their concerns with horizontal department A, the department showed little willingness to take their concerns into account in the collection, analysis and interpretation of organisational data. While boundary spanners acknowledged to understand the complexity of managing many diverging stakeholder concerns, they argued that department A's lack of benevolence was shown through its low interest in concerns expressed, and a lack of feedback about how concerns expressed were followed up by horizontal department A (see quote 7.11). Interestingly, several boundary spanners noted that they considered this lack of benevolence to be an organisational characteristic, which was present in the senior management and political direction of department A, rather than a personal characteristic of their counterpart boundary spanner (see quote 7.12). This perceived lack of benevolence on the political and the senior management level in department A was argued to lead to a sense of alienation between front-office 'professionals' and back-office 'managers' in the Flemish administration. Boundary spanners argued that as department A disregarded their concerns, the horizontal issues, topics and projects grew increasingly detached from their own organisational priorities. Some respondents argued that more benevolence by department A was crucial to strengthen its perceived trustworthiness, because it would

only be able to build its perceived ability, knowledge and competence about issues administrative entities care about by showing more active interest in the needs and challenges of the front-office organisations (see quote 7.13).

Describing perceived integrity in samples 2 and 4

Boundary spanners interviewed about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) argued that department B was characterised by integrity. Department B was described as open, transparent, honest, objective, and neutral in the collection, aggregation and use of horizontal information. These characteristics were particularly emphasised as important values for horizontal collection, aggregation and use of organisational information in the challenging context of divergent organisational and political interests (see quote 7.14). One boundary spanner also argued that integrity comprises full disclosure about possibilities within the legal framework of information exchange, but with absolute respect for its boundaries and for previous arrangements between the organisations. As such, integrity also reflects a difficult balance between horizontal benevolence toward administrative entities with particular concerns and compliance with relevant formal and informal arrangements for the collection, aggregation and use of horizontal information (see quote 7.15).

Boundary spanners interviewed about the most frequently selected RI of distrust (sample 4) did not explicitly question the integrity of horizontal department A. However, some respondents, particularly those who had reported a rather high extent of distrust in department A in the boundary spanner survey, were rather critical about departments A's neutrality and honesty in collecting and presenting aggregated organisational data (see quote 7.16). First, multiple respondents argued that the horizontal department was sometimes motivated by opportunistic interests when presenting data, particularly with regards to the political objectives of the responsible ministers' cabinet (infra) (see quote 7.17). Second, some boundary spanners were critical about the honesty of horizontal department A and argued that they thought that department A had not been truthful about the actual cost and benefits of systems of information management in order to strengthen the attractiveness of their horizontal alternatives for such systems (see quote 7.18).

Describing perceived compliance in samples 2 and 4

Boundary spanners interviewed about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) were very positive regarding the perceived compliance of department B. Our respondents expected department B to remain true to its formal and informal engagements, but specified that they were also tolerant when the occasional deadline was not respected, due to the challenges of reconciling diverging interests that were considered to be inherent to department B's tasks (see quote 7.19).

Boundary spanners interviewed about the most frequently selected RI of distrust (sample 4) indicated some problems regarding the compliance dimension of perceived trustworthiness. Particularly, they considered department A to be a somewhat unpredictable counterpart because it did not always comply with prior arrangements made in interorganisational interactions (see quote 7.20). However, multiple

boundary spanners argued that they could understand that previous arrangements might be broken due to the complexity of horizontal tasks and the dependency upon dynamics of political decision-making. In this respect, one respondent argued that the problem was not that previous arrangements were broken, but rather that there was a lack of open and honest communication and feedback about the reasons underlying the breaking of previous arrangements, thus referring to perceived intergrity, rather than perceived compliance (see quote 7.21).

> 7.3.2. *Describing willingness to suspend vulnerability*

The second dimension of administrational trust we consider here is boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability. Suspension of vulnerability means that a trustor is willing to make the assumption that irreducible social vulnerability and uncertainty will be favourably resolved on the basis of 'good reasons', despite the radical uncertainty inherent to trust problems.

> 7.3.2.1. *Quantitative description of the willingness to suspend vulnerability: samples 1 and 3*

As argued in the methodological chapter, we have measured boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability in the boundary spanner survey with regards to communication and surveillance. The Cronbach alpha values for our index measures of willingness to suspend vulnerability in communication (sample 1 α = .767; sample 3 α = .819), willingness to suspend vulnerability in surveillance (sample 1 α = .825; sample 3 α = .876), and the overall measure of willingness to suspend vulnerability (sample 1 α = .858; sample 3 α = .904) again indicate strong internal consistency, and thus suggest that the measures are reliable (George and Mallery, 2003; Kline, 2000; Devellis, 2012; Hair et al., 1998).

Table 36 provides an overview of boundary spanners' survey answers regarding the willingness to be vulnerable in RI of trust (sample 1) and distrust (sample 3). Figure 19 provides a visual comparison of the index measures' confidence intervals. The table and figure show that the index for willingness to suspend vulnerability is significantly larger in sample 1 than in sample 3 (p<.01). The significant difference between sample 1 and 3 is present for boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability regarding surveillance of horizontal departments (p<.01) and for communication with horizontal departments (p<.1). First, we find that boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability is significantly larger regarding surveillance intentions in sample 1 than in sample 3 (p<.01). In other words, these data show that boundary spanners are more willing to make themselves vulnerable by 'letting go' of what the horizontal department might or might not do in the interaction in sample 1 (RI of trust) than in sample 3 (RI of distrust). In sample 1, boundary spanners indicate that they would feel more at ease after asking the horizontal department to do something, indicate significantly less intentions to keep a close eye on the horizontal department, report significantly more disagreement with statements that they would feel compelled to check the correctness of statements made by the horizontal departments, check with others whether the horizontal department is reliable, and keep a close eye on the horizontal department. Second, we found a significant difference between sample 1 and sample 3 regarding boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability in communication with the horizontal department, but only on the lowest confidence level (p<.1). Looking at the individual indicators, we found no significant difference between sample 1 and

sample 3 regarding boundary spanners' responses to the statement that they would give all relevant information to the horizontal department despite the personal or organisational damage this could imply, as boundary spanners tended to equally disagree with this statement in both samples. We did find a difference in the extent to which boundary spanners tend to rather disagree with the statement that they would limit the extent of information shared with the horizontal department, as this disagreement is stronger in sample 1 than in sample 3 (p<.1). Furthermore, boundary spanners in sample 1 agree significantly less with the statement that they would carefully consider their opinions before sharing them with the horizontal department (p<.05). Finally, we find that boundary spanners in sample 1 disagree significantly more with the statement that they would withhold certain information from the horizontal department than in sample 3 (p<.05). In other words, boundary spanners are more willing to be open in their communication with horizontal departments in RI of trust than in RI of distrust, but they are equally reluctant to share information that might damage their own interests.

Table 36: Descriptive statistics of the willingness to suspend vulnerability (all observations)

Dimension measure	Sample 1 (trust)			Sample 3 (distrust)			Group diff.
	N	Mean	S.E.	N	Mean	S.E.	
Suspension of vulnerability index	158	4,46	0,07	145	4,06	0,08	S1>S3***
Suspension of vulnerability in communication index	158	4,31	0,07	145	4,03	0,08	S1>S3*
• I would carefully consider my opinions before I share them with this org.	158	3,91	0,11	145	4,39	0,11	S3>S1**
• I would give this org. all relevant information on important matters, even if it could get me in trouble	158	3,77	0,10	145	3,66	0,11	S1=S3
• I would limit the information I give to this org.	158	3,30	0,09	145	3,62	0,10	S3>S1*
• I would give this org. all relevant information on important matters, even if it could get my org. in trouble	158	3,57	0,10	145	3,59	0,12	S1=S3
• I would deliberately withhold some information when communicating with this org.	158	2,57	0,09	145	3,06	0,10	S3>S1***
Suspension of vulnerability in surveillance index	158	4,60	0,07	145	4,09	0,09	S1>S3***
• I would feel at ease after I have asked this org. to do something	158	4,88	0,08	145	4,32	0,10	S1>S3***
• I would keep a close eye on this org. to ensure that they don't do something detrimental to my organisation	158	3,61	0,10	145	4,17	0,11	S3>S1***
• I would check with others to what extent this org. is reliable	158	3,32	0,10	145	3,77	0,11	S3>S1**
• I would keep a close eye on this org. after I have asked them to do something	158	3,52	0,10	145	3,97	0,11	S3>S1**
• I would check the correctness of statements made by this org. in formal documents	158	3,44	0,10	145	3,94	0,11	S3>S1**

1 completely disagree; 2 disagree; 3 rather disagree; 4 neither agree nor disagree; 5 rather agree; 6 agree; 7 completely agree
Index variables use inverted scores on negatively worded statements so that higher index values indicate more risk-taking
* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

Figure 19: Confidence intervals for willingness to suspend vulnerability in samples 1 and 3
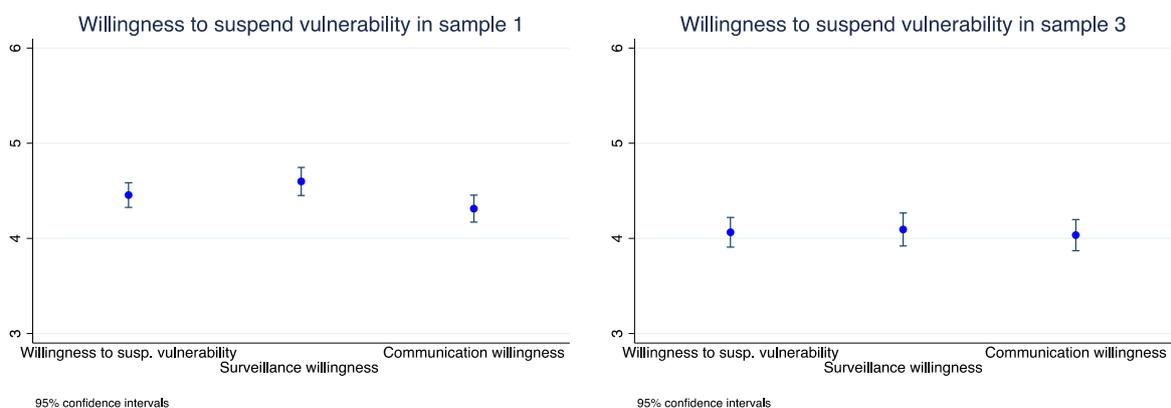
The quantitative data thus suggest that boundary spanners are more willing to suspend vulnerability in trusted than in distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. First, they are more willing to communicate openly with horizontal departments in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions, except when doing so could imply personal or organisational damage. Second, boundary spanners are more willing to 'let go' of verification and surveillance of the horizontal department in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. However, for both of these points, it is important to note that the difference between both samples, although it is significant, lies in more agreement with positive statements and more disagreement with negative statements in sample 1, versus more neutral answers in sample 3 (closer to a score of 4 on the 7-point Likert scale). While these data thus indicate significant differences in boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability between trusted and distrusted RI, they should not lead us to overestimate these differences.

> 7.3.2.2. *Qualitative description of the willingness to suspend vulnerability: samples 2 and 4*

We will now provide more detailed examples of what it means to be 'willing to suspend vulnerability' according to boundary spanner in the Flemish administration, on the basis of our interviews about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) and the most frequently selected RI of distrust (sample 4). Figure 20 shows that the distribution of the willingness to suspend vulnerability in samples 2 and 4 corresponds well with the distribution in samples 1 and 3, despite the wider confidence intervals, which is due to smaller sample sizes. Thus, we argue that qualitative insights about the willingness to suspend vulnerability in samples 2 and 4 may be generalised to the larger samples 1 and 3.

Figure 20: Confidence intervals for willingness to suspend vulnerability in samples 2 and 4
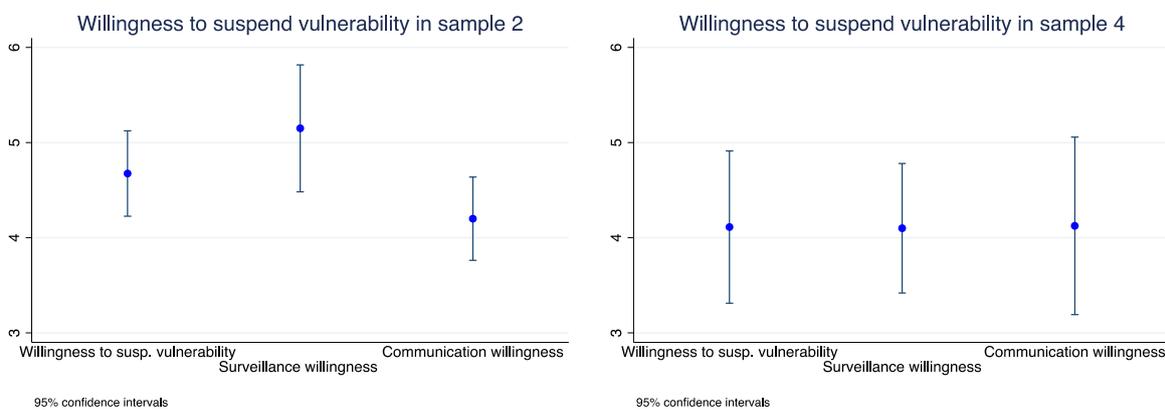
Boundary spanners who were interviewed about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) argued that they were willing to be open and vulnerable to a certain extent, but would always insist on maintaining interdependency in interorganisational interactions with department B. While some respondents argued that willingness to suspend vulnerability was their basic attitude for any interorganisational interaction in the Flemish administration, others specified that they were more willing to be open toward department B than toward departments A and C. For example, one boundary spanner argued that their organisation is less 'strategic' in how it shares information with department B compared to the other horizontal departments (see quote 7.22). However, while boundary spanners in sample 2 were

willing to be open and vulnerable toward department B, this willingness was certainly not without its limits. Boundary spanners in sample 2 acknowledged that, despite their trust in department B, the professional reality of public administration involves diverging organisational interests, which require a minimum of surveillance and reticence in communication with horizontal departments. Boundary spanners thus argued that they were not willing to relinquish all surveillance of department B and maintained some limits to the information shared with department B (see quote 7.23). Furthermore, while boundary spanners in sample 2 considered themselves willing to assume an open and vulnerable position towards department B, they emphasised that they were not willing to be dependent upon department B, as 'dependency' was associated with 'powerlessness'. Boundary spanners argued that they were unwilling to be powerless toward department B, but argued that that this was never an issue in interactions with department B because of two reasons. On the one hand, boundary spanners argued that they could exercise influence over the collection and use of horizontal information by department B because department B was benevolent toward their own organisation and cared about their needs and interests. On the other hand, respondents argued that they were never strictly obliged to cooperate with department B regarding the collection and use of horizontal information, and were thus never truly 'powerless' in interorganisational interactions (see quote 7.24). The sample 2 interviews yielded several examples of this willingness to be 'open and vulnerable to a certain extent whilst maintaining interdependency'. The willingness to be vulnerable was discussed first and foremost as being willing to provide the horizontal department with the organisational information it requests. This was considered to render the boundary spanners' own organisation vulnerable to both department B and to factors not directly related to department B. On the one hand, open communication with department B was argued to make the boundary spanners' organisation vulnerable to department B. For example, department B often speaks as the 'single voice' of the Flemish administration, and thus speaks on behalf of the boundary spanners' own organisation. One boundary spanner argued that they had no guarantee that department B would not simply ignore their organisations' perspective when speaking on behalf of the entire Flemish administration, and that the internal and the external authority of their own organisation would be severely undermined if department B would present a vision that would contradict the one promoted by their organisation. However, since department B was considered to be trustworthy (supra), the boundary spanner argued that they had 'good reasons' to make a 'leap of faith' regarding department B, although they never had full certainty that department B would not abuse their vulnerability (see quote 7.25). Another example referred to boundary spanners' willingness to allow department B to negotiate and manage framework contracts for the provision of certain external services to their organisations and exchange organisational information in that respect, thus becoming vulnerable to the performance of horizontal department B in these negotiations (see quote 7.26). On the other hand however, open communication with department B was also argued to engender vulnerability to factors beyond the control of department B. For example, boundary spanners emphasised the possibility that (political) decisions about resource allocation might be taken on the basis of information compiled by department B (see quote 7.27). Another example was that the aggregation of organisational information by department

B makes such information more accessible to actors such as the press, the parliament, political parties or other stakeholders, who might seek to use that information to further certain interests at the cost of the boundary spanners' organisation (see quote 7.28).

Interviews with boundary spanners about the most frequently selected RI of distrust (sample 4) indicated that in this interaction, boundary spanners' willingness to be open and vulnerable ranged from 'willing but wary' to 'highly reluctant and unwilling to suspend vulnerability'. Some sample 4 boundary spanners argued that, in principle, they were willing to be vulnerable towards department A, although they were clearly more reluctant than the sample 2 boundary to suspend vulnerability. For instance, one sample 4 boundary spanner indicated that they had to accept more vulnerability toward department A than they were willing to accept (see quote 7.29). Another boundary spanner indicated that while they tried to keep an open mind and that they would not outrightly refuse cooperation with the department A, they were nonetheless more wary and more inclined to abort the cooperation if they noticed anything 'off' (see quote 7.30). Limited willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 4 therefore seems to be expressed in a lower tolerance for mistakes and a faster decision to discontinue cooperation, rather than in outright initial refusal of interorganisational cooperation. Other sample 4 boundary spanners argued in no unclear terms that they were outright unwilling to be open and vulnerable in communicating information towards department A (see quote 7.31). The sample 4 interviews provided several examples of boundary spanners' reluctance to suspend vulnerability towards department A, which related to vulnerability toward department A and to vulnerability toward factors beyond department A's influence. An example of the former regards boundary spanners' wariness of the black box processes in department A. Multiple boundary spanners in sample 4 argued that they had no idea about how information shared with department A would be interpreted, how certain analyses were conducted, or how concerns and comments regarding the process were followed up. Boundary spanners felt vulnerable and dependent upon department A due to this lack of information about the process of information collection, analysis and use, and argued that this ambiguity obstructed their own ability to adequately report about their boundary spanning activity towards their own organisations (see quote 7.32). Boundary spanners in sample 4 also argued that they would be more vulnerable to factors beyond horizontal department A's control. For example, boundary spanners' were reluctant to suspend vulnerability toward department A because they refused to become a 'sheep among wolves', as they argued that it would be foolish to suspend vulnerability in a context where none of the other entities does the same (see quote 7.33). Finally, boundary spanners argued that the information usually requested by department A provides insight in boundary spanners' own organisations, on the basis of which (political) decisions about resource allocation might be made, which was considered threatening in a context of budgetary stringency, in which political decision makers are known to be looking for ways to reduce the operating budget of public administration. This vulnerability to allocation decisions was emphasised to far greater extent in sample 4 than in sample 2 (see quote 7.34), because boundary spanners argued that these political decisions were affected by the lack of neutrality, comparability and context-sensitiveness of the analyses of organisational information made and presented by department A (see quote 7.35).

The third dimension of administrational trust discussed here is boundary spanners' risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions, which was considered as the *"only credible demonstration of trust and hence its definitional realization"* (Skinner et al., 2013: 12-13). Thus, in order for trust to be realised, risk-taking behaviour needs to be present in the interorganisational interaction.

> 7.3.3.1. *Quantitative description of risk-taking behaviour: samples 1 and 3*

We have measured boundary spanners' risk-taking behaviour by using the measures for boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability, but changing the item prompts from hypothetical intentions to actual behaviour, as discussed in the methodological chapter of this dissertation. Thus, the boundary spanner survey assesses risk-taking behaviour in communication and surveillance behaviour. The Cronbach alpha values for our index measures regarding communication behaviour (sample 1 α = .755; sample 3 α = .833), surveillance behaviour (sample 1 α = .854; sample 3 α = .885), and the overall measure of risk-taking behaviour (sample 1 α = .853; sample 3 α = .902) suggest that the measures are internally consistent and thus reliable indicators (George and Mallery, 2003; Kline, 2000; Develis, 2012; Hair et al., 1998).

The findings are highly comparable to those reported for willingness to suspend vulnerability in the previous section. Table 37 compares boundary spanners' responses regarding risk-taking behaviour in RI of trust (sample 1) and distrust (sample 3). Figure 21 provides a graphical comparison between the confidence intervals around the index measures. The index for risk-taking behaviour is significantly larger in sample 1 than in sample 3 (p<.01). We find that this significant difference is present for boundary spanners' surveillance behaviour vis-à-vis horizontal departments (p<.01) and for their communication behaviour with horizontal departments (p<.1). First, we see that the risk-taking behaviour regarding surveillance is significantly larger in sample 1 than in sample 3 (p<.01). In other words, boundary spanners enact less surveillance when they interact with a trusted horizontal department than when they interact with a distrusted horizontal department. For sample 1, boundary spanners report that they feel significantly more at ease after asking the horizontal department to do something (p<.01), while they indicated to verify and surveil the horizontal department to a significantly greater extent in sample 3. For instance, in sample 3, boundary spanners agreed significantly more with statements that they check with others whether the counterpart organisation is reliable (p<.05), that they keep a close eye on the horizontal organisation when dealing with them (p<.05), and that they double-check the correctness of statements made by the horizontal department (p<.05). Although significantly less surveillance behaviour is reported in sample 1 than in sample 3, the average scores are all close to the neither agree/neither disagree answer option in sample 3, which suggests that the behavioural difference between trusted and distrusted interactions lies in a lower amount of time and energy (and thus resources) spent on surveillance. Second, we find a less pronounced, but significant difference between communication behaviour in sample 1 and sample 3 (p<.1). We found significant differences regarding the extent to which boundary spanners deliberately limit the information given to the horizontal department (p<.05) as boundary spanners appear to limit the information exchanged to greater extent in sample 3 than in sample 1. However, we did not find a

significant difference in the extent to which boundary spanners carefully consider their opinions in interactions with horizontal departments, or in the extent to which boundary spanners exchange information that could damage their own interests. The data suggest boundary spanners are reluctant to share such information, regardless of whether they trust or distrust the horizontal department.

Table 37: Descriptive statistics of reported risk-taking behaviour (all observations)

Dimension measure	Sample 1 (trust)			Sample 3 (distrust)			Group diff.
	N	Mean	S.E.	N	Mean	S.E.	
Risk-taking behaviour index	158	4,44	0,07	145	4,03	0,08	S1>S3***
Risk-taking behaviour in communication index	158	4,28	0,07	145	3,98	0,08	S1>S3*
• I carefully consider my opinions before I share them with this org.	158	4,16	0,11	145	4,50	0,10	S1=S3
• I give this org. all relevant information on important matters, even if it could get me in trouble	158	3,84	0,10	145	3,61	0,11	S1=S3
• I limit the information I give to this org.	158	3,20	0,10	145	3,63	0,10	S3>S1**
• I give this org. all relevant information on important matters, even if it could get my org. in trouble	158	3,59	0,11	145	3,54	0,11	S1=S3
• I deliberately withhold some information when communicating with this org.	158	2,65	0,09	145	3,10	0,10	S3>S1**
Risk-taking behaviour in surveillance index	158	4,60	0,08	145	4,08	0,09	S1>S3***
• I feel at ease after I have asked this org. to do something	158	4,85	0,08	145	4,21	0,09	S1>S3***
• I keep a close eye on this org. to ensure that they don't do something detrimental to my organisation	158	3,59	0,10	145	4,11	0,11	S3>S1**
• I check with others to what extent this org. is reliable	158	3,23	0,10	145	3,72	0,11	S3>S1**
• I keep a close eye on this org. after I have asked them to do something	158	3,56	0,10	145	4,01	0,10	S3>S1**
• I check the correctness of statements made by this org. in formal documents	158	3,46	0,10	145	3,98	0,11	S3>S1**

1 completely disagree; 2 disagree; 3 rather disagree; 4 neither agree nor disagree; 5 rather agree; 6 agree; 7 completely agree
Index variables use inverted scores on negatively worded statements so that higher index values indicate more risk-taking
* = $p < .1$; ** = $p < .05$; *** = $p < .01$

Figure 21: Confidence intervals for risk-taking behaviour in samples 1 and 3
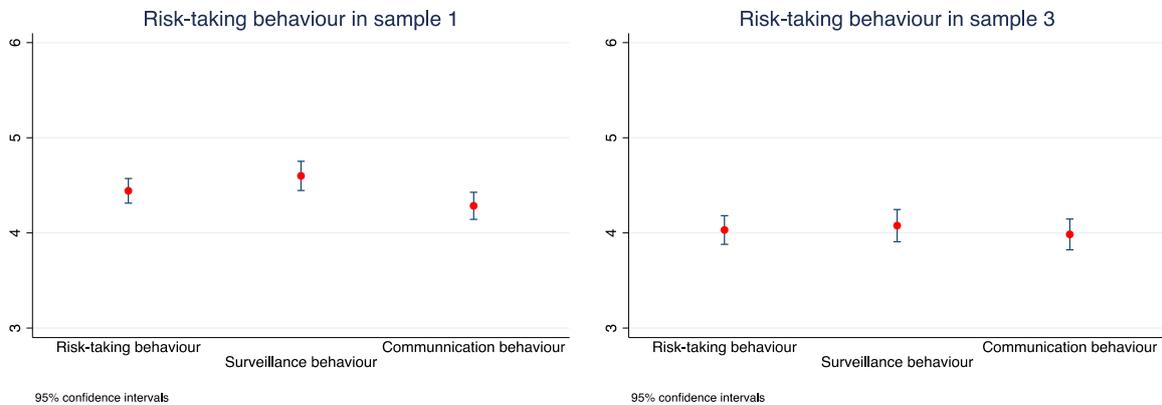
Our quantitative data therefore suggest that boundary spanners effectively behave differently towards the horizontal departments in trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions, taking more risks in their interactions with horizontal departments in RI of trust than in RI of distrust. While this is more pronounced in their surveillance behaviour than in their communication behaviour, we can argue that boundary spanners engage more in risk-taking behaviour, take fewer precautions of surveillance and withhold less information from the horizontal departments in RI of trust than in RI of distrust, or at least report that they do so.

Qualitative description of risk-taking behaviour: samples 2 and 4

Again, we will illustrate these quantitative findings in samples 1 and 3 with examples from interviews collected in samples 2 and 4. The following figure presents the distribution of boundary spanners' risk-taking behaviour in samples 2 and 4, which provide a good representation of the distribution of risk-taking behaviour in samples 1 and 3 for the overall risk-taking behaviour measure and the risk-taking behaviour measure for surveillance, but suggest no difference between the risk-taking behaviour measure for communication between samples 2 and 4. However, as we will see, such a difference in communication between sample 2 and 4 is clearly present in the examples.

Figure 22: Confidence intervals for risk-taking behaviour in samples 2 and 4
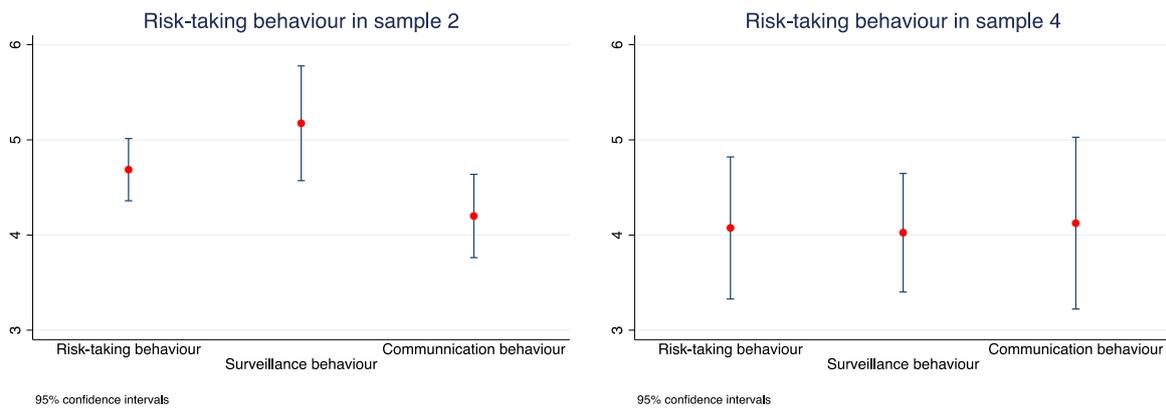
In interviews about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2), boundary spanners argued that their risk- taking behaviour comprised effective openness and vulnerability vis-à-vis department B, although this was argued to differ from assuming a position of dependency. In fact, respondents argued that they acted more dependently toward other horizontal departments in which they had less interorganisational trust, because they were given no other option than doing so. In other words, boundary spanners interviewed about their most trusted interorganisational interaction argued that they were vulnerable and open, but not forced to be dependent because department B proactively engaged in efforts to invite feedback, input and contextualisation of the information it collected. This allowed the boundary spanners to influence the process of horizontal information collection, and rendered the interaction one of interdependent openness and vulnerability rather than dependent one-sided openness and vulnerability (see quote 7.36). The sample 2 interviews produced a number of interesting examples of such open, vulnerable and interdependent behaviour in interorganisational interactions with department B. First, boundary spanners argued that they shared information about their organisations' functioning with department B despite the fact that doing so rendered them vulnerable to department B or third parties. One respondent argued that they made significant individual efforts to convince their own organisation to continue cooperation and information exchange with department B, despite internal opposition, effectively assuming vulnerability by going against their colleagues in order to promote cooperation vis-à-vis department B (see quote 7.37).

In interviews about the most frequently selected RI of distrust (sample 4), several boundary spanners argued that they were effectively more dependent upon department A than they were willing to (see quote 7.38). In order to deal with this 'given' dependency toward department A and regain some control over the interaction, boundary spanners argued that they effectively limited their vulnerability toward department A by withholding some information and employing strategies to 'keep an eye' on department A to better understand its intentions. For example, respondents argued that some organisations share interpretations of their organisational information rather than raw data, in order to retain some control over how the information could be used by department A, especially when faced with uncertainty about department A's intentions regarding the analysis, interpretation and use of the information, and when faced with questions about the perceived integrity of department A. In other words, Flemish administrative entities were argued to behaviourally limit their dependency in information exchange with department A by 'colouring' organisational information in a particular way (see quote 7.39). Second, boundary spanners argued that they were more careful and selective about which information they share with department A. Although respondents emphasised that they never gave incorrect information to the department A, they also indicated not to 'put all their cards upon the table'. Some respondents argued that they only provided aggregated information rather than detailed indicators, or limited the exchange of information to the absolute minimum of what they were formally required to exchange. As such, information exchange is not refused outright, but boundary spanners do limit their information exchange as a result of their distrust in department A by attempting to make it more difficult for department A to damage their organisation with detailed analyses of organisational information (see quote 7.40). Third, respondents argued that they effectively tried to keep a close eye on the intentions of department A. For example, one boundary spanner argued that their colleague always insisted on checking outgoing communication toward department A in order to ensure no potentially damaging information was communicated. Another boundary spanner argued that their main motivation to attend meetings with department A was to keep a close eye on them and ensure that their own interests were not threatened by department A (see quote 7.41).

> 7.3.4. *Discussion: describing dimensions of the trust process in RI of trust and distrust*

In this section, we have combined quantitative measures of the three dimensions of trust evaluations in RI of trust (sample 1) and distrust (sample 3) with qualitative information about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) and distrust (sample 4) in order to describe and compare the presence of perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability, and risk-taking behaviour in trusted and distrusted interactions between administrative entities and horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. We now consolidate the results and assert how they correspond with the hypotheses set out in the theoretical chapter of this dissertation. Our main conclusion is that none of the hypotheses derived from proposition B can be rejected on the basis of the evidence presented here. Table 38 provides an overview of proposition B, the associated hypotheses, and our core findings.

First, the empirical data are in line with hypothesis HB1. The horizontal department was considered significantly more trustworthy in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. This difference was found for all four sub-dimensions of perceived trustworthiness: perceived ability, benevolence, integrity and compliance. We also found that within RI of trust and distrust, perceived benevolence was significantly weaker than the other three sub-dimensions of perceived trustworthiness. The perception that department B made efforts to take concerns into account (benevolence), combined with transparency, honesty, neutrality and objectiveness in the collection, analysis and use of information (integrity) and the perception that department B has the competences to unite different interests in a contextualised presentation of horizontal information (ability), contributed to boundary spanners' perceptions of department B's trustworthiness. In interviews about the most frequently selected RI of distrust on the other hand, boundary spanners gravely questioned the benevolence of department A due to what they considered to be a top-down supply-driven approach, in which there was little room for input about their needs and concerns, leading to alienation between front-office 'professionals' and back-office horizontal 'managers'. In addition, boundary spanners argued that department A also lacked ability to understand needs and concerns of front-office organisations, as well as ability to communicate openly about delays, problems and failures in horizontal projects. While boundary spanners did not explicitly question the integrity of department A, they were critical about its neutrality and honesty in the analysis and presentation of horizontal information. Finally, some boundary spanners argued that department A was unpredictable regarding compliance, as it had not always complied with its prior engagements.

Second, our findings also supported hypothesis HB2. The findings show that boundary spanners have a greater willingness to suspend vulnerability in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. This difference was also reflected in boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability regarding surveillance and communication. In our interviews, clear differences were found between the most frequently selected RI of trust and distrust. Boundary spanners interviewed about the most frequently selected RI of trust argued that they were willing to be open and vulnerable, but not dependent, toward department B and provided several illustrations of this willingness. In interviews

Table 38: Describing trust evaluations – asserting theoretical proposition B

Formulated propositions	Derived hypotheses	Empirical observations
Proposition B: Trusted and distrusted interactions can be studied through the universal trust process, in which we expect that all three trust process dimensions will be significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.	**HB1:** The perceived trustworthiness is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.	**HB1:** not rejected **Quantitative evidence:** supports hypothesised difference in all dimensions investigated (perceived ability; benevolence; integrity; compliance) **Qualitative evidence:** supports hypothesised difference in all dimensions investigated. In trust interviews, perceived efforts of the horizontal department to take into account concerns and perspectives of the trustors (benevolence), combined with transparency, honesty, neutrality and objectiveness (integrity) and the perception that the trusted horizontal department has the competences to unite different interests and provide a duly contextualised aggregation of organisational data (ability) constituted its perceived trustworthiness. No compliance problems indicated. In distrust interviews, perceived lack in ability to understand needs of front-office organisations and communicate openly; benevolence of horizontal department gravely questioned due to perceived top-down approach. Integrity not explicitly questioned, although critical about neutrality and honesty; some concern about predictability of horizontal department due to lack of compliance with prior engagements.
	HB2: The willingness to suspend vulnerability is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.	**HB2:** not rejected **Quantitative evidence:** supports hypothesised difference in surveillance dimension but only partly in communication dimension **Qualitative evidence:** supports hypothesised difference in both dimensions investigated. In trust interviews: willingness to be open and vulnerable to a certain extent, but not to make organisation dependent upon horizontal department. Several examples of open communication and acceptance of vulnerability discussed. In distrust interviews; willingness to be open and vulnerable ranged from 'reluctantly willing' over 'willing but wary' toward 'outright unwilling'. Several examples discussed of more wariness, less tolerance for mistakes, more limiting and withholding of information from horizontal department.
	HB3: Risk-taking behaviour is significantly higher in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.	**HB3:** not rejected **Quantitative evidence:** supports hypothesised difference in surveillance dimension but only partly in communication dimension **Qualitative evidence:** supports hypothesised difference in both dimensions investigated. In trust interviews, behaviour argued to be open and vulnerable, but interdependent rather than dependent. In distrust interviews, different behavioural strategies used to limit vulnerability. Examples of 'colouring' information, obfuscating information through aggregation, participation in meetings and projects in order to verify and 'supervise' the horizontal department.

about the most frequently selected RI for interorganisational distrust on the other hand, boundary spanners ranged from 'reluctantly willing' over 'willing but wary' toward 'outright unwilling' to suspend vulnerability toward department A, and provided several examples of this willingness.

Third, our findings also support hypothesis HB3. All evidence supports that boundary spanners engage in more risk-taking behaviour vis-à-vis horizontal departments in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. Again, the difference was reflected in the sub-dimensions of risk-taking behaviour regarding surveillance and communication, and was illustrated in interviews about the most frequently selected RI of trust and distrust. In interviews about the most frequently selected RI of trust, boundary spanners argued that they shared information in an open, vulnerable but interdependent way with department B. In the most frequently selected RI of interorganisational distrust on the other hand, boundary spanners argued that they were forced to be more dependent than they actually wanted to be, and used different strategies to retain control and limit dependency toward department A. Examples included 'colouring', obfuscating or withholding information, and attending meetings to 'supervise' department A's intentions and activities regarding the collection and use of horizontal information.

We do emphasise that the differences in dimensions of the trust process between RI of trust and distrust should not be overrated. While our data do support that boundary spanners perceive more trustworthiness, are more willing to suspend their vulnerability, and take more behavioural risk in RI of trust than in RI of distrust, the quantitative differences are rather small and the qualitative data highlight that perceptions, attitudes and behaviour regarding horizontal counterparts are never either black or white. Rather than suggesting that boundary spanners hold more negative opinions about the distrusted horizontal department, our data actually suggest that boundary spanners are more uncertain and doubtful about their perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability and actual risk-taking behaviour regarding distrusted horizontal counterparts, while they are more pronouncedly positive regarding trusted organisational counterparts.

> 7.4.   **Explaining trust process interdimensional relations in RI of trust and distrust**

In this section, we will examine how the three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process relate to each other in RI of trust and RI of distrust. This section therefore focuses on proposition C, in which we postulated that the assumed 'universal' nature of the trust process leads us to expect that the interdimensional relations of the trust process in trusted interactions are similar to those in distrusted interactions.

Table 39 provides Pearson correlations between the three dimensions and all control variables for samples 1 and 3. Some clear observations can be made on the basis of these data. First, the data clearly suggests the existence of highly significant and strong positive relationships between the three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in both sample 1 and sample 3. However, importantly, we note that the correlation between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour is particularly high,

surpassing the threshold of Pearson's r>.8 in both samples, which suggests that both variables may actually measure the same construct (Field, 2009), indicating a possible problem of discriminant validity[30].

Table 39: Pearson correlations for trust process dimensions and control variables in sample 1 (top) and sample 3 (bottom)

Sample 1 measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Perceived trustworthiness	1									
2. Willing. to susp. vulnerability	0,5589 ***	1								
3. Risk-taking behaviour	0,4916 ***	0,9223 ***	1							
4. Age (years)	Ns	Ns	Ns	1						
5. Sex (Female)	Ns	Ns	Ns	-0,1975 **	1					
6. Seniority (years)	Ns	Ns	Ns	0,7113 ***	Ns	1				
7. Education (master or higher)	Ns	0,172 **	0,1334 *	-0,1443 *	0,1672 **	-0,2837 ***	1			
8. Managerial responsibilities	Ns	Ns	Ns	0,2558 ***	Ns	0,2614 ***	Ns	1		
9. Formal org. autonomy	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	-0,2294 ***	1	
10. Generalised trust	0,2667 ***	0,2617 ***	0,2499 ***	0,1745 **	0,1340 *	Ns	0,1862 **	Ns	Ns	1

Sample 3 measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Perceived trustworthiness	1									
2. Willing. to susp. vulnerability	0,6398 ***	1								
3. Risk-taking behaviour	0,6982 ***	0,8504 ***	1							
4. Age (years)	Ns	Ns	Ns	1						
5. Sex (Female)	Ns	Ns	Ns	-0,1763 **	1					
6. Seniority (years)	Ns	0,1960 **	0,1511 *	0,7017 ***	Ns	1				
7. Education (master or higher)	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	0,1565 *	Ns	1			
8. Managerial responsibilities	Ns	Ns	Ns	0,2300 **	Ns	0,2312 ***	0,1808 **	1		
9. Formal org. autonomy	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	-0,2562 ***	1	
10. Generalised trust	0,2592 ***	0,2387 ***	0,2554 ***	0,1974 **	Ns	Ns	0,1767 **	Ns	Ns	1

* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

clxxx———————————————

[30] Field (2009) argues that correlations of r>.8 might indicate a lack of empirical distinction between measured variables. The high correlations between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and effective risk-taking behaviour may thus indicate a problem of internal validity because:

- A priming effect could have occurred due to asking the behavioural questions right after the 'willingness' questions,
- Respondents may experience social desirability to show they "believe in what they do, and do what they believe in."
- Survey methods may be fit to measure attitudes but are less appropriate to measure behaviour.

We discuss these limitations in the final chapter of this dissertation.

Second, the data suggest that boundary spanners' micro-level predispositions to trust others are a highly important control variable, as this measure was found to be positively related to all dimensions of the trust process in both sample 1 and sample 3, although the Pearson's r values indicate that its correlation with the dimensions of the trust process is weaker than the relation between the dimensions of the trust process. Third, two further control variables are found to be significantly related to the dimensions of the trust process. In sample 1, education is found to be positively related to the willingness to suspend vulnerability (p<.05) and risk-taking behaviour (p<.1). In sample 3, we find a positive relationship between seniority and the willingness to suspend vulnerability (p<.05) and risk-taking behaviour (p<.1). Fourth, some significant relations are found between control variables. The correlation coefficients do not suggest any cause for concern regarding multicollinearity. It is important to note that we are not interested in the causal mechanisms behind the correlations between these control variables in this dissertation. The negative correlation between sex and age in both samples indicates that female respondents are more likely to be young than male respondents in our samples. The positive relationship between seniority (years employed in the Flemish administration) and age is self-explanatory. The positive relationship between managerial responsibilities and age indicates a higher probability that respondents with some managerial responsibilities have a higher average age. Age and generalised trust are also positively correlated, which indicates that older respondents are more likely to have trust in 'other people' than younger respondents. The positive correlation between female respondents and education indicates that in our two samples, female respondents are more probable than male respondents to have achieved at least a masters' degree. In sample 1, we also find a positive correlation between female respondents and generalised trust, which suggests that women have more trust in 'generalised others', but this correlation is not present in sample 3. In sample 1, we find a negative correlation between seniority and education, which indicates that respondents who have worked longer for the Flemish administration are less likely to have achieved a masters' degree. A positive relation is observed between seniority and managerial responsibilities in both samples, indicating that respondents who have worked longer for the Flemish administration are more likely to have managerial responsibilities. We also observe a positive relation between education and generalised trust in both samples, which indicates that respondents who have achieved at least a masters' degree (or equivalent) are more likely to trust generalised others. We also find a positive relationship between education and managerial responsibilities in sample 3, which indicates that respondents who have at least achieved a masters' degree are more likely to also have managerial responsibilities in sample 3. A negative correlation is found between managerial responsibilities and formal organisational autonomy in both samples, which suggests that respondents with managerial responsibilities were less likely to stem from organisations with a higher extent of formal managerial autonomy.

In the following paragraphs, we will elaborate further on the relationships between the dimensions of the trust process in RI of trust and distrust, using data collected in samples 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Relating perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability

First, we will consider the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in trusted and distrusted interactions. Figure 23 visualises the relationship between both variables in sample 1 and sample 3 by means of scatterplots and simple OLS regression, and clearly shows a large and positive relationship between boundary spanners' perceptions of trustworthiness and their willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 1 (r = .5589, p<0,01) and sample 3 (r = .6398, p<0,01).

Figure 23: Relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 1 (left) and sample 3 (right)
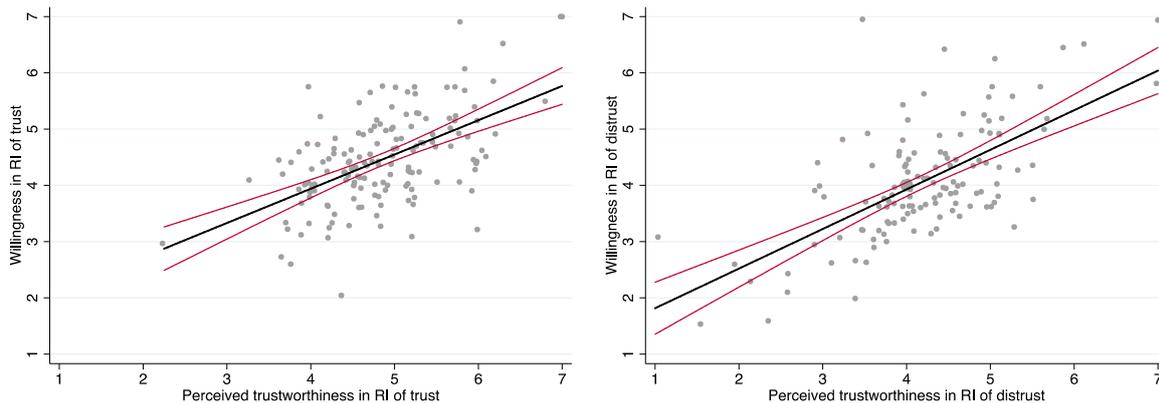
Table 40 shows the OLS regression models for the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability, including the control variables discussed above, for sample 1 and sample 3.

Table 40: Relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability sample 1 (left) and sample 3 (right)

Sample 1 OLS of willingness to suspend vulnerability				Sample 3 OLS of willingness to suspend vulnerability			
	Coef.	Std. Err.	Beta		Coef.	Std. Err.	Beta
Perceived trustworthiness	0,563	0,075	0,517 ***	Perceived trustworthiness	0,760	0,072	0,697 ***
Age (years)	0,006	0,009	0,059	Age (years)	-0,003	0,009	-0,029
Sex (Female)	-0,104	0,120	-0,060	Sex (Female)	-0,055	0,121	-0,029
Seniority (years)	0,003	0,009	0,040	Seniority (years)	0,006	0,009	0,069
Education (master or higher)	0,430	0,220	0,144 *	Education (master or higher)	-0,026	0,227	-0,008
Managerial responsibilities	0,024	0,128	0,014	Managerial responsibilities	0,125	0,131	0,066
Formal org. autonomy	-0,085	0,114	-0,051	Formal org. autonomy	0,126	0,117	0,069
Generalised trust	0,083	0,066	0,090	Generalised trust	0,031	0,067	0,032
Constant	0,575	0,547	.	Constant	0,575	0,516	.

* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01
Sample 1 R^2 = .356, adj. R^2 = .321, model probability value p<.01.
Sample 1 post-estimations indicate linear (Breush-Pagan p<.1) and non-linear heteroscedasticity (White's test p<.1)
Sample 3 R^2 = .509, adj. R^2 = .480, model probability value p<.01.
Outlier observations 280, 40, 832 deleted from analysis. Sample 3 post-estimations indicate no problems.

Both models again support a strong, positive relationship between both dimensions. In sample 1, the adjusted R^2 value for the full OLS model suggests that about 32% of the variance in willingness to suspend

vulnerability may be explained by the perceived trustworthiness model. In sample 3, the adjusted R^2 value suggests that there is 48% common variance between perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability. In other words, the data are in line with our theoretical framework, which specified that perceived trustworthiness is one of the most important 'good reasons' on the basis of which boundary spanners are willing to take a 'leap of faith' and suspend their vulnerability in interorganisational interactions. It is interesting though, that a significant part of the variance in boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability remains unexplained, which suggests that there are other elements which contribute to boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration.

Interviews about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) and distrust (sample 4) provide additional insight in the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions with Flemish horizontal departments. In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners often referred to their positive perceptions about department B's trustworthiness when explaining their willingness to suspend vulnerability toward department B. Perceived benevolence and perceived integrity in particular were argued to be important and to lead boundary spanners to 'expect the best' of department B. In other words, the perceived trustworthiness of department B provided 'good reasons' to expect that department B would not abuse the vulnerability in the 'leap of faith' involved in information exchange. However, in addition to department B's trustworthiness, boundary spanners argued that their willingness to suspend vulnerability was also affected by the trustworthiness of other stakeholders involved in the interaction, and by the external risks involved with information sharing beyond department B's control. For instance, boundary spanners argued that the press, political principals, partisan interests, other stakeholders in information-sharing initiatives, and the stability of the institutional context reduced department B's control over their organisations' vulnerability, and thus reduced the impact of B's perceived trustworthiness on their own willingness to suspend vulnerability (see quote 7.42 in annex). In sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners argued that they were less willing to suspend vulnerability because department A was considered less trustworthy. The lack of perceived benevolence and integrity featured prominently in their explanations of why 'good reasons' were lacking to rest assured that department A would not abuse their vulnerability (see quote 7.43 in annex). However, a lower extent of perceived trustworthiness was not the only reason for boundary spanners' limited willingness to suspend vulnerability in information exchange interactions with department A: some boundary spanners argued that the high degree of alienation from horizontal department A's objectives and intentions rendered them unwilling to suspend their vulnerability, despite department A's relative trustworthiness, because they simply saw no reason to engage in interaction with department A (see quote 7.44 in annex).

All our data therefore suggest a positive relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability. However, the data also suggest that this positive relationship does not equal a perfect correlation. Two reasons are suggested: on the one hand, the perceived trustworthiness of

the horizontal department provides little reason to suspend vulnerability that is beyond the horizontal departments' control. On the other hand, perceived trustworthiness may be a necessary, but insufficient condition for the willingness to suspend vulnerability to occur, as boundary spanners also need to see a reason to suspend their vulnerability before they are willing to do so. In addition to perceived trustworthiness, there thus needs to be a catalyst for actual cooperation or interaction. In that sense, perceived trustworthiness may be considered as the fuel for the willingness to suspend vulnerability, but requires a spark before it is ignited and releases its energy as a driver of the trust process.

> 7.4.2.   *Relating willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour*

Second, we will discuss the relationship between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in trusted and distrusted interactions. Figure 24 visualises the very large and positive relationship between both variables in sample 1 (r = .9223, p<0,01) and sample 3 (r = .8504, p<0,01). The correlation coefficient's extremely high values in both sample 1 and sample 3 are striking, indicating near perfect correlation between boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability and the (reported) risk-taking behaviour when acting on behalf of their organisation in interorganisational interactions with the horizontal departments.

Figure 24: Relationship between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in RI of trust (left) and distrust (right)
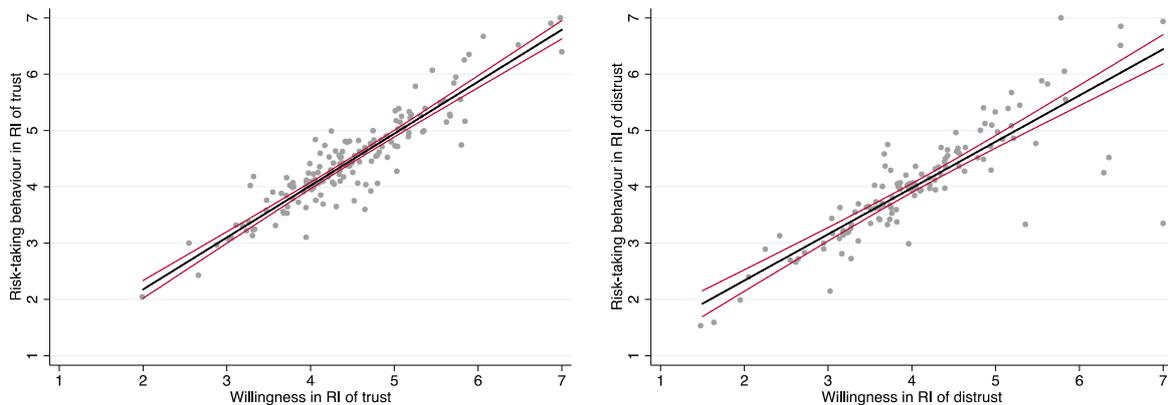
Table 41 shows the sample 1 and 3 OLS regression models for the relationship between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour with all control variables. Both models again support a strong, positive relationship between both dimensions. In sample 1, the adjusted R^2 value for the full OLS model suggests that about 85% of the variance in risk-taking behaviour is explained by the willingness to suspend vulnerability model. In sample 3, the adjusted R^2 value is even higher, suggesting 90% of the variance in risk-taking behaviour is shared with the willingness to suspend vulnerability model. Although these findings are in line with our theoretical model, in which we postulated the expectation of a strong, positive relationship between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, the extremely large value of the correlation in both samples suggests a lack of discriminant validity between our measure for willingness to suspend vulnerability and our measure for risk-taking behaviour.

Table 41: Relationship between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in sample 1 (left) and sample 3 (right)

Sample 1 OLS of risk-taking behaviour	Coef.	Std. Err.	Beta	Sample 3 OLS of risk-taking behaviour	Coef.	Std. Err.	Beta
Willingness to suspend vuln.	0,920	0,033	0,920 ***	Willingness to suspend vuln.	0,957	0,028	0,931 ***
Age (years)	-0,010	0,004	-0,103 **	Age (years)	0,007	0,004	0,073 *
Sex (Female)	-0,034	0,056	-0,020	Sex (Female)	0,073	0,052	0,039
Seniority (years)	0,009	0,004	0,100 **	Seniority (years)	0,000	0,004	-0,001
Education (master or higher)	-0,048	0,104	-0,016	Education (master or higher)	0,101	0,097	0,030
Managerial responsibilities	0,053	0,060	0,030	Managerial responsibilities	-0,112	0,055	-0,060 **
Formal org. autonomy	0,023	0,053	0,014	Formal org. autonomy	0,064	0,050	0,036
Generalised trust	0,020	0,031	0,022	Generalised trust	0,025	0,028	0,025
Constant	0,546	0,239	.	Constant	-0,381	0,218	.

* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

Sample 1 R^2 = .858, adj. R^2 = .851, model probability value p<.01.

Sample 1 post-estimations indicate linear heteroscedasticity (Breush-Pagan p<.1) and non-normal error terms (Shapiro-Wilk p<.01; Shapiro-Francia p<.01; Skewness-Kurtosis p<.05)

Sample 3 R^2 = .908, adj. R^2 = .903, model probability value p<.01.

Outlier observations 280, 862, 832, 61, 784 deleted from analysis. Sample 3 post-estimations indicate non-normal error terms (Shapiro-Wilk p<.01; Shapiro-Francia p<.01; Skewness-Kurtosis p<.01).

Furthermore, post-estimations in both models indicate that the models' error terms are not normally distributed, due to which their parameters may be inaccurate. Thus, although the quantitative results are in line with our hypotheses, they should be interpreted with great care due to indications of weak validity and reliability. Although causality cannot strictly be inferred on the basis of these cross-sectional survey data, an interpretation of these findings along the lines of our theoretical framework would suggest that boundary spanners' individual willingness to suspend vulnerability highly determines their risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions. On the other hand, it may be argued that the causal logic is in fact reversed, as boundary spanners simply agree very much with the behavioural strategy imposed upon them by their organisations, but do not directly determine that strategy. Therefore, qualitative data may provide a better understanding of the causal relationship between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration.

Data from qualitative interviews about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) and distrust (sample 4) enable us to assess the validity and strengthen the reliability of the strong correlation suggested by the quantitative data, and allow us to gain additional insight into the direction of the causal relationship between these two dimensions in the interorganisational trust process. In sample 2 interviews, about half of the boundary spanners argued that there was no difference between their willingness to suspend vulnerability and their effective risk-taking in the interorganisational interaction (see quote 7.46 in annex), confirming the very strong correlation observed in the quantitative data. The other half of the respondents argued that their personal willingness indeed explained their effective behaviour in the interorganisational interaction, but that resource constraints, formal obligatory or prohibitory rules, collective organisational decision-making or direct instructions from hierarchical seniors could 'overrule'

their own individual willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions, at least in theory. However, while the respondents thus argued that their willingness to suspend vulnerability could be overruled, they also emphasised that such 'overruling' had not actually occurred in their own experiences, and that their own willingness to suspend vulnerability was thus usually aligned with actions required, instructions received and collective decisions taken about the organisations' risk-taking behaviour (see quote 7.47 in annex). The strong positive correlation observed in the sample 1 quantitative data is thus confirmed by the sample 2 interviews. In sample 4 interviews, the same argument was presented. Most boundary spanners argued that their effective risk-taking behaviour was the result of their own willingness to suspend vulnerability, but that their risk-taking behaviour could deviate from it as well. In these sample 4 interviews, this was not only considered a hypothetical scenario, but an actual reality, as some respondents argued that their effective risk-taking behaviour was somewhat higher than their individual willingness to suspend vulnerability (see quote 7.49 in annex), while others argued the opposite (see quote 7.50 in annex). The explanation of this deviation was that boundary spanners did not always have full discretion to individually decide how they would behave in the interorganisational interaction (see quote 7.51 in annex). There was only one respondent who argued that their personal willingness to suspend vulnerability was perfectly aligned with their effective risk-taking behaviour (see quote 7.48 in annex). However, this respondent was a senior civil servant, and can therefore be argued to possess a large extent of discretion regarding their risk-taking behaviour on behalf of their organisation.

Our interviews thus confirm that there is a highly significant positive causal relationship between boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability and the risk-taking behaviour they engage in on behalf of their organisations. However, the interviews add that this relationship is mediated by the boundary spanners' decision discretion. Where boundary spanners' decision discretion is lower, the causal relationship between their individual willingness to suspend vulnerability and effective risk-taking behaviour is suggested to be weaker. One possible explanation is that the large quantitative correlation indicates that individual boundary spanners influence organisational behaviour as hypothesised, but that they are at the same time influenced by their organisations, and that the quantitative correlation thus masks possible bidirectional causality, as attitudes of boundary spanners shape organisational behaviour, but organisational behaviour also shapes the attitudes of boundary spanners. While the former explanation is in line with the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour we have discussed in the theoretical chapter of this dissertation, the latter explanation corresponds to a perspective of socialisation through coercive, normative and mimetic isomorphism. While this sort of bidirectional causation cannot be estimated through cross-sectional survey data, our qualitative findings did suggest that some nuance to the strong correlation observed in the quantitative data is appropriate.

> 7.4.3.   *Relating risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness*

Third, we consider the feedback loop between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness. Table 39 showed relatively large Pearson correlations for the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and risk-taking behaviour in sample 1 and sample 3, indicating that these two dimensions share a large

extent of variance. However, these Pearson coefficients combine the direct relationship between perceived trustworthiness and organisational risk-taking behaviour (the feedback loop) with the indirect relationship between these two dimensions that is mediated by the willingness to suspend vulnerability. In order to separate the direct feedback loop from the indirect relationship between trustworthiness and risk-taking behaviour, we need to consider the partial correlation between perceived trustworthiness and risk-taking behaviour, in other words, the correlation between perceived trustworthiness and risk-taking behaviour under constant willingness to suspend vulnerability. Table 41 presents these partial correlation values.

Table 42: Partial correlations of risk-taking behaviour with perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability, in RI of trust and distrust

	Risk-taking behaviour in sample 1	Risk-taking behaviour in sample 3
Trustworthiness in sample 1	-0,0748 ns	.
Willingness in sample 1	0,8968 ***	.
Trustworthiness in sample 3	.	0,3809 ***
Willingness in sample 3	.	0,7337 ***

* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

The partial correlations show support for the existence of a direct relationship between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness in sample 3, but not in sample 1. In sample 1, the partial relation between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness is not significant. While the partial correlation between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour accounts for about 80 percent of the common variation between both variables (R^2=.8042), the partial relation between perceived trustworthiness and risk-taking behaviour only accounts for about 0,5 percent of the common variation (R^2=.0056). Virtually all co-variation between perceived trustworthiness and risk-taking behaviour in sample 1 is thus explained through the indirect relation between both dimensions, which is mediated by boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability. The quantitative data therefore do not support the existence of a significant feedback effect between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness in RI of trust. In sample 3 however, the partial correlation between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness is positive and significant (p<0,01), and accounts for about 15% of the common variation between perceived trustworthiness and risk-taking behaviour (R^2=.1451). The partial correlation between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in sample 3 is stronger, and accounts for about 54% of the common variation (R^2=.5383). The quantitative data therefore do support the hypothesis of a feedback loop between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness in RI of distrust. In other words, this means that boundary spanners who take more risk toward distrusted horizontal counterparts, are more likely to consider their counterpart to be more trustworthy than boundary spanners who do not engage in such risk-taking behaviour.

Table 43 presents the sample 1 and sample 3 OLS regression models for risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness, controlled for the willingness to suspend vulnerability and the general control variables. Both models confirm the partial correlations discussed above: we find a positive and significant

relationship between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness while controlling for willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 3, but no significant relationship is found in sample 1.

Table 43: Relationship between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness sample 1 (left) and sample 3 (right)

Sample 1 OLS of perceived trustworthiness	Coef.	Std. Err.	Beta	Sample 3 OLS of perceived trustworthiness	Coef.	Std. Err.	Beta
Risk-taking behaviour	-0,200	0,163	-0,218	Risk-taking behaviour	0,355	0,118	0,396 ***
Willingness to suspend vuln.	0,675	0,163	0,735 ***	Willingness to suspend vuln.	0,268	0,118	0,299 **
Age (years)	-0,009	0,009	-0,111	Age (years)	-0,005	0,008	-0,055
Sex (Female)	-0,012	0,112	-0,008	Sex (Female)	-0,037	0,105	-0,021
Seniority (years)	0,006	0,008	0,075	Seniority (years)	0,008	0,007	0,088
Education (master or higher)	-0,131	0,207	-0,048	Education (master or higher)	0,060	0,197	0,019
Managerial responsibilities	0,041	0,120	0,026	Managerial responsibilities	-0,233	0,112	-0,134 **
Formal org. autonomy	0,047	0,106	0,031	Formal org. autonomy	-0,189	0,101	-0,114 *
Generalised trust	0,127	0,061	0,150 ***	Generalised trust	0,130	0,057	0,143 **
Constant	2,455	0,482	.	Constant	1,272	0,437	.

* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01
Sample 1 R² = .341, adj. R² = .301, model probability value p<.01.
Sample 1 post-estimations indicates no problems
Sample 3 R² = .558, adj. R² = .528, model probability value p<.01.
Outlier observations 280, 40 deleted from analysis. Sample 3 post-estimations indicate no problems.

Since the qualitative interviews did not focus specifically on the presence of this feedback loop in the trust process, we are not able to supplement these quantitative findings with additional qualitative data.

> 7.4.4. *Discussion: the trust process's interdimensional relations in RI of trust and distrust*

In this section, we have examined the relations between the three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in RI of trust and distrust. Our analysis was based on quantitative survey data about RI of trust (sample 1) and distrust (sample 3), and was supplemented with qualitative data about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) and distrust (sample 4). We will now consolidate our findings and assert how they correspond with proposition C and its associated hypotheses. Table 44 shows that hypotheses HC1 and HC2 are supported, while we must reject hypothesis HC3 on the basis of our findings, since the feedback loop was not found to be present in both RI of trust and distrust. Our conclusion is thus that both trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration are characterised by a causal sequence of perceived trustworthiness, which causally affects boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability, which in turn has a strong impact on the boundary spanners' risk-taking behaviour on behalf of their organisation in interorganisational interactions. In distrusted interactions, there is evidence for a limited extent of feedback from the experience of risk-taking behaviour into perceptions of trustworthiness, but this relationship is not observed in trusted interactions. We will discuss this causal sequence more elaborately in the following paragraphs.

First, perceived trustworthiness positively affects boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions. However, this relationship is mediated by two factors. The first factor is

the ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent vulnerability: while the horizontal departments' perceived trustworthiness provides 'good reasons' to boundary spanners to suspend the vulnerability that is under the horizontal departments' control, it provides little assurance regarding vulnerability that is beyond the horizontal departments' direct control. Thus, the larger the boundary spanners' vulnerability towards factors that are beyond the control of the horizontal department, the weaker the relationship between the horizontal departments' perceived trustworthiness and the boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability will be. This is an important insight for the management of interorganisational trust, as it implies that the willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions can be strengthened by improving the perceived trustworthiness of the trustee on the one hand, and by reducing the trustors' vulnerability to trustee-independent factors on the other hand. In public administrations' complex and multilateral environments with high interdependency toward various stakeholders, changing institutional environments, political dynamics and systematic elections, we may assume that the moderating ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent factors is characterised by a denominator of significant size. The second factor mediating the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability is the presence of a 'catalyst'. The presence of perceived trustworthiness is necessary for willingness to suspend vulnerability, but it is not sufficient in and of itself. In addition to perceived trustworthiness, there needs to be a reason, a utility, a wish, an initiative, a request or a necessity for actual interaction, for boundary spanners to develop a willingness to suspend their vulnerability towards the horizontal department. Lewis and Weigert (1985: 971) already noted in this respect that perceived trustworthiness "*only opens the door to trust without actually constituting it. (…) they simply serve as the platform from which the leap is made.*" This insight is important for the management of interorganisational trust, as it highlights the necessity of engineering a catalyst which 'sparks' a 'leap of faith' on the basis of perceptions of trustworthiness in interorganisational interactions in public administration.

Second, boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability positively affects their risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments. However, the strength of this causal effect may be moderated by boundary spanners' discretion to determine their own risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions. Where boundary spanners have a lot

Formulated propositions	Derived hypotheses	Empirical observations
Proposition C: There is a universal causal sequence of trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour which will apply to both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions.	**HC1:** There is a positive direct relation between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions	**HC1:** not rejected **Quantitative evidence:** supports existence of significant relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of trust and distrust **Qualitative evidence:** supports existence of significant causal relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of trust and distrust. Qualitative findings suggest that boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability is to be understood as a combination of trustee-dependent vulnerability on the one hand, and trustee-independent vulnerability on the other hand. The former is affected by the trustee's perceived trustworthiness, whereas the latter is not. The relation between perceived trustworthiness and boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability is therefore mediate by the ratio between trustee-dependent vulnerability and trustee-independent vulnerability. In addition, a catalyst is required to 'spark' willingness to suspend vulnerability.
	HC2: There is a positive direct relation between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions.	**HC2:** not rejected **Quantitative evidence:** supports existence of significant relationship between willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in RI of trust and distrust **Qualitative evidence:** supports existence of significant relationship between willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in RI of trust and distrust. However, qualitative findings suggest that the relation between boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability and their effective risk-taking behaviour is mediated by the boundary spanners' decision discretion to act on behalf of their organisation in interorganisational interactions, that the causal effect of willingness on behaviour is most probably smaller than indicated by the large correlation indicated by the quantitative samples, and that an additional causal effect in the opposite direction,which is explained by socialisation, may explain why risk-taking behaviour and willingness to suspend vulnerability also correlate under conditions of low boundary spanner decision discretion.
	HC3: There is a positive direct relation between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness when controlling for willingness to suspend vulnerability (feedback loop) in both trusted interactions and distrusted interactions.	**HC3:** rejected **Quantitative evidence:** supports hypothesised positive relationship in RI of distrust, but not in RI of trust **Qualitative evidence:** No additional qualitative evidence available

of decision discretion over their risk-taking behaviour, the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour explain a strong causal effect from willingness to suspend vulnerability on risk-taking behaviour. However, where boundary spanners have little decision discretion over their risk-taking behaviour, this causal directional effect implied by these theories is likely to be less pronounced, and the large quantitative correlation may mask a causal effect in the opposite direction, as boundary spanners internalise instructions about organisational behaviour in their own attitudes. This explanation rather follows an institutional logic of appropriateness, due to which boundary spanners' attitudes are socialised as a result of coercive, normative and mimetic isomorphism. Although qualitative evidence for such reversed causality is very limited, it appears clear that the hypothesised causal relationship is moderated by boundary spanners' decision discretion. This is another important insight for the management of interorganisational trust, as it implies that risk-taking behaviour is supported when boundary spanners with a strong willingness to suspend vulnerability are provided with a broad mandate to act on behalf of their organisation in interorganisational interactions. Conversely, it means that boundary spanners with a low willingness to suspend vulnerability may be socialised to change their attitude by limiting their decision discretion and 'coercing' them to engage in risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions, although this is likely to be a long-term process.

Finally, we found quantitative evidence for the existence of a feedback loop in RI of distrust, but not in RI of trust. Although no qualitative evidence was gathered to explain the presence or absence of this feedback loop in detail, this leads to two relevant insights. First, the observation that the experience of engaging in risk-taking behaviour strengthens boundary spanners' perceptions of trustworthiness in RI of distrust but not in RI of trust, suggests that the trust process is self-reinforcing, but only until a certain level of perceived trustworthiness is achieved, after which the self-reinforcing dynamic becomes a self-sustaining dynamic. Second, the existence of this feedback loop in RI of distrust makes the behavioural dimension an important point of managerial focus in breaking vicious cycles of distrust. Guided coercion of risk-taking behaviour in distrusted interactions will create behavioural experiences that feed new relational information into perceived trustworthiness, possibly breaking cycles of distrust. Furthermore, by coercing risk-taking behaviour and thus 'overruling' boundary spanners' decision discretion, socialisation effects are encouraged from which more sustainable attitudes of willingness to suspend vulnerability may emerge on the long term, as argued in the previous paragraph.

> 7.5.   **Chapter conclusion: describing administrational trust in the Flemish administration**

In this chapter we have combined quantitative and qualitative data to describe and understand the internal dynamics of the universal trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. Our three core findings are 1) there is significantly more perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability, and (reported) risk-taking behaviour in RI of trust than in RI of distrust, 2) the internal dynamics of the trust process are similar in RI of trust and distrust, with exception of a feedback loop which was only empirically present in RI of distrust, and 3) the

interdimensional relations are subject to moderation and can thus be influenced by managerial intervention. Table 45 summarises these core findings concisely.

First, we found significantly more perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability, and risk-taking behaviour in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. However, the differences should not be overrated, as our data suggest that boundary spanners' perceptions of counterpart trustworthiness, their willingness to suspend vulnerability and their risk-taking behaviour are positive in trusted interactions, while they are neutral to rather negative in distrusted interactions. We therefore argue that on the whole, there was more uncertainty, doubt, and carefulness in distrusted interactions than in trusted interactions, although some extreme examples were also present.

Table 45: Summary of chapter 7 findings regarding propositions B and C

Dimension	Group comparison (proposition B)	Relationship to subsequent dimension (proposition C)
Perceived trustworthiness	Trusted > Distrusted	Perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability positively related, but moderated by ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent vulnerability. In addition, a catalyst is required to 'spark' willingness to suspend vulnerability.
Willingness to suspend vulnerability	Trusted > Distrusted	Willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour positively related, but moderated by boundary spanners' decision discretion over organisational behaviour. The larger such discretion, the stronger the positive effect of willingness to suspend vulnerability on risk-taking behaviour.
Risk-taking behaviour	Trusted > Distrusted	Risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness positively related in RI of distrust, but not in RI of trust. Suggests that the behavioural dimension of the trust process is particularly crucial to break cyclical dynamics in distrusted interorganisational interactions.

Second, the internal dynamics of the trust process were largely similar in trusted and distrusted interactions, with exception of the feedback loop, which was empirically present in RI of distrust but not in RI of trust. Perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability were found to be positively related, but qualitative findings suggest that the relation is moderated by the ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent vulnerability. The larger the trustee-dependent vulnerability, the stronger the positive relation between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability can be expected to be. Furthermore, perceived trustworthiness is necessary, but not sufficient for willingness to suspend vulnerability to occur, as a 'catalyst' is required to 'activate' perceptions of trustworthiness in an attitude of willingness to suspend vulnerability. The willingness to suspend vulnerability was highly correlated to risk-taking behaviour, but interviews suggested that the hypothesised causal effect (from willingness to suspend vulnerability to risk-taking behaviour) is moderated by the boundary spanners' decision discretion over organisational behaviour. Where such discretion is high, the large correlation can be explained as a strong causal effect of willingness to suspend vulnerability on risk-taking behaviour, as boundary spanners determine organisational behaviour to a large extent. However, where such discretion is low, this causal effect is likely to be smaller, and part of the large correlation may be explained in the opposite direction, as boundary spanners internalise organisational decisions and their attitudes are socialised along the lines of organisational behaviour decided by other

decision-makers. Finally, we found quantitative evidence for the existence of a feedback loop in RI of distrust, but not in RI of trust, which suggests that the behavioural dimension of the trust process is crucial to break cyclical dynamics of distrust.

Figure 25 summarises our findings regarding the internal dynamics of the trust process in the Flemish administration. The figure clearly shows the three fundamental contributions of this chapter to the interorganisational trust literature. First, the mediating role of the ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent vulnerability for the causal effect of perceived trustworthiness on boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability. Second, the mediating role of boundary spanners' behavioural discretion for the causal effect of the willingness to suspend vulnerability on risk-taking behaviour. Third, the feedback loop which was only found in distrusted interactions, suggesting that risk-taking behaviour only strengthens perceived trustworthiness until such perceived trustworthiness is sufficiently established, after which the positive feedback effect subsides.

Figure 25: Revised model of the internal dynamics of administrational trust
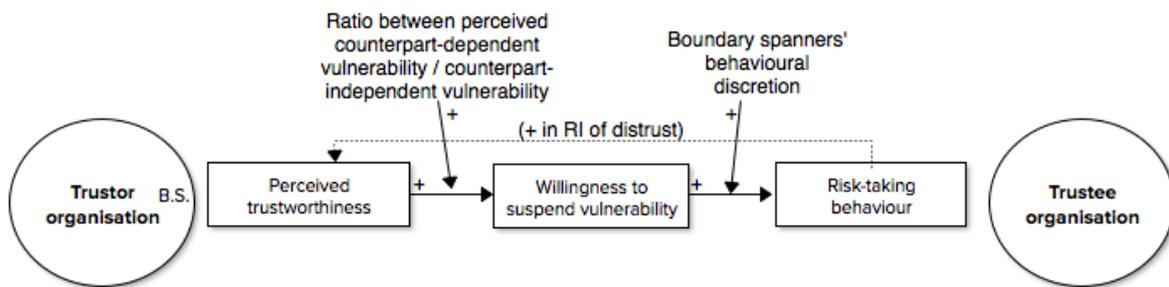
This chapter provided an extensive analysis of internal dynamics of the interorganisational trust process in the Flemish administration. In the next chapter, we examine how this trust process is embedded in interorganisational interactions, and how aspects of such interactions affect this trust process. In other words, we will examine whether the occurrence of interorganisational trust and distrust can be explained through the presence of micro-, meso- and macro-level aspects in interorganisational interactions.

8. Explaining mechanisms of administrational trust in the Flemish administration: interaction-specific reasons for the trust process

Introduction

In this chapter we will investigate how the interorganisational trust process is embedded in and affected by macro- and meso- level aspects of interorganisational interactions. The objective of this chapter is the falsification of the hypotheses derived from propositions D and E. In the theoretical chapter of this dissertation, we have argued that macro- (formal and informal institutional) and meso-level (calculative and relational) aspects of interorganisational interactions affect interorganisational trust. On the basis of our theoretical discussion, we expect that all trust-supporting interaction aspects are present to a stronger degree in trusted interorganisational interactions than in distrusted interorganisational interactions (proposition D), and that these trust-supporting interaction aspects affect all three dimensions of the universal trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions (proposition E). The two propositions and their associated hypotheses are repeated here.

Proposition D: Trusted interactions are associated with a stronger presence of trust reasons on the macro and meso- level of interorganisational interactions than distrusted interactions.

- **HD1:** Formal institutional frameworks which are clear about mutual rights, functions and obligations, and informal institutional frameworks which create a 'culture of trustfulness', will occur to greater extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.

- **HD2:** Perceived risks, interaction costs (asset specificity), and perceived counterpart opportunistic motivations occur to lesser extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.

- **HD3:** Reciprocal trust, value identification, good interpersonal relationships, and an equal power distribution occur to greater extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.

Proposition E: Trust reasons on the macro and meso level of interorganisational interactions are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in both trusted and distrusted interactions.

- **HE1:** Formal institutional frameworks which are clear about mutual rights, functions and obligations, and informal institutional frameworks which create a 'culture of trustfulness', are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions and general control variables are kept constant.

- **HE2:** Perceived risks, interaction costs (asset specificity), and perceived counterpart opportunistic motivations are negatively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions, general control variables, organisational and personal utility preferences are kept constant.

- **HE3:** Reciprocal trust, value identification, good interpersonal relationship and an equal power distribution are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions, general control variables and relational familiarity are kept constant.

We will first discuss the characteristics of the quantitative and the qualitative data on the basis of which our examination will take place. We then focus on proposition D by describing the distribution of macro- and meso- level interaction aspects in trusted and distrusted interactions. Subsequently, we focus on proposition E by analysing how these macro- and meso- level aspects relate to the three dimensions of the

universal trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions in the Flemish administration. Finally, we consolidate our findings and finish the chapter with concluding remarks regarding the mechanisms of administrational trust and distrust.

> 8.2. **Chapter methodology**

Like the previous chapter, the analysis presented here builds on both quantitative survey data about RI of trust (sample 1) and distrust (sample 3) and qualitative evidence about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) and distrust (sample 4).

> 8.2.1. *Data collection*

The quantitative data was collected in modules III and IV of the boundary spanner survey, in which respondents answered items regarding the presence of macro- and meso-level interaction aspects for their selected RI of trust and distrust. The quantitative data discussed in this chapter thus describes the presence of interaction aspects in boundary spanners' selected RI of trust (sample 1) and distrust (sample 3) in the boundary spanner survey. The measures for these interaction aspects were discussed in the methodological chapter of this dissertation, and are included in the annex to this dissertation. Control variables are measured and modelled as in the previous chapter.

The qualitative data was collected in semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Interview respondents were selected on the basis of their RI selection in module II of the boundary spanner survey. Half of the interviews focused on interorganisational trust, and were conducted with respondents who had chosen the most frequently selected RI for interorganisational trust in a horizontal department (the collection and use of horizontal information by B) (sample 2). The other half of the interviews focused on interorganisational distrust, and were conducted with respondents who had chosen the most frequently selected RI for interorganisational distrust in a horizontal department (the collection and use of horizontal information by A) (sample 4). In these interviews, respondents were requested to discuss the three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process for their RI, and then select the macro- and meso-level interaction aspects they considered to be the most important factors to explain each dimension of the trust process from among a set of cards prepared by the interviewer. Respondents were requested to explain why they considered certain interaction aspects to be more important for certain dimensions of the trust process than others. This qualitative card method was discussed in the methodological chapter of this dissertation, and is also included in the annex.

The analysis in this chapter is thus based on the same four samples as the previous chapter: a quantitative RI of trust sample (sample 1, data collected in survey module III, n=158), a quantitative RI of distrust sample (sample 3, data collected in survey module IV, n=145), a qualitative 'most frequently selected RI of trust' sample (sample 2, data collected in interviews about trust, n=8), and a qualitative 'most frequently selected RI of distrust' sample (sample 4, data collected in interviews about distrust, n=8).

Description of samples

Since the data for this chapter are collected from the same four samples discussed in the previous chapter, we refer the reader to the previous chapter for a detailed description of the sample characteristics.

> 8.3. **Describing interaction aspects in RI of trust and distrust**

In this paragraph, we will compare and describe the distribution of macro- and meso-level interaction aspects in trusted and distrusted interactions, and consider whether the presence of these aspects is in line with our proposition D. Table 46 and figure 26 provide a comparison of the confidence intervals for the presence of macro- and meso-level interaction aspects in RI of trust (sample 1) and distrust (sample 3). These findings will be discussed in the following paragraphs, together with qualitative evidence about the presence of these interaction aspects in the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) and distrust (sample 3).

Figure 26: Interaction aspect presence in sample 1 (left) and sample 3 (right)
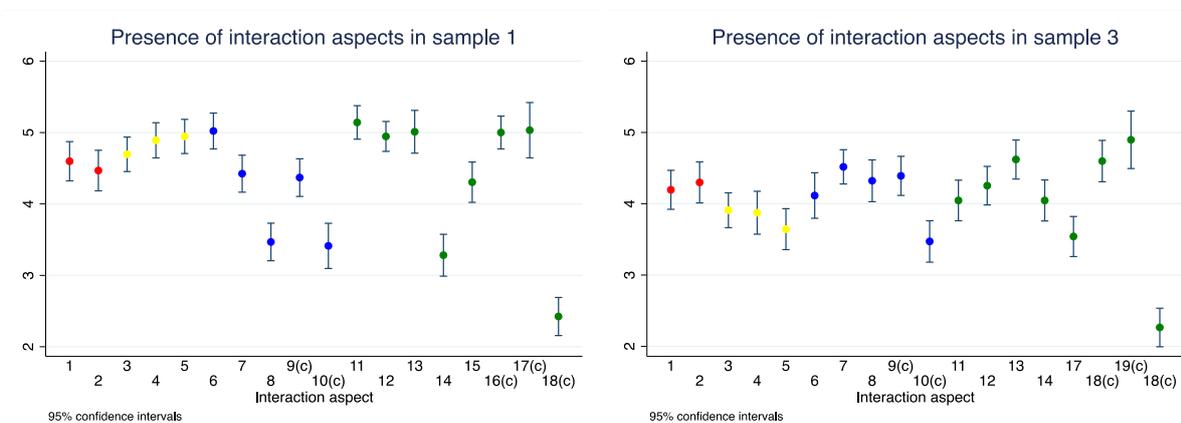
Table 46: Descriptive statistics of macro and meso level interaction aspects in sample 1 and 3

Interaction aspect category	Interaction aspect	Sample 1 (trust)			Sample 3 (distrust)			Group diff.
		N	Mean	S.E.	N	Mean	S.E.	
Macro level formal aspects	1. Formal rule framework	148	4,547	0,109	125	4,320	0,119	S1= S3
	2. Formal role framework	143	4,420	0,115	120	4,408	0,125	S1= S3
Macro level informal aspects	3. Informal routine framework	141	4,582	0,103	120	3,933	0,102	S1> S3***
	4. Admin. leader confirmatory norms	138	4,913	0,107	119	3,798	0,130	S1> S3***
	5. Pol. principal confirmatory norms	127	4,953	0,107	110	3,609	0,131	S1> S3***
Meso level calculative aspects	6. No information of opp. motivations	155	5,135	0,098	127	4,244	0,131	S1> S3***
	7. Asset specificity (-)	158	4,133	0,100	145	4,366	0,098	S1= S3
	8. Risk nature (-)	157	3,312	0,103	145	4,193	0,110	S3>S1***
	9(c). Personal cost-benefit analysis	149	3,201	0,123	124	3,315	0,128	S1= S3
	10(c). Org. cost-benefit analysis	151	4,384	0,108	125	4,376	0,122	S1= S3
Meso level relational aspects	11. Signalled trust	150	5,127	0,090	127	4,213	0,118	S1> S3***
	12. Value identification	144	4,938	0,084	123	4,431	0,114	S1> S3**
	13. Good personal relationship	138	5,116	0,118	115	4,730	0,117	S1= S3
	14. Signalled distrust (-)	152	3,151	0,115	126	3,897	0,119	S3>S1***
	15. Power equality	158	4,266	0,106	145	3,641	0,111	S1> S3***
	16(c). Experience-based expectations	148	4,872	0,097	124	4,645	0,123	S1= S3
	17(c). Interaction age	158	4,962	0,153	145	4,545	0,171	S1= S3
	18(c). Interaction frequency	158	2,424	0,103	145	2,076	0,101	S1>S3*

1 completely disagree; 2 disagree; 3 rather disagree; 4 neither agree nor disagree; 5 rather agree; 6 agree; 7 completely agree
* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01
(c) indicates control variable

> 8.3.1. *Describing macro-level formal interaction aspects*

Quantitative findings: comparing sample 1 and 3

The boundary spanner survey data shows a higher presence of all macro-level aspects in sample 1 than in sample 3, but the difference is not significant. In other words, respondents did not report significantly higher levels of agreement with the statement that formal rules and roles provide a clear framework for mutual tasks, rights and obligations in the interaction in RI of trust than in RI of distrust.

Qualitative findings: comparing sample 2 and 4

Qualitative interviews on the other hand, do suggest that boundary spanners perceive the presence of macro-level interaction aspects quite differently in the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) than in the most frequently selected RI of distrust (sample 4). However, the difference between sample 2 and sample 4 appears not to lie in the extent of the presence of macro level formal interaction aspects, but in the form of their presence. Whereas macro- level formal aspects in sample 2 were described as possessing most of Sztompka's (1999) trust-building substantial and operational characteristics, the macro- level formal aspects in sample 4 were argued to lack these characteristics.

In the sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that institutional stability, clearly defined rights and duties and the latent operational character of formal arrangements were characteristic aspects of the RI. On the one hand, the presence of such formal rules was argued to play in the background of interorganisational interactions to shape clear mutual expectations, allowing flexible realignment of mutual expectations between boundary spanners and empowering informal ways of working (see quote 8.1 in annex). On the other hand, formal rules and roles were considered to be important delineators for the boundaries of such informal realignment, and were considered essential to enable the finalisation of decisions in interorganisational interactions (see quote 8.2 in annex).

In sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners brought up macro- level formal aspects either because they were considered to be (temporarily) absent and unclear in information exchange interactions with department A, or because macro- level formal aspects were considered to be used too actively as coercive or regulatory instruments in information-exchange interactions with department A. Some boundary spanners argued that absent formal frameworks engendered a state of (temporary) opaqueness and anomie, which gave rise to rumours and suspicions about ideological (political) motivations behind horizontal information collection initiatives (see quote 8.3 in annex). On the other hand, some boundary spanners argued that formal instruments were used too actively and violated organisational autonomy, the principle of subsidiarity, and hampered any flexibility in interorganisational cooperation with horizontal department A (see quote 8.4 in annex).

Thus, interview findings seem to suggest that the form, rather than the presence of macro- level formal aspects seems to differ between sample 2 and sample 4.

Describing macro-level informal interaction aspects

Quantitative findings: comparing sample 1 and 3

The boundary spanner survey data indicate a significant difference between RI of trust (sample 1) and distrust (sample 3) regarding the presence of all three macro- level informal interaction aspects. In sample 1, respondents agree significantly more with the statement that unwritten routines offer a clear framework for mutual tasks, rights and obligations in the interaction with the horizontal department ($p<.01$). Furthermore, they also agree significantly more with the statement that their political ($p<.01$) and administrative ($p<.01$) leaders have normative preferences which are in line with their own attitudes[31]. These quantitative data therefore suggest that clear trust-supporting informal institutional frameworks are present to a greater degree in sample 1 than in sample 3.

Qualitative findings: comparing sample 2 and 4

In the sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that they did not really question their counterparts unless standard routines were broken (see quote 8.5 in annex). Furthermore, respondents argued that the normative frameworks of their administrative leaders largely confirmed and empowered their own positive trust evaluations. Clear normative frameworks of political principals were argued to be largely absent and not to have an explicit impact on trust evaluations. Furthermore, multiple boundary spanners in the sample 2 interviews highlighted the presence of an additional macro- level informal institutional aspect which they argued to be important for their trust evaluations: the sense of belonging to one single 'administrative community' together with the horizontal counterpart (see quote 8.6 in annex).

In the sample 4 interviews on the other hand, conflicting organisational routines grounded in incompatible organisational cultures were mentioned as aspects that negatively impact boundary spanners' trust evaluation. For instance, some of department A's meeting routines were considered to be grounded in a bureaucratic culture that was incompatible with performance-oriented organisational cultures. Boundary spanners also raised the presence of salient norms of distrust expressed by their administrative leaders (see quote 8.7 in annex). The saliency of political principals' norms was not mentioned specifically in the sample 4 interviews. Finally, multiple respondents explicitly rejected the notion of belonging to one single 'administrative community', as they rather described the Flemish administration in terms of competition between entities and diverging organisational cultures rather than in terms of partnership, cultural unity and common challenges (see quote 8.8 in annex).

Thus, interview findings in sample 2 and 4 largely corroborated that there was a difference regarding informal routines and the presence of salient trust-supporting norms of administrative leaders, but did not

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[31] (we note that the respondents were requested to indicate their agreement with statements that the normative referent clearly trusted the counterpart in sample 1, and with statements that the normative referent clearly distrusted the counterpart in sample 3)

suggest any difference regarding the presence of salient trust-supporting norms of political principals, and added the presence of an informal culture of belonging to an administrative community as an additionally important macro-level informal interaction aspect.

> 8.3.3. *Describing meso-level calculative interaction aspects*

Quantitative findings: comparing sample 1 and 3

The boundary spanner survey data shows that only two of the three measured meso-level calculative interaction aspects differ significantly between RI of trust (sample 1) and RI of distrust (sample 3). First, we found that boundary spanners indicated that they had significantly less knowledge about any opportunistic motives of the horizontal department in sample 1 than in sample 3 (p<.01). Second, boundary spanners perceived a significantly lower extent of risk in sample 1 than in sample 3 (p<.01). However, the quantitative data did not show any difference in the perceived asset specificity of investments made in the interorganisational relationship, as we had proposed in our theoretical framework.

Qualitative findings: comparing sample 2 and 4

In qualitative interviews about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2), respondents played down the presence of calculative considerations in the interorganisational interaction with department B, arguing that they did not explicitly consider the costs and benefits of information exchange with department B (see quote 8.9 in annex). When boundary spanners did refer to cost-benefit considerations of information exchange, they focused, particularly on organisational or government-wide costs and benefits (see quote 8.10 in annex). The main benefit of information exchange with department B was considered to lie in the higher effectiveness in reaching organisational or government-wide objectives. The main cost of information exchange with department B was considered to be the asset specificity of the requested information (the time, trouble and resources to gather the requested information). Furthermore, boundary spanners argued that they did expect some opportunistic behaviour from department B, but no more than what they considered to be normal and healthy in interorganisational interactions (warranting some 'strategic healthy distrust' in the relationship). Boundary spanners in sample 2 did not consider rumour-based information to be present in their interactions with department B.

In the sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners emphasised the presence of costs and the absence of benefits to information exchange far more explicitly. The costs of information exchange with department A were considered to be high due to the asset specificity of the requested information and due to the risk of (political) consequences of undue, decontextualised or faulty interpretation and presentation of collected information by department A (see quote 8.11 in annex). Furthermore, boundary spanners saw little or no organisational benefits in information exchange with department A. Sample 4 boundary spanners emphasised strongly that they suspected the horizontal department of holding opportunistic motivations, which they considered to go beyond 'standard' bureau maximisation and to include political-ideological motivations, i.e. cutting the cost and size of public administration rather than contribute to the quality of the Flemish public administration (see quote 8.12 in annex). Finally, sample 4 boundary spanners

indicated that some of the information grounding their trust evaluations was based on rumours about department A, in particular during (temporary) absence of institutional stability and reliable formal sources of information (see quote 8.13 in annex).

Thus, interview findings in sample 2 suggest that asset specificity and the opportunism of the counterpart are tolerable, while cost-benefit considerations are implicit and characterised by the potential for win-win outcomes, while in sample 4 the asset specificity in information exchange interactions is considered particularly high, the opportunism of the counterpart goes beyond what is acceptable, and cost-benefit considerations are explicit and characterised by a zero-sum perspective on the outcomes of interorganisational interactions.

It is important to note that in both samples 2 and 4, the boundary spanners argued that meso-level calculative interaction aspects are embedded in macro-level formal and informal interaction aspects. First, meso-level calculative interaction aspects were argued to be embedded in macro-level formal interaction aspects. For instance, boundary spanners argued that trust-building formal frameworks establish basic rules and level the playing field, reduce information asymmetry by enforcing transparency, or mitigate risks in the interaction, and thus affect boundary spanners' estimations of potential costs and benefits in the interaction. Second, meso-level interaction aspects were argued to be embedded in macro-level informal interaction aspects. In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that an informal culture of collective administrative identity and collective dedication to the 'common good' added a perspective of collective benefits to their cost-benefit considerations, thus expanding their self-interested organisational perspectives on costs and benefits with a perspective of administration-wide collective costs and benefits. In other words, the utility framework in which boundary spanners interpret information about costs and benefits of interorganisational trust is embedded in the presence of an informal institutional shared culture (macro), which may add a win-win perspective of collective benefits to boundary spanners' utility calculations (see quote 8.14 in annex). In sample 4 interviews on the other hand, boundary spanners emphasised an informal culture of interorganisational competition in which such a collective benefit perspective was absent from their cost-benefit considerations, and in which the perceived added value of the horizontal department's work for the boundary spanners' organisation was highly limited (see quote 8.15 in annex). Therefore, the kind of cost-benefit considerations boundary spanners are likely to make can be argued to be embedded in the informal institutional culture they operate in.

> 8.3.4.   *Describing meso-level relational interaction aspects*
Quantitative findings: comparing sample 1 and 3

Table 46 shows that all differences between RI of trust (sample 1) and distrust (sample 3) regarding meso-level interaction aspects are in line with our expectations, although not all are statistically significant. In sample 1, respondents reported that their counterparts show significantly higher extents of trust ($p<.01$) and significantly lower extents of distrust ($p<.01$) in the respondents' own organisation. Furthermore, power distributions between the respondents' organisation and the horizontal department are reported to

be more equal in sample 1 than in sample 3. Also, in sample 1, we find a higher extent of value identification ($p<.05$) between boundary spanners and the horizontal departments. However, we did not find a significant difference between sample 1 and sample 3 in the quality of the interpersonal relationship between boundary spanners.

Qualitative findings: comparing sample 2 and 4

In interviews about the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2), boundary spanners argued that department B clearly expressed trust in their own organisation, and boundary spanners emphasised good interpersonal relations with their counterparts. Furthermore, boundary spanners also stressed that they were able to identify with the values of their counterpart organisation. In that regard, values of cooperation for the public interest, neutrality, objectiveness, and a common vision on horizontal themes featured prominently (see quote 8.16 in annex). Several boundary spanners additionally argued that they appreciated the two-way approach to communication used by the trusted counterpart organisation. Regarding the control variable of familiarity, boundary spanners frequently referred to positive previous interaction experiences, although some negative experiences were also discussed as 'learning processes' (see quote 8.18 in annex).

In interviews about the most frequently selected RI of distrust (sample 4), some boundary spanners argued that department A expressed a low degree of trust and a high degree of distrust in their own organisation (see quote 8.19 in annex). Second, much like in the sample 2 interviews, the sample 4 boundary spanners were positive about the presence of good interpersonal relations with their counterparts in department A, and specified that their distrust was not directed at individual counterparts, but rather at the department 'as such' (see quote 8.20 in annex). Third, the sample 4 boundary spanners argued that value identification with department A was rather low, as they argued that department A had become highly politicised, that they personally disagreed with the ideological values of the horizontal departments' political principal, or that they felt alienated from department A's goals and objectives in the Flemish administration (see quote 8.21 in annex). Finally, but importantly, like in the sample 2 interviews, the sample 4 boundary spanners also emphasised previous experiences extensively. However, unlike in the sample 2 interviews, they mainly referred to negative previous interaction experiences, and gave numerous examples of negative experiences with department A regarding decontextualised or flawed interpretations and presentations of collected data, and department A's refusal to take concerns regarding interorganisational information exchange into account (see quote 8.22 in annex).

Finally, boundary spanners argued that meso-level relational aspects and macro-level institutional aspects are also intertwined. On the one hand, boundary spanners argued that macro-level institutional aspects encompass meso-level relational aspects. In particular, boundary spanners argued that the macro-level informal institutional 'sense of belonging to a collective organisation' permitted the existence of shared values, thus supporting the extent of value identification in interorganisational interactions. On the other hand, some boundary spanners argued that meso-level relational aspects affected the macro-level

institutional framework over time, as interpersonal value identification, positive past experiences, and reciprocated trust eventually become part of the organisational routines, the myths and the body of evidence that shapes the formal and informal framework of appropriateness in which collective decisions are taken about organisational behaviour (see quote 8.23 in annex).

> 8.3.5.   *Discussion: describing interaction aspects in RI of trust and distrust*

In this section, we have combined quantitative measures for trust reasons in RI of trust (sample 1) and distrust (sample 3) with qualitative information about these reasons in the most frequently selected RI of trust (sample 2) and distrust (sample 4). The objective of this effort was to assert whether variations in the presence of such macro- and meso-level interaction aspects are able to explain interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration.

Proposition D was formulated in order to guide our interpretation of the findings. Table 47 summarises this proposition, along with the associated hypotheses and the findings we have presented in this paragraph. The table shows that it is possible to explain differences between trusted and distrusted interactions on the basis of differences between the macro- and meso-level aspects of those interactions.

Our evidence for differences between trusted and distrusted interactions can be grouped in three categories: the first category contains differences regarding the extent of the presence of macro- and meso-level interaction aspects in trusted and distrusted interactions. The second category contains evidence for differences regarding the form of macro- and meso-level aspects in trusted and distrusted interactions. A third category comprises the interaction aspects for which we did not find any evidence of differences between trusted and distrusted interactions. We discuss these three categories of findings here.

First, we found differences in the extent of the presence of some interaction aspects between trusted and distrusted interactions. Informal routines, salient trusting normative frameworks of administrative and political leaders, value identification, signalised trust and power equality were found to be present to a larger degree in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions. Knowledge of the counterparts' opportunistic motivations, perceived risk, and signalised distrust were found to be present to a larger degree in distrusted than in trusted interactions. Qualitative evidence additionally suggested a larger extent of rumour-based information in distrusted interactions than in trusted interactions, as well as the presence of an informal institutional culture and a sense of shared identity with other organisations in trusted interactions, which was not present in distrusted interactions.

Formulated propositions	Derived hypotheses	Empirical observations
Proposition D: Trusted interactions are associated with a stronger presence of trust reasons on the macro and meso-level of interorganisational interactions than distrusted interactions.	**HD1**: Formal institutional frameworks which are clear about mutual rights, functions and obligations, and informal institutional frameworks which create a 'culture of trustfulness', will occur to greater extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.	**HD1**: Rejected for formal institutional frameworks, not rejected for informal institutional frameworks **Quantitative evidence**: does not support hypothesised difference in presence of clear formal institutional frameworks, but supports hypothesised difference in presence of clear informal institutional frameworks **Qualitative evidence**: does not support hypothesised difference in presence of clear formal institutional frameworks. In trust interviews, formal aspect presence was neither too high, nor too low. In distrust interviews, presence of formal aspects considered either too high or too low. However, difference between interview groups was found regarding substantial and operational characteristics of formal aspects, rather than in the extent of their presence. Qualitative evidence thus suggests importance of form over presence for formal institutional frameworks. Qualitative evidence supports hypothesised difference in presence of clear informal institutional frameworks. In trust interviews, presence of informal trust-supporting aspects considered strong, but latent. Horizontal counterpart considered as part of 'world in common'. In distrust interviews, presence of informal distrust-supporting aspects considered less strong, but explicit. Presence of salient administrative norms of distrust particularly mentioned. Horizontal counterpart considered as part of 'competitive world'.
	HD2: Perceived risks, interaction costs (asset specificity), and perceived counterpart opportunistic motivations occur to lesser extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.	**HD2**: Partly rejected **Quantitative evidence**: supports hypothesised difference in two of three examined calculative interaction aspects (knowledge of opportunistic motivations; risk nature) **Qualitative evidence**: supports hypothesised difference for some but not all aspects. In trust interviews, calculative considerations were considered to be subsidiary and implicit. Organisational benefits considered to outweigh costs. Some counterpart opportunism considered normal, rumour-based information considered unimportant. In distrust interviews, calculative considerations were considered to be primary and explicit. Organisational costs considered to outweigh benefits. Lack of perceived benefits particularly prominent. Counterpart opportunism considered excessive and ideologically motivated. Rumour-based information considered important, especially in absence of clear alternative information sources.
	HD3: Reciprocal trust, value identification, good interpersonal relationships, and an equal power distribution occur to greater extent in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions.	**HD4**: Partly rejected **Quantitative evidence**: supports hypothesised difference in five of six examined relational interaction aspects (signalised trust; value identification; power equality; signalised distrust) **Qualitative evidence**: Supports hypothesised difference for some but not all aspects. In trust interviews, large extent of value identification, particularly regarding 'cooperation for the general interest' and 'neutrality and objectiveness', strong presence of good interpersonal relations, signalised trust, relational continuity. Presence of two-way communication mentioned to ensure more equality in power distribution. Previous experiences mainly positive, while negative previous experiences were considered as vital learning processes. In distrust interviews, low extent of value identification, particularly regarding political values in the horizontal counterpart. Some signalised distrust mentioned. Previous experiences mostly negative. However, strong presence of good interpersonal relations.

Second, qualitative interviews indicated differences regarding the form in which some interaction aspects are present in trusted and distrusted interactions, despite a lack of quantitative evidence for a difference regarding the presence of these interaction aspects. Particularly, interviews indicated differences in the substantive and operational characteristics of macro-level formal frameworks between trusted and distrusted interactions. Second, they also indicated that in RI of trust, cost-benefit considerations were argued to be implicit, automatic, and to include a government-wide win-win perspective, while cost-benefit considerations were argued to be organisation-centred, explicit and interaction-specific in distrusted interactions. Finally, while boundary spanners referred to the importance of previous experiences in both trusted and distrusted interactions, interviews highlighted that previous experiences were mainly positive in trusted RI, while negative experiences were emphasised to a far greater extent in distrusted RI.

Third, we did not find any quantitative or qualitative evidence for a difference between trusted and distrusted interactions regarding the quality of the interpersonal relations between boundary spanners. It therefore appears that differences between these RI of trust and distrust are not explained by this aspect of interorganisational interactions.

Finally, we note that meso-level interaction aspects and macro-level interaction aspects are intertwined and influence each other in a continuous process of 'structuration' (Giddens, 1986). Formal macro-level frameworks affect the calculative aspects of interorganisational interactions by levelling the playing field, by determining formal boundaries to cooperation, and by mitigating risks and rewards. The informal macro-level aspect of an institutional culture with a 'sense of belonging to a collective organisation', which is particularly propagated through the salient norms of administrative and political leaders, was argued to affect boundary spanners' cost-benefit considerations by adding an administration-wide win-win perspective to their utility frameworks, as well as affect the relational aspect of value identification between different organisations by introducing common values in the administration. As such, meso-level interaction aspects are affected and shaped by macro-level interaction aspects. On the other hand however, meso-level relational aspects can change and shape the macro-level institutional framework over time as well. Repeated benefits (or costs) to cooperation, a high extent of value identification between organisations, repeated positive experiences and signals of mutual trust may eventualy become part of the organisational myths, routines and body of evidence which shape the formal and informal framework in which collective decisions are taken about organisational behaviour.

In this section, we have thus demonstrated how certain macro-and meso-level interaction aspects differ between trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, but we have not examined whether and how these differences affect the trust process in these interactions. The following section is entirely committed to the effort of investigating these explanatory mechanisms in trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration.

> 8.4.   **Explaining mechanisms of administrational trust in RI of trust and distrust**

In the subsequent paragraphs, we will analyse how macro- and meso- level interaction aspects affect the three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration. In section 2.5.3. of this dissertation, we introduced the analytical framework we will use for this analysis. Proposition E introduced our theoretical expectations regarding each cell of this analytical framework. Therefore, the data analysis in this section is structured around the twelve cells of the analytical framework. Each 'cell analysis' consists of a quantitative component (a comparison of sample 1 and 3), a qualitative component (a comparison of sample 2 and 4), and an integration component. In the main body of this text, we did not include the separate quantitative and qualitative components of the cell analyses, and will only report the final integration component. The ambition of the main text in this section is to consider the total extent to which the evidence supports the theoretical expectations for each cell of the analytical framework. The full cell analyses, as well as all quantitative models and qualitative interview quotes underlying these cell analyses, can be consulted in the annex to this dissertation. In that sense the analytical framework introduced in section 2.5.3. can be used as a 'reading companion' to the cell analyses in annex, as shown in the following table.

Table 48: Analytical framework as reading companion to the annex analyses

		Macro		Meso	
		Formal	Informal	Calculus	Relations
RI of trust vs RI of distrust	**Perceived trustworthiness**	Cell 1: integration of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 2: integration of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 3: integration of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 4: integration of samples 1,2,3,4
	Willingness to suspend vulnerability	Cell 5: integration of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 6: integration of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 7: integration of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 8: integration of samples 1,2,3,4
	Risk-taking behaviour	Cell 9: integration of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 10: integration of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 11: integration of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 12: integration of samples 1,2,3,4

The quantitative component of the cell analysis comprises an OLS regression model for sample 1 (RI of trust) and an OLS regression model for sample 3 (RI of distrust) in each cell of the framework, which allows us to compare and determine the existence of any linear relationships between a particular interaction aspect and a particular dimension of the interorganisational trust process. This means that for each cell of the analytical framework, the relevant trust process dimension in that cell is modelled as the dependent variable, and the relevant interaction aspects in that cell are modelled as the independent variables, together with the control variables age, sex, education, seniority, managerial responsibilities, formal organisational autonomy and micro-level predispositions to trust others. In other words, in each cell of the analytical framework, we discuss *whether* the relevant interaction aspects for that cell were related to the relevant trust process dimension for that cell in the sample 1 and sample 3 survey data. All regression models were subjected to post-estimations, which allowed us to assess the reliability of the OLS models in terms of the conditions of homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, and the normal distribution of residuals. If indications for unreliable models were found, we conducted case-by-case deletion of critical outliers and leverage points with a distorting influence on the regression models in order to improve the reliability of the models, and re-estimated the models without the deleted outliers.

The qualitative component of the cell analysis comprises a qualitative analysis of the causal arguments and illustrative examples regarding the relationship between the relevant trust process dimension and interaction-specific aspect, on the basis of data collected in card sort interviews in sample 2 and 4. Since respondents were requested to provide causal explanations when they related a certain interaction aspect with a certain trust process dimension, their causal arguments can be interpreted within each cell of the analytical framework. In other words, in each cell of the analytical framework, we discuss *how* the relevant interaction aspects for that cell were argued to be related to the relevant trust process dimension for that cell in sample 2 and sample 4 qualitative interviews.

The integrative component of the cell analysis comprises an analysis of the extent to which the quantitative and the qualitative findings are in line with the expectations arising from proposition E. The extent of empirical support for the theoretical hypotheses is assessed on the basis of a points-based method. Each hypothesised relationship between an interaction aspect and a trust process dimension is allowed a maximum score of 4/4. A potential two points (one point for sample 1 and one point for sample 3) are attributed on the basis of the criterion of correlation in the quantitative component of the cell analysis. Another potential two points (one point for sample 2 and one point for sample 4) are attributed on the basis of the criterion of causation in the qualitative component of the cell analysis. In the case that a particular piece of evidence contradicts the theoretical hypothesis, the respective point is deducted instead. In other words, the maximum score of 4/4 is attributed when quantitative findings in sample 1 ánd sample 3 suggest a significant correlation between the interaction aspect and the trust process dimension in the expected direction, ánd when qualitative findings in sample 2 ánd sample 4 provide a causal explanation that supports a direct relationship between the interaction aspect and the trust process dimension. The 'scores' for each relationship between interaction aspects and dimensions are summed in each cell of the analytical framework and expressed in terms of a 'percentage of evidence in support of hypothesised relationships'. The ambition of the integrative component of our cell analysis is thus to obtain an overview of the extent to which our empirical findings support the hypothesised relationships between macro- and meso- level interaction aspects and the three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 49: Integrative component of cell analyses: overview of maximum scores for findings in support of direct relationship between interaction aspects and trust process dimensions

			Macro		Meso	
			Formal	Informal	Calculus	Relations
RI of trust vs RI of distrust		Perceived trustworthiness	Max score 8/8	Max score 12/12	Max score 12/12	Max score 20/20
		Willingness to suspend vulnerability	Max score 8/8	Max score 12/12	Max score 12/12	Max score 20/20
		Risk-taking behaviour	Max score 8/8	Max score 12/12	Max score 12/12	Max score 20/2**0**

In the following paragraphs, we will discuss this integrative component of our analysis by sequentially discussing the four columns of this table. We start with a discussion of the macro-level formal mechanisms and the three dimensions of the trust process, and continue with macro-level informal mechanisms, meso-level calculative mechanisms, and meso-level relational mechanisms of the interorganisational trust

process in trusted and distrusted interactions with the horizontal departments of the Flemish administration. We then consolidate and discuss the results.

> 8.4.1. *Macro-level formal mechanisms of administrational trust*

Table 50 summarises the extent to which the evidence in our cell analyses supports the hypothesised relationships between macro-level formal aspects and the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. The underlying quantitative and qualitative cell analysis components can be consulted in cell analyses 1, 5 and 9 in the annex to this dissertation.

Table 50: Integration of findings regarding macro-level formal aspects and trust dimensions

Trust dimension (dependent)	Interaction aspects (independent)	Predicted	Phase 3 regression	Phase 4 qualitative interviews	Evidence aspect	Evidence model
Perceived trustworthiness	1. Formal rule framework	T: + DT: +	S1: + * * * S3:+ * * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	4 / 4	6 / 8 75 %
	2. Formal role framework	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: + *	S2: / S4: Causal argument for direct relation	2 / 4	
Willingness to suspend vulnerability	1. Formal rule framework	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: + * * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	3 / 4	5 / 8 62 %
	2. Formal role framework	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: /	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	2 / 4	
Risk-taking behaviour	1. Formal rule framework	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: + * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	3 / 4	5 / 8 62 %
	2. Formal role framework	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: /	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	2 / 4	

* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

The quantitative evidence suggests that clear formal rules are positively related to perceived trustworthiness in sample 1, and to all three dimensions of the trust process in sample 3. The qualitative evidence suggests that clear formal rules are positively and causally related to all three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in both sample 2 and sample 4. We discuss these findings further in the following paragraphs. We note that in the sample 2 and 4 interviews, boundary spanners did not make a clear distinction between formal rules and formal roles in interorganisational information-sharing interactions, instead arguing that formal rules and roles were both part of the 'formal framework' that encompasses the interorganisational information exchange interaction with horizontal departments.

> 8.4.1.1. *Macro-level formal interaction aspects and perceived trustworthiness*

Our findings fully support a positive causal relationship between clear formal rules and perceived trustworthiness in both trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. The quantitative cell analysis component supports a positive correlation between clear formal rules and perceived trustworthiness in both samples 1 and 3. The qualitative cell analysis suggest that an institutional logic of consequences explains the causal mechanism behind this positive relationship in both samples 2 and 4. Formal frameworks characterised by Sztompka's (1998) substantive trust-supporting characteristics (normative certainty, transparency, stability, universal application, allowing enactment of rights and enforcement of duties, non-violation of dignity, integrity and autonomy and morally justifiable) were argued to unambiguously clarify formal norms for mutual behaviour in interorganisational interactions, thus acting as a reference point for boundary spanners' expectations about their counterparts' integrity, compliance and ability to make credible commitments in

interorganisational interactions. Furthermore, formal frameworks characterised by Sztompka's (1998) operational trust-supporting characteristics (dependable but sparing use) were argued to establish a relatively broad but clearly defined arena for interorganisational interaction, which leaves room for boundary spanners to express flexibility and benevolence toward their counterparts, and thus allows boundary spanners to be perceived as trustworthy actors. In other words, formal frameworks enable perceived benevolence by unambiguously defining the limits of flexibility in interorganisational interactions, and allow perceived integrity, ability and compliance by setting a clear framework for 'correct' behaviour.

> 8.4.1.2. *Macro-level formal interaction aspects and willingness to suspend vulnerability*

As boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability is driven by the dimension of perceived trustworthiness, it is also indirectly affected by the macro-level formal mechanism discussed above. However, our evidence suggests that formal frameworks can also have a direct effect on boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability, as well as increase the impact of perceived trustworthiness on the willingness to suspend vulnerability.

In particular, the quantitative cell analysis component supports a positive correlation between clear formal rules and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 3. The qualitative cell analysis component suggests a positive causal relationship between clear formal rules and willingness to suspend vulnerability in both samples 2 and 4. Again, the qualitative cell analysis suggests that a logic of consequences explains the positive causal relationship between clear formal frameworks and the willingness to suspend vulnerability, as boundary spanners argued that clear, unambiguously defined and universally applied rules and definitions establish a 'level playing field' for all organisations that are required to share information with the horizontal department, which reduces the likelihood that those other organisations will act opportunistically by sharing false or coloured information with the horizontal department. In other words, formal institutional frameworks with Sztompka's (1998) trust-supporting substantive and operational characteristics were not only argued to positively affect the perceived trustworthiness of the counterpart horizontal department, but were also argued to strengthen the perceived trustworthiness of all other stakeholders who share information with the horizontal department. In doing so, non-ambiguous formal frameworks were argued to reduce the extent of trustee-independent vulnerability, thus also lowering the total extent of vulnerability to be suspended in the interorganisational interaction on the one hand, and increasing the ratio between trustee-dependent vulnerability and trustee-independent vulnerability on the other hand. Therefore, such formal frameworks with Stompka's (1998) trust-supporting characteristics both reduce the extent of vulnerability to be suspended on the one hand, and strengthen the impact of perceived trustworthiness on the willingness to suspend vulnerability (and therefore the indirect effect of clear formal frameworks on the willingness to suspend vulnerability) on the other hand. Boundary spanners also emphasised that such macro- level formal frameworks support their willingness to suspend vulnerability by being latently present in the background of the interorganisational interaction, under the knowledge that they would be explicitly activated in case of necessity.

> 8.4.1.3. *Macro-level formal interaction aspects and risk-taking behaviour*

As boundary spanners' risk-taking behaviour is driven by their willingness to suspend vulnerability, it is also indirectly affected by the macro-level formal mechanism described in the previous paragraph. However, our findings suggest that formal frameworks also affect risk-taking behaviour directly.

The quantitative cell analysis component supports a positive correlation between clear formal rules and risk-taking behaviour in sample 3. The qualitative cell analysis component suggests a positive causal relationship between clear formal rules and risk-taking behaviour in both samples 2 and 4. The qualitative cell analysis suggests a direct causal relationship between formal frameworks and risk-taking behaviour, which is explained on the basis of a logic of appropriateness, in contrast to the two previous dimensions, where it was explained on the basis of a logic of consequences, as macro-level formal frameworks were argued to permit, prohibit or coerce risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational information exchange with horizontal departments. While risk-taking behaviour was argued to be directly affected by formal permission and prohibition in sample 2 interviews, risk-taking behaviour was argued to be directly affected by formal coercion in sample 4 interviews. Trust-supporting permissive formal frameworks were argued to minimise formal obstructions to risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions, allowing boundary spanners the necessary decision discretion to engage in information exchange with the horizontal department. Trust-supporting prohibitive formal frameworks were argued to clearly define the maximal boundaries of risk-taking behaviour, making it clear for both parties what kind of information could not reasonably be requested by the horizontal department. Finally, in sample 4 interviews, coercive formal frameworks were argued to enforce risk-taking behaviour by obliging boundary spanners to share information with the distrusted horizontal department, as such breaking the cycle of distrust by defining the minimal boundaries of interorganisational risk-taking behaviour. In other words, whereas latent formal frameworks were argued to support risk-taking behaviour in trusted interactions through permissive and prohibitive mechanisms, explicit and actively used formal frameworks were argued to enforce risk-taking behaviour in distrusted interactions through coercive mechanisms. Although a logic of appropriateness thus applies to both samples in the qualitative component of the cell analysis, the causal mechanisms explaining the relationship are different for sample 2 (permissive/prohibitive mechanism) and sample 4 (coercive mechanism).

> 8.4.2. *Macro-level informal mechanisms of administrational trust*

Table 51 summarises the extent to which the evidence in our cell analyses supports the hypothesised relationship between macro-level informal interaction aspects and the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. The underlying quantitative and qualitative cell analysis components can be consulted in cell analyses 2, 6 and 10 in the annex to this dissertation.

Table 51: Integration of findings regarding macro-level informal aspects and trust dimensions

Trust dimension (dependent)	Interaction aspects (independent)	Predicted	Phase 3 regression	Phase 4 qualitative interviews	Evidence aspect	Evidence model
Perceived trustworthiness	3. Informal routine framework	T: + DT: +	S1: + * * S3: + * * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: /	3 / 4	8 / 12 66 % (+1)
	4. Admin. leader confirmatory norms	T: + DT: -	S1: + * * * S3: - *	S2: / S4: Causal argument for direct relation	3 / 4	
	5. Pol. principal confirmatory norms	T: + DT: -	S1: + * * S3: - * *	S2: / S4: /	2 / 4	
Willingness to suspend vulnerability	3. Informal routine framework	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: + * * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	3 / 4	6 / 12 50 % (+1)
	4. Admin. leader confirmatory norms	T: + DT: -	S1: / S3: /	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: /	1 / 4	
	5. Pol. principal confirmatory norms	T: + DT: -	S1: + * * * S3: - * *	S2: / S4: /	2 / 4	
Risk-taking behaviour	3. Informal routine framework	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: + * * *	S2: / S4: Causal argument for direct relation	2 / 4	7 / 12 58 %
	4. Admin. leader confirmatory norms	T: + DT: -	S1: + * S3: - * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	4 / 4	
	5. Pol. principal confirmatory norms	T: + DT: -	S1: / S3: - * * *	S2: / S4: /	1 / 4	

. * = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01

(+1) symbol indicates that an extra aspect was argued important during interviews, for which quantitative data is not available

The majority of quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that clear informal routines are positively related to all three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process. We note that the quantitative measures for salient norms have positive signs in sample 1, where the boundary spanner survey referred to the salient norms of trust, while in sample 3 it referred to their salient norms of distrust. The importance of salient norms of administrative leaders is primarily supported by our findings for the dimension of perceived trustworthiness and risk-taking behaviour. The hypothesised importance of salient norms of political principals is supported by quantitative evidence for all dimensions of the trust process, although qualitative evidence suggests that salient norms of political principals are inconsequential to any of the dimensions of the trust process. Finally, it is important to note that an additional macro-level informal aspect, the institutional culture of 'administrative community', was argued to be important for perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in the qualitative sample 2 and sample 4 interviews.

> 8.4.2.1. *Macro-level informal interaction aspects and perceived trustworthiness*

Macro-level informal aspects were argued to affect the perceived trustworthiness of the horizontal department in both trusted and distrusted interactions. We will discuss these macro-level informal interaction aspects in order of the empirical support for their impact on perceived trustworthiness.

First, a majority of our evidence supports a positive causal relationship between informal routines and perceived trustworthiness. The quantitative cell analysis component supports a positive correlation in both sample 1 and 3. The qualitative cell analysis suggest a causal explanation for this relationship in sample 2 based on a logic of appropriateness, as it was argued that clear routines in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments establish self-evident and unquestioned notions of horizontal departments' trustworthiness, which are internalised and perpetuated by individual boundary spanners over time (mimetic isomorphism).

Second, a majority of our findings support the expected causal relationship between administrative leaders' salient norms and perceived trustworthiness. The quantitative cell analysis component supports the expected relationship in both sample 1 and 3. The qualitative cell analysis component provides a causal explanation for the hypothesised relationship in sample 4, based on an institutional logic of appropriateness, as boundary spanners argued that expressions of distrust by their administrative leaders exerted negative pressures on their own perceptions about the horizontal departments' perceived trustworthiness (normative isomorphism).

Third, boundary spanners in both sample 2 and 4 raised a new macro-level informal institutional aspect during qualitative interviews, which we had not included in the boundary spanner survey design. In both sample 2 and 4 interviews, the existence of an institutional 'culture of belonging to an administrative community' was argued to be important for the perceived trustworthiness of the horizontal department. In sample 2, boundary spanners argued that such a 'culture of administrative community' allowed different entities to share common interests and have similar formal and informal standards of quality and accountability, as well as similar organisational cultures. The perceived existence of this culture led boundary spanners to argue that department B would help other entities (perceived benevolence) in order to maximise the common interest of the Flemish administration. Furthermore, boundary spanners in the sample 2 interviews expected that similar standards of quality, performance and accountability would apply to department B as to their own organisation under such a culture of 'administrative community', which grounded their assumptions that department B was also trustworthy in terms of its competence and integrity. In other words, 'gaps' in boundary spanners' relational knowledge about the horizontal department were filled on the basis of a 'cultural template' provided by an informal culture of 'administrative community', on the basis of which boundary spanners made assumptions about the trustworthiness of their counterparts. In sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners rejected the existence of such a culture of 'administrative community' in the Flemish administration. An informal 'culture of administrative community' was thus argued to positively affect perceived trustworthiness through a combination of the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences. Although we did not collect quantitative data to corroborate this qualitative finding, this macro-level informal aspect was very much present in the qualitative cell analysis component.

Finally, although the quantitative cell analysis component supports the expected relationship between political principals' salient norms and perceived trustworthiness, the qualitative cell analysis did not provide any support for a causal relationship. In both sample 2 and sample 4 interviews, multiple respondents rejected the notion that political leaders' salient norms affect boundary spanners' perceptions of horizontal departments' trustworthiness.

> 8.4.2.2. *Macro-level informal interaction aspects and willingness to suspend vulnerability*

As boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability is driven by perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability is also indirectly affected through the mechanisms discussed above. However, our findings also suggest that macro-level informal interaction aspects have a direct impact on

boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability. We will discuss these macro-level informal interaction aspects in order of the empirical support for a direct impact on the willingness to suspend vulnerability.

First, a majority of our findings support a positive causal relationship between informal routines and the willingness to suspend vulnerability. The quantitative cell analysis component supports a positive correlation in sample 3. The qualitative cell analysis suggests a causal explanation for this relationship in both sample 2 and 4, on the basis of both the logics of appropriateness and consequences. The logic of appropriateness was present in the causal argument that informal routines support the willingness to suspend vulnerability by rendering it a self–evident and unquestioned attitude, rather than the result of a conscious decision calculus or a 'personal favour' between boundary spanners (mimetic isomorphism). For example, in sample 4 interviews boundary spanners argued that existing routines of information exchange led them to not question willingness to suspend vulnerability, even though they did not consider the horizontal department to be trustworthy at times. Additionally, the logic of consequences was present in the causal argument that clear routines establish stability and predictability in interorganisational interactions, as such reducing the extent of complexity in interorganisational interactions and reducing the extent of perceived vulnerability to be suspended in the interorganisational interaction.

Second, the qualitative cell analysis component suggested a positive causal direct impact of the presence of a 'culture of administrative community' on the willingness to suspend vulnerability. In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that under such an informal culture, they felt an 'ethical responsibility' or a 'moral duty' to be transparent about the use of public resources toward horizontal departments and to be accountable towards horizontal systems of democratic audit and control, particularly when such is required by principles of good governance and the 'common interest' of the collective Flemish administration. In sample 4 interviews, this community perspective was largely absent, and willingness to suspend vulnerability was thus rarely considered in relation to the 'common interest' of the Flemish administration, as boundary spanners mainly emphasised their own organisational interests (infra our discussion of calculative mechanisms). Unfortunately, we did not collect quantitative data to corroborate this qualitative finding.

Third, we did not find coherent evidence in support of any direct causal relationship between salient norms of political leaders and the willingness to suspend vulnerability. Although the quantitative cell analysis component did suggest a positive relationship between political leaders' salient norms and the willingness to suspend vulnerability, the qualitative cell analysis did not provide any direct causal explanations for such a relationship.

Finally, little to no evidence was found in support of a direct causal relationship between salient norms of administrative leaders and the willingness to suspend vulnerability. The quantitative cell analysis component did not suggest any significant relationship. In qualitative interviews, some sample 2 respondents suggested that administrative leaders' salient norms of trust could lately support their

willingness to suspend vulnerability, but they emphasised that this argument was mainly theoretical and could not be supported by empirical examples.

> 8.4.2.3. *Macro-level informal interaction aspects and risk-taking behaviour*

Since boundary spanners' risk-taking behaviour is driven by the willingness to suspend vulnerability, risk-taking behaviour is indirectly affected through the informal mechanisms discussed in the previous paragraph. However, our findings also suggest that macro-level informal interaction aspects have a direct impact on boundary spanners' risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments. Again, we will discuss these macro-level informal interaction aspects in order of the empirical support for their direct impact on risk-taking behaviour in trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration.

Our findings fully support a causal relationship between administrative leaders' salient norms and risk-taking behaviour. The quantitative cell analysis component supports a positive correlation in both samples 1 and 3. The qualitative cell analysis component supports a causal and direct relationship between administrative leaders' salient norms and boundary spanners' risk-taking behaviour in both samples 2 and 4, on the basis of an institutional logic of appropriateness, in particular through the mechanism of normative isomorphism. Boundary spanners argued that salient norms of interorganisational trust or distrust expressed by their administrative leaders constituted a framework of 'strategic appropriateness' in which they considered their own willingness to suspend vulnerability before engaging in risk-taking behaviour toward the horizontal department on behalf of their organisations. In case of divergence between the attitude of the senior civil servant and their own willingness to suspend vulnerability, boundary spanners argued that their administrative leaders' attitude would overrule their own willingness to suspend vulnerability. However, it is important to note that in both sample 2 and sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners emphasised that their risk-taking behaviour usually occurred under the implicit assumption that their administrative leader condoned such risk-taking behaviour, and that they only explicitly checked their administrative leaders' attitudes when in doubt. In other words, we found strong evidence that the salient norms of administrative leaders provide latent support to the risk-taking behaviour of boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions, due to causal mechanisms of normative isomorphism.

Second, our findings suggest a direct causal relationship between clear routines and risk-taking behaviour in distrusted interactions. The quantitative cell analysis component suggests a positive relationship between clear informal routines and risk-taking behaviour in sample 3. The qualitative cell analysis component provides a causal argument for such a positive relation in sample 4, which is again based on an institutional logic of appropriateness. Sample 4 boundary spanners argued that they exchanged information with horizontal department A despite the relative absence of willingness to suspend vulnerability, because they were reluctant to challenge existing routines (mimetic isomorphism) and because the exchange of information was considered the evident, 'normal' state of affairs. Breaking this routine would be considered 'ab-normal' with respect to the professional norms that exert pressure on

boundary spanners in the Flemish administration (normative isomorphism). In other words, risk-taking behaviour may exist despite a relatively low extent of willingness to suspend vulnerability, as informal routines are maintained through the mimetic and normative isomorphism that is associated with the institutional logic of appropriateness.

Third, our evidence does not support a direct causal relationship between political leaders' salient trust and risk-taking behaviour. The quantitative cell analysis suggests a significant relationship in sample 3, but the qualitative cell analysis does not provide any causal argumentation underlying such a relationship, as boundary spanners in both sample 2 and 4 argued that the salient norms of political principals had little relevance for their risk-taking behaviour in information-exchange interactions with the horizontal department.

Finally, it is worth noting that the qualitative cell analysis does not suggest any direct causal impact of a 'culture of administrative community' on the behavioural dimension of the trust process.

> 8.4.3. *Meso-level calculative mechanisms of administrational trust*

Table 52 summarises the extent to which the evidence in our cell analyses supported the hypothesised relationships between meso-level calculative interaction aspects and the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. The underlying quantitative and qualitative analyses can be consulted in cell analyses 3, 7 and 11 in the annex to this dissertation.

The table shows mixed support for the hypothesised importance of meso-level calculative interaction aspects in trusted and distrusted interactions, which is particularly strong for the dimension of willingness to suspend vulnerability and particularly weak for the dimension of risk-taking behaviour. Our findings suggest that among the meso-level calculative interaction aspects, boundary spanners' knowledge about the horizontal departments' opportunistic motivations directly affects perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in trusted and distrusted interactions, and that perceived risks have a significant direct impact on boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability. Contradictory evidence is found regarding asset specificity in the interorganisational interaction. Finally, a negative relation seems to exist between the extent to which boundary spanners consider organisational costs and benefits in their trust evaluations and the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour dimensions, which we had modelled as a control variable. We elaborate further upon these findings in the following paragraphs.

Table 52: Integration of findings regarding meso-level calculative aspects and trust dimensions

Trust dimension (dependent)	Interaction aspects (independent)	Predicted	Phase 3 regression	Phase 4 qualitative interviews	Evidence aspect	Evidence model
Perceived trustworthiness	6. No information of opp. motivations	T: + DT: +	S1: + * * * S3:+ * * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	4 / 4	6 / 12 50 % (!)
	7. Asset specificity (-)	T: - DT: -	S1: + * (!) S3: /	S2: / S4: Causal argument for direct relation	0 / 4 !	
	8. Risk nature (-)	T: - DT:	S1: - * * S3: - * *	S2: / S4: /	2 / 4	
	9(c). Personal cost-benefit analysis	Control	S1: / S3: /	S2: / S4: /	Control	
	10(c). Org. cost-benefit analysis	Control	S1: / S3: /	S2: / S4: Inconsistent evidence	Control	
Willingness to suspend vulnerability	6. No information of opp. motivations	T: + DT: +	S1: + * * * S3: + * * *	S2: / S4: /	2 / 4	9 / 12 75 %
	7. Asset specificity (-)	T: - DT: -	S1: - * * S3: /	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	3 / 4	
	8. Risk nature (-)	T: - DT:	S1: - * * * S3: - * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	4 / 4	
	9(c). Personal cost-benefit analysis	Control	S1: - * S3: - * *	S2: / S4: /	Control	
	10(c). Org. cost-benefit analysis	Control	S1: - * * S3: - * * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	Control	
Risk-taking behaviour	6. No information of opp. motivations	T: + DT: +	S1: + * * * S3: + * * *	S2: / S4: /	2 / 4	4 / 12 33 %
	7. Asset specificity (-)	T: - DT: -	S1: / S3: /	S2: / S4: /	0 / 4	
	8. Risk nature (-)	T: - DT:	S1: - * * * S3: - * * *	S2: / S4: /	2 / 4	
	9(c). Personal cost-benefit analysis	Control	S1: - * * S3: /	S2: / S4: /	Control	
	10(c). Org. cost-benefit analysis	Control	S1: - * * S3: - * * *	S2: / S4: /	Control	

* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01
(!) indicates counter-hypothesised finding in cell model.
Control variables not included in cell model evidence

> 8.4.3.1. *Meso-level calculative interaction aspects and perceived trustworthiness*

Meso-level calculative interaction aspects were argued to affect perceived trustworthiness in both trusted and distrusted interactions. We discuss the meso-level calculative interaction aspects in descending order of empirical support for their impact on perceived trustworthiness.

First, our findings fully support a negative causal relationship between boundary spanners' knowledge about horizontal departments' opportunistic interests and perceived trustworthiness. The quantitative cell analysis component supports a negative correlation in both samples 1 and 3. The qualitative cell analysis component supports a causal and direct negative relationship in both samples 2 and 4. In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that they had little knowledge of any opportunistic motivations of department B. On the one hand, due to the presence of the macro-level informal culture of 'administrative community', department B was considered to seek collective interest rather than self-interest, which was argued to strengthen perceptions of its integrity. On the other hand, sample 2 boundary spanners emphasised that it would be irrational for department B to engage in 'self-interest seeking with guile' under the conditions of interdependency and power equality (infra) which were considered to characterise their interorganisational interactions, and that the lack of such 'self-interest seeking with guile' illustrates respect for the boundary spanners' organisational needs and interests in the interaction, thus supporting perceived benevolence. In sample 4 interviews on the other hand, boundary spanners argued that

suspicions about department A's motivations for bureau maximisation were detrimental to perceptions of its benevolence, and that information about the political motivations behind department A's information collection initiatives severely affected its perceived integrity, particularly with regards to its objectiveness and neutrality in information exchange interactions. Interestingly, the sample 4 boundary spanners argued that information gathered through rumours was important in shaping these suspicions, particularly during periods of institutional ambiguity, during which more reliable sources of information were considered to be absent.

Second, findings regarding the impact of other calculative aspects on perceived trustworthiness are unclear regarding the causal direction. While the quantitative cell analysis component suggests a negative relationship between the perceived risk and perceived trustworthiness in both samples 1 and 3 as expected, the qualitative cell analysis component suggests that the horizontal departments' perceived trustworthiness affects boundary spanners' risk perceptions in information exchange interactions with the horizontal department, rather than the other way around.

Third, the quantitative cell analysis component shows a counter-hypothesised positive relationship between asset specificity and perceived trustworthiness in sample 1. However, the qualitative cell analysis component in sample 4 supports the hypothesised negative relationship between asset specificity and perceived trustworthiness on the basis of the causal argument that asset specificity is seen as a cost in organisational cost-benefit considerations, which negatively affects the perceived benevolence and integrity of the horizontal department because boundary spanners feel that they are being offered a 'bad deal' by department A. The data are thus inconclusive about the relationship between asset specificity and perceived trustworthiness, and partially contradict our calculus-based trust hypothesis. Zhong et al. (2014) have noted that inconsistent empirical findings regarding asset specificity and interorganisational trust have emerged between theories or even within a specific theory. Rational choice theories such as Transaction Cost Economics consider asset specificity as a cost component in interorganisational interactions, which motivates organisations to behave opportunistically in order to avoid such costs, which reduces interorganisational trust (Heide, 1994; Williamson, 1993). However, Social Exchange Theory emphasises the social nature of economic transactions (Bradach & Eccles, 1989; Hill, 1990) and suggests that an organisation may invest in specific assets or accept a high extent of asset specificity in interorganisational interactions in order to express both goodwill and capability of maintaining the relationship with the hope of developing a long-term relationship with the counterpart organisation (Ganesan, 1994; Heide & John, 1992). Thus, contrary to Transaction Cost Economics, Social Exchange Theory would suggest a positive relationship between asset specificity and interorganisational trust, but reverses the causal argumentation, as it suggests that boundary spanners are willing to accept more asset specificity (Geyskens, Steenkamp, & Kumar, 2006; Poppo & Zenger, 2002) in interactions with organisations they trust and want to continue interacting with. Thus, as our quantitative and qualitative findings do not corroborate each other, there is a need for further investigation of the role of asset specificity in the interorganisational trust process.

Finally, the control variables regarding the extent to which boundary spanners ground their trust evaluations in organisational and personal cost-benefit considerations were not related to perceived trustworthiness in the quantitative cell analysis component. However, the qualitative cell analysis component suggested that perceived trustworthiness is affected by cost-benefit considerations on the one hand, as boundary spanners' experience of being offered a 'bad deal' affects the perceived benevolence and integrity of the horizontal department. On the other hand, perceived trustworthiness was argued to affect boundary spanners' cost-benefit considerations, as information exchange with trustworthy counterparts was considered to hold more potential benefits for boundary spanners' own organisations, thus reversing the causal logic of the explanation. None of our evidence supported any sort of relationship between personal cost-benefit considerations and perceived trustworthiness.

> 8.4.3.2.   *Meso-level calculative interaction aspects and willingness to suspend vulnerability*

As boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability is driven by the dimension of perceived trustworthiness, it is also indirectly affected by the meso-level calculative mechanisms discussed in the previous paragraph. However, our evidence suggests that meso-level calculative interaction aspects also affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability directly.

First, our findings fully support a negative causal relationship between perceived risks and the willingness to be vulnerable in trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. The quantitative cell analysis component supports a negative correlation in both samples 1 and 3. The qualitative cell analysis component supports a causal and direct negative relationship in both samples 2 and 4, in which it is argued that as boundary spanners associate more risks to interorganisational information exchange with the horizontal department, a larger extent of perceived vulnerability must be suspended, rendering them less willing to do so in the absence of 'good reasons' to make such a 'leap of faith'.

Second, a majority of our evidence supports the hypothesised negative relationship between asset specificity (the cost of collecting required information) and boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability. The quantitative cell analysis component suggests a negative correlation between asset specificity and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 1. The qualitative cell analysis component provides a causal explanation for a direct negative impact of asset specificity on the willingness to suspend vulnerability in both samples 2 and 4, as boundary spanners in both samples argued that a higher asset specificity would lead them to be less willing to suspend vulnerability toward the horizontal department. However, in sample 2, boundary spanners also argued that they would remain willing to suspend vulnerability in the interaction with department B even though the costs (asset specificity) of information exchange would outweigh its benefits, as maintaining cooperation with department B was implicitly considered to benefit the boundary spanners' own organisation on the longer term and in other interactions with department B. In other words, although a negative relationship between the costs of the interaction and the willingness to suspend vulnerability was found to be present, boundary spanners in

trusted interactions argued that they were willing to accept short-term asset specificity costs in order to continue long-term cooperation.

Third, while the quantitative cell analysis component supports the existence of a negative relationship between boundary spanners' knowledge about the counterparts' opportunistic motivations and their willingness to suspend vulnerability, the qualitative cell analysis does not provide any causal argument for such a direct relationship to the willingness to suspend vulnerability, rather suggesting that the knowledge about the counterparts' opportunistic behaviour affects the willingness to suspend vulnerability indirectly, through its effect on perceived trustworthiness.

Interestingly, our evidence strongly suggests that the control variables regarding the extent to which boundary spanners' ground their trust evaluations in organisational and personal cost-benefit considerations are significantly related to the willingness to suspend vulnerability. In the quantitative cell analysis component, a negative relationship is suggested between the extent to which boundary spanners ground their trust evaluation in organisational cost-benefit considerations and their willingness to suspend vulnerability. Although the qualitative cell analysis component does not provide a causal explanation for this negative relationship, boundary spanners' cost-benefit considerations in sample 2 interviews were notably more implicit, automatic and routinised, while they were far more explicit and deliberate in sample 4 interviews. In other words, boundary spanners seem less willing to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions characterised by more explicit considerations of organisational costs and benefits. Quantitative evidence suggests a similar negative relationship between the extent of personal cost-benefit considerations and boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions in sample 1 and 3, even though boundary spanners argued that personal considerations did not affect their willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 2 and sample 4 interviews.

> 8.4.3.3. *Meso-level calculative interaction aspects and risk-taking behaviour*
As boundary spanners' risk-taking behaviour is driven by their willingness to suspend vulnerability, risk-taking behaviour is also indirectly affected by the meso-level calculative mechanisms discussed in the previous paragraph. While the quantitative cell analysis component does show several significant relations between meso-level calculative interaction aspects and risk-taking behaviour in trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions with the horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, the qualitative findings provide little to no support for the existence of any direct causal relations between meso-level calculative interaction aspects and risk-taking behaviour. Our findings thus suggest that calculative interaction aspects drive risk-taking behaviour mainly through their influence on boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability, and through their influence on the trust processes of other decision-makers with whom the boundary spanner shares decision discretion.

> 8.4.4. *Meso-level relational mechanisms of administrational trust*
Table 53 contains a summary of the extent to which our findings support the hypothesised relationships between meso-level relational interaction aspects and the dimensions of the interorganisational trust

process. The underlying analyses for these findings can be consulted in cell analyses 4, 8 and 12 in the annex to this dissertation.

Table 53: Integration of findings regarding meso-level relational aspects and trust dimensions

Trust dimension (dependent)	Interaction aspects (independent)	Predicted	Phase 3 regression	Phase 4 qualitative interviews	Evidence aspect	Evidence model
Perceived trustworthiness	11. Signalled trust	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: + * * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	3 / 4	15 / 20 75 %
	12. Value identification	T: + DT: +	S1: + * * * S3:+ * * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	4 / 4	
	13. Good personal relationship	T: + DT: +	S1: + * * S3: /	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	3 / 4	
	14. Signalled distrust (-)	T: - DT: -	S1: / S3: - * *	S2: / S4: Causal argument for direct relation	2 / 4	
	15. Power equality	T: + DT: +	S1: + * * * S3: /	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	3 / 4	
	16(c). Experience-based expectations	Control	S1: + * * * S3: /	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	Control	
	17(c). Interaction age	Control	S1: +* S3: /	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: /	Control	
	18(c). Interaction frequency	Control	S1: : - * S3: /	S2: / S4: /	Control	
Willingness to suspend vulnerability	11. Signalled trust	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: /	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	2 / 4	7 / 20 35 %
	12. Value identification	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: + * * *	S2: / S4: /	1 / 4	
	13. Good personal relationship	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: /	S2: / S4: /	0 / 4	
	14. Signalled distrust (-)	T: - DT: -	S1: / S3: - *	S2: / S4: /	1 / 4	
	15. Power equality	T: + DT: +	S1: + * * S3: + * * *	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: /	3 / 4	
	16(c). Experience-based expectations	Control	S1:+ * * * S3: /	S2: Causal argument for direct relation S4: Causal argument for direct relation	Control	
	17(c). Interaction age	Control	S1: / S3: /	S2: / S4: /	Control	
	18(c). Interaction frequency	Control	S1: / S3: /	S2: / S4: /	Control	
Risk-taking behaviour	11. Signalled trust	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: /	S2: / S4: /	0 / 4	3 / 20 15 %
	12. Value identification	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: + * * *	S2: / S4: /	1 / 4	
	13. Good personal relationship	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: /	S2: / S4: /	0 / 4	
	14. Signalled distrust (-)	T: - DT: -	S1: / S3: - * * *	S2: / S4: /	1 / 4	
	15. Power equality	T: + DT: +	S1: / S3: + * * *	S2: / S4: /	1 / 4	
	16(c). Experience-based expectations	Control	S1: + * * S3: /	S2: / S4: Causal argument for direct relation	Control	
	17(c). Interaction age	Control	S1: / S3: /	S2: / S4: /	Control	
	18(c). Interaction frequency	Control	S1: / S3: /	S2: / S4: /	Control	

* = p < .1; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01
Control variables not included in model evidence

The findings suggest that meso-level relational interaction aspects particularly affect the interorganisational trust process with regards to the dimension of perceived trustworthiness and, to lesser extent, the willingness to suspend vulnerability. Particularly, our findings strongly suggest that value identification, signalled trust, the quality of interpersonal relationships and power equality are important meso-level relational interaction aspects regarding perceived trustworthiness in trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. Furthermore,

the control variable of 'familiarity' in interorganisational interactions was argued to be a precondition for any meso-level (calculative and relational) interaction aspect to develop in the interorganisational relationship. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss these meso-level relational aspects and their effects on the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in further detail.

> 8.4.4.1. *Meso-level relational interaction aspects and perceived trustworthiness*

Our findings indicate that meso-level relational interaction aspects had a relatively strong effect on the dimension of perceived trustworthiness in trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. As in previous paragraphs, we discuss the relationship between these meso-level relational interaction aspects and perceived trustworthiness in descending order of empirical support.

First, all evidence fully supports that value identification is a strong determinant of perceived trustworthiness. The quantitative cell analysis component suggests a significant positive relationship between value identification and perceived trustworthiness in both sample 1 and sample 3. The qualitative cell analysis component provides a causal argument for this correlation on the basis of sample 2 and sample 4 interviews, in which it was argued that strong value identification with the horizontal department positively affects the boundary spanners' perceptions about the integrity of the horizontal department. The qualitative cell analysis component clarifies furthermore that two elements are deemed necessary for such value identification to occur in interorganisational interactions. On the one hand, a certain set of 'shared values' need to exist between the boundary spanner and the horizontal department. In the sample 2 interviews, these values were argued to be empowered by a macro-level informal institutional culture of 'administrative community'. On the other hand, value identification was argued to require the boundary spanner to have direct relational experience with the operationalisation and prioritisation of those shared values in a particular interorganisational interaction with the counterpart horizontal department. Value identification thus requires the macro-level presence of shared values, as well as positive historical experiences (familiarity) with the operationalisation of those values in interorganisational interaction with the counterpart. In sample 2 interviews, both conditions were argued to be present, giving rise to value identification, thus affecting the perceived trustworthiness of the horizontal department. In sample 4 interviews however, boundary spanners either rejected the idea of a shared administrative culture (macro) and thus the existence of shared values, or argued that they supported the macro-level shared values, but disagreed strongly with the way in which department A had operationalised or applied those values in their previous interorganisational interaction experiences (meso).

Second, our evidence strongly suggests that relational reciprocity, or expressions of trust by the counterpart, is an important determinant of perceived trustworthiness. The quantitative cell analysis component supports the expected positive relationship between expressions of trust by the horizontal department and perceived trustworthiness in sample 3. The qualitative cell analysis component provides a causal explanation suggesting an impact of the counterparts' expressions of trust on perceived trustworthiness in both samples 2 and 4. Especially in sample 4, boundary spanners emphasised that horizontal department A showed a lack of trust in their own organisations, which they perceived as a lack

of benevolence and concern toward their organisational needs and interests. Furthermore, the quantitative cell analysis component in sample 3 suggested a negative relationship between expressions of distrust by the counterpart and perceived trustworthiness. The qualitative cell analysis component confirmed this negative relationship in sample 4 and suggested the causal explanation that explicit expressions of distrust by the department A were relatively rare, but considered to be highly detrimental to the horizontal departments' perceived benevolence. This evidence is very much in line with scholars who have argued that trusting others is a signal of one's own trustworthiness (Koeszegi, 2004). For instance, Kydd (2000) demonstrated that costly signals separate trustworthy actors from the untrustworthy, and the most efficient way to convince the other side of one's own trustworthiness is, in fact, to show trust.

Third, our evidence strongly suggests a positive impact of power equality on perceived trustworthiness. The quantitative cell analysis component suggests a positive significant relationship between power equality and perceived trustworthiness in sample 1. The qualitative cell analysis component provides a causal explanation for this relationship in both sample 2 and sample 4. Specifically in sample 2, horizontal department B's open communication, in combination with opportunities for feedback and discussion about interorganisational information exchange, was argued to give boundary spanners a certain extent of influence over the interorganisational interaction, thus stimulating power equality. Boundary spanners argued that by allowing them to influence the process, horizontal department B showed that it trusted in and cared about the needs of the boundary spanners' organisation, which supported the perceived benevolence of the horizontal department. In sample 4 interviews on the other hand, boundary spanners argued that interorganisational information-exchange was characterised by one-way communication and a lack of organised feedback, which made the boundary spanners feel relatively powerless in the information-exchange interactions with department A, and which was considered to be detrimental to department A's perceived benevolence toward the boundary spanners' organisation. As such, efforts to enable power equality through interactive communication in interorganisational interactions were argued to affect the perceived benevolence of the horizontal department, and thus, to affect its perceived trustworthiness.

Fourth, our evidence also strongly suggests that the quality of interpersonal relations between boundary spanners affects perceptions about the trustworthiness of the counterpart department. The quantitative cell analysis component suggests the existence of a significant positive relationship between good interpersonal relations and perceptions about the horizontal departments' perceived trustworthiness in sample 1. The qualitative cell analysis component provides a causal explanation for this relationship in both sample 2 and sample 4, as good personal relationships between boundary spanners were argued to allow more flexibility in interorganisational interactions, and to smoothen informal, 'off the record' discussion about the interorganisational interaction between boundary spanners. Importantly, when the counterpart boundary spanner was considered to have the ability to make 'credible commitments' on behalf of the horizontal department, good interpersonal relationships between boundary spanners were considered to

contribute to the perceived benevolence of the horizontal department in the interorganisational interaction. In sample 2 interviews, respondents argued that their counterpart boundary spanners had such ability for credible commitment, thus allowing good interpersonal relations to positively affect the perceived benevolence of the counterpart horizontal department. In sample 4 interviews however, boundary spanners argued that although they had good interpersonal relations with their counterpart boundary spanners, this did not affect the perceived trustworthiness of horizontal department A because the counterpart boundary spanners were considered to have little ability to make credible commitments on behalf of their organisation.

We controlled these findings for the presence of interpersonal familiarity in the interorganisational interaction. The quantitative cell analysis component showed a positive relationship between interaction age and perceived trustworthiness in sample 1, as well as a positive relationship between the extent to which expectations were based on previous experiences and perceived trustworthiness in sample 1. The qualitative cell analysis component in both sample 2 and 4 suggests that familiarity and previous experiences affect perceived trustworthiness in interorganisational interactions because accumulated relational information adds to the predictability of the counterpart in the interorganisational interaction, and thus enables the formation of more accurate positive or negative expectations about the horizontal department. Furthermore, boundary spanners in both sample 2 and 4 argued that such accumulation of relational information and predictability in the interorganisational interaction is a precondition for other meso-level interaction aspects to develop in the interorganisational interaction. Although there is thus both quantitative and qualitative evidence to suggest that the mere presence of familiarity positively affects perceived trustworthiness, sample 2 and sample 4 interviews indicated that more than the mere presence, the positive or negative experiences characterising such familiarity were crucial predictors of perceived trustworthiness. Positive (in sample 2 interviews) or negative (in sample 4 interviews) previous experiences with the ability, benevolence and integrity of the horizontal department were argued to shape boundary spanners' expectations regarding the trustworthiness of the horizontal counterpart in future interactions. However, the influence of these historical experiences over future expectations was argued to depend on two conditions. On the one hand, conditions of institutional stability (macro) were argued to strengthen the impact of previous experiences on expectations of perceived trustworthiness, as (temporary) episodes of institutional instability and changes to the role and required competences of the horizontal department were argued to render experiences with previous performance an inaccurate predictor of future performance. On the other hand, boundary spanners argued that clear attribution of the horizontal counterparts' responsibility for positive or negative previous experiences strengthens the impact of such previous experiences on future expectations of the horizontal departments' trustworthiness.

> 8.4.4.2. *Meso-level relational interaction aspects and the willingness to suspend vulnerability*

Since boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability is driven by their perceptions of the counterparts' trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability is also indirectly affected by the

meso-level relational mechanisms we have discussed in the previous paragraph. Our analytical framework also allows direct effects of relational interaction aspects on the willingness to suspend vulnerability. However, our empirical evidence suggests only few direct impacts of meso-level relational aspects on the willingness to suspend vulnerability. We note that in qualitative interviews, boundary spanners explained the impact of meso-level relational aspects on their willingness to suspend vulnerability to a large extent through indirect mechanisms, referring to the dimension of perceived trustworthiness. However, some meso-level relational interaction aspects were argued to affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability directly. In the next paragraphs, we will discuss these meso-level relational interaction aspects in order of the empirical support for their impact on perceived trustworthiness.

First, our evidence suggests that power equality directly affects the willingness to suspend vulnerability, in addition to its effect on perceived trustworthiness we discussed in the previous paragraph. The quantitative cell analysis component suggested a positive relationship between power equality and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in both sample 1 and sample 3. The qualitative cell analysis component provided some causal argumentation for a direct causal effect of power equality on the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 2 (although the empirical basis is relatively weak as it rests on one single interview). Power equality was argued to decrease the trustee-dependent component of the perceived vulnerability in the interorganisational interaction, thus reducing the total amount of vulnerability to be suspended and rendering boundary spanners more willing to suspend vulnerability. However, in theory, this also means that the ratio between trustee-dependent / trustee-independent vulnerability would also decrease, theoretically weakening the interdimensional relationship between perceived counterpart trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability (supra chapter 7). Our evidence thus suggests that power equality positively affects boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions, but the theoretical conclusions of the previous chapter of this dissertation suggest that by lowering the trustee-dependent component of perceived vulnerability in the interorganisational interaction, the willingness to suspend vulnerability may become less dependent upon the boundary spanners' perceptions of the trustworthiness of the horizontal department.

Second, we note that the quantitative cell analysis component does not indicate any significant relationship between signalised trust and the willingness to suspend vulnerability, although qualitative evidence in sample 2 and sample 4 interviews indicates that signalled trust inspires 'mirroring' and stimulates 'automatic' reciprocity in the relation, suggesting a direct causal impact of signalled trust on willingness to suspend vulnerability, i.e. without necessarily affecting perceptions of trustworthiness. This description of the norm of reciprocity corresponds closely with Gouldners' (1960) discussion of this seminal concept, although boundary spanners emphasised the effect of signals of trust on perceived trustworthiness to a greater extent in the interviews.

Third, we note that quantitative and qualitative evidence suggest that familiarity, in the form of previous interaction experiences, have a direct effect on the willingness to suspend vulnerability. In the quantitative cell analysis component, expectations on the basis of previous experiences were positively related to

willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 1. The qualitative cell analysis component suggests that previous experiences with the counterpart department, as well as with other stakeholders in the interaction, contextual contingency, macro-level dynamics or external risk factors, produces relational information about the ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent vulnerability in the interorganisational interaction. Thus, in addition to affecting the willingness to suspend vulnerability by positively affecting perceived trustworthiness, familiarity in the form of positive relational experiences may also affect the strength of the causal effect of perceived trustworthiness on the willingness to suspend vulnerability by providing information about the ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent vulnerability in the interorganisational interaction.

> 8.4.4.3.   *Meso-level relational interaction aspects and risk-taking behaviour*

According to the logic of the interorganisational trust process**,** risk-taking behaviour is positively affected by boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability, and thus indirectly by the relational aspects discussed in the previous paragraphs. While our analytical framework also allows direct impacts of meso-level relational aspects on risk-taking behaviour, very little evidence supports the existence of any direct causal impact of the investigated meso-level relational interaction aspects upon risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. Indeed, when boundary spanners argued that meso-level interaction aspects impacted risk-taking behaviour, their causal argumentation referred to indirect mechanisms between meso-level relational interaction aspects and risk-taking behaviour, which were driven by the effect of meso-level relational interaction aspects on the dimensions of perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability.

In anecdotal evidence from one single sample 4 interview, a boundary spanner argued that familiarity in the form of expectations based on previous experiences did affect their risk-taking behaviour directly. The boundary spanner argued that their own experience-based expectations had become part of the institutional myths and rumours in their organisation, on the basis of which other organisational decision-makers were argued to amplify the boundary spanners' attitudes during collective decisions about organisational risk-taking behaviour. The boundary spanner thus argued that their personal previous experiences had affected other decision makers' subjective trust evaluations as well, and thus had an impact on organisational behaviour beyond their personal participation in collective decision-making about organisational risk-taking behaviour. However, considering that this evidence was not corroborated by other interviews or by any quantitative data, we consider it to be anecdotal rather than substantive evidence for a direct impact of meso-level relational aspects on risk-taking behaviour.

> 8.4.5.   *General control variables in the quantitative cell analysis component*

In this paragraph, we briefly discuss the general control variables in the quantitative cell analysis component. As introduced earlier, we modelled the relevant trust process dimension as the dependent variable in each cell, and modelled the relevant interaction aspects as the independent variables in each cell, together with the control variables age, sex, education, seniority (measured as years of employment in the Flemish administration), managerial responsibilities (measured as the respondents' level in the

organisation), formal organisational autonomy (measured as organisational type) and micro-level predispositions to trust others. All OLS models can be consulted in the annex to this dissertation. Analogously to the previous paragraphs, we will discuss these control variables in descending order of their importance for the interorganisational trust process.

First, the most important control variable were boundary spanners' micro-level predispositions to trust others. The measure for these predispositions to trust others was a significant and positive determinant for trust process dimensions in 19/24 estimated OLS models. Micro-level predispositions to trust others were found to be positively related to all dimensions of the trust process in at least one of the samples for all estimated interaction aspect models. Compared to the other control variables, the evidence for a positive relationship between micro-level predispositions to trust and the interorganisational trust is thus relatively consistent.

Second, seniority in the Flemish administration, measured as the number of years a respondent is employed in the Flemish administration, was a significant and positive determinant for 3/24 estimated OLS models. More specifically, seniority was a positively significant control variable in the meso-level relational model of perceived trustworthiness in sample 3, in the meso-level relational model of the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 3, and in the meso-level relational model of risk-taking behaviour in sample 1.

Third, respondents' age and the formal autonomy of the respondents' organisations were found to be significant control variables in 2/24 estimated models. Respondent age was negatively significant in the macro-level informal aspect model for perceived trustworthiness in sample 1 and in the meso-level relational interaction aspect model for perceived trustworthiness in sample 1. The formal autonomy of the respondents' organisation was positively significant in the meso-level relational model of willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 3 and for the meso-level relational model of willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 3.

Finally, the control variables managerial responsibilities, respondent sex and respondent education were not significantly related to the trust process dimensions for any of the estimated OLS models in samples 1 and 3.

> 8.4.6. *Discussion: mechanisms of the interorganisational trust process*
Table 54 provides a comprehensive consolidation of the extent to which the quantitative and qualitative components of the cell analyses support the hypothesised relationships between the interaction-specific aspects and the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in each cell of the analytical framework. Table 55 briefly summarises the causal mechanisms behind these empirical relationships in each cell of the analytical framework. In this paragraph, we discuss this summary of the mechanisms relating interaction-specific characteristics to the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process.

Table 54: Consolidation - percentage of evidence in support of hypothesised relations between interaction aspects and interorganisational trust

		Macro		Meso	
		Formal	Informal	Calculus	Relations
RI of trust vs RI of distrust	Perceived trustworthiness	75%	66% (+1)	50% (!)	75%
	Willingness to suspend vulnerability	62%	50% (+1)	75%	35%
	Risk-taking behaviour	62%	58%	33%	15%

Percentages show proportion of evidence in samples 1, 2, 3 and 4 in support of hypotheses postulated in proposition E.
(+1) symbol indicates presence of aspect in qualitative interviews which was not part of quantitative survey design.
(!) symbol indicates presence of counter-hypothesised or contradictory findings.

First, macro-level formal aspects affect all three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process by mechanisms rooted in both the institutional logic of consequences and the institutional logic of appropriateness. First, the impact of macro-level formal interaction aspects on perceived trustworthiness was supported by 75 per cent of our evidence. Macro-level formal frameworks with trust-supporting substantive and operational institutional characteristics directly support perceived trustworthiness by acting as reference points for the trustee's integrity, compliance and ability to make credible commitments, and allow mutual benevolence in interorganisational interactions by establishing a clear but broad cooperative arena between trustor and trustee. Second, the impact of macro-level formal interaction aspects on the willingness to suspend vulnerability was supported by 62 per cent of our evidence. Macro-level formal frameworks with trust-supporting substantive and operational institutional characteristics indirectly affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability through the dimension of perceived trustworthiness, but also affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability directly by creating a level playing field, which lowers the trustors' vulnerability to stakeholders in the wider context of interactions with the trustee. Third, the impact of macro-level formal interaction aspects on risk-taking behaviour was also supported by 62 per cent of our evidence. Macro-level formal frameworks with trust-supporting substantive and operational institutional characteristics indirectly affect risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions through boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability, but they also affect risk-taking behaviour directly, which is explained through a logic of appropriateness. In trusted interactions, latent permissive and/or prohibitive formal frameworks support risk-taking behaviour by minimising formal obstructions to boundary spanners' decision discretion to engage in risk-taking behaviour and/or clearly defining the maximal boundaries of risk-taking behaviour. In distrusted interactions, explicit coercive formal frameworks may oblige risk-taking behaviour and thus break the vicious cycle of interorganisational distrust.

Second, macro-level informal interaction aspects which support a 'culture of trustfulness' were argued to directly and indirectly affect all three dimensions of the universal trust process through mechanisms that are mainly explained by the institutional logic of appropriateness, with the logic of consequences playing a smaller, but nonetheless noteworthy role. First, at least 66 per cent of our evidence suggests that macro-level informal interaction aspects affect the dimension of perceived trustworthiness in interorganisational interactions. Macro-level informal routines of interorganisational cooperation and salient norms of interorganisational trust expressed by administrative leaders were argued to positively affect perceived

Table 55: Consolidation - summarising mechanisms of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration

	Formal	Informal	Calculus	Relations
Perceived trustworthiness	**Direct:** logic of consequences: - Formal frameworks act as reference point for expectations of integrity, compliance, and ability. - Formal frameworks also establish arena for cooperation with clear constraints, as such shaping conditions for flexibility (benevolence).	**Direct:** logic of consequences/appropriateness - Informal routines and salient norms of administrative leaders socialise expectations due to mimetic and normative isomorphism - Culture of administrative community fill 'gaps' in knowledge about the counterpart, on the basis of which assumptions about trustworthiness are made.	**Direct:** - Suspicions about opportunistic motivations affects perceived benevolence and integrity. Information about counterpart gathered through rumours in absence of reliable information sources particularly argued to feed such suspicions - Unclear how asset specificity relates to perceived trustworthiness – further research warranted.	**Direct:** - Value identification affects perceived integrity. - Signals of trust affect perceived benevolence of counterpart (particularly in distrusted interactions). - Power equality affects perceived benevolence. - Quality of personal relationships affects perceived benevolence (if counterpart has ability to make credible commitments)
Willingness to suspend vulnerability	**Indirect:** interdimensional dynamic (moderated by ratio trustee-dependent / trustee-independent vulnerability) **Direct:** logic of consequences - Latent presence of formal framework levels playing field, thus constraining vulnerability to third parties, providing good reason to suspend vulnerability.	**Indirect:** interdimensional dynamic (moderated by ratio trustee -dependent / trustee -independent vulnerability) **Direct:** logic of consequences/appropriateness - Informal routines introduce predictability and thus extenuate vulnerability - Informal routines and culture of administrative community socialise willingness to suspend vulnerability due to mimetic and normative isomorphism	**Indirect:** interdimensional dynamic (moderated by ratio trustee -dependent / trustee -independent vulnerability) **Direct:** - Perceived risks affect vulnerability, and thus willingness to suspend it. - Asset specificity considered as a cost, which negatively affects willingness to suspend vulnerability	**Indirect:** Interdimensional dynamic (moderated by ratio trustee -dependent / trustee -independent vulnerability) **Direct:** - Power equality reduces trustee - dependent vulnerability, positively affecting willingness but (theoretically) weakening interdimensional relation between perceived trustworthiness and willingness. - Signals of trust stimulate norm of reciprocity and 'automatically' evoke willingness to suspend vulnerability
Risk-taking behaviour	**Indirect:** interdimensional dynamic (moderated by decision discretion) **Direct:** logic of appropriateness - Formal frameworks provide latent institutional permission or prohibition of risk-taking behaviour in trusted interaction - Formal frameworks actively coerce risk-taking behaviour in distrusted interaction.	**Indirect:** interdimensional dynamic (moderated by decision discretion) **Direct:** logic of appropriateness - Informal routines create reluctance to challenge status quo and existing professional norms due to mimetic and normative isomorphism - Administrative leaders' salient norms socialise behaviour due to normative isomorphism, coercion by administrative leaders argued hypothetically possible but empirically absent.	**Indirect:** interdimensional dynamic (moderated by discretion)	**Indirect:** interdimensional dynamic (moderated by discretion)

trustworthiness due to mimetic and normative isomorphism. Additionally, the informal macro-level interaction aspect of an informal 'culture of administrative community' was also argued to positively affect perceived trustworthiness, through a mechanism which combines the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences, as the presence of a culture of 'administrative community' enabled boundary spanners to 'bridge unfamiliarity' and make assumptions about the horizontal counterparts' trustworthiness on the basis of 'cultural templates'. Second, at least 50 per cent of our evidence suggests an effect of macro-level informal interaction aspects on boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions. Macro-level informal interaction aspects indirectly affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability through the dimension of perceived trustworthiness, but informal routines and the 'culture of administrative community' were also argued to have a direct effect on the willingness to suspend vulnerability. Informal routines were argued to affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability due to mimetic isomorphism (logic of appropriateness) and because they introduce stability in the interaction and thus extenuate vulnerability, rendering boundary spanners more willing to suspend vulnerability (logic of consequences). Furthermore, the informal 'institutional culture of administrative community' was argued to affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability directly, as boundary spanners associated such a culture with a 'moral duty' to assume an attitude of openness and transparency toward the horizontal departments in this 'administrative community' (logic of appropriateness). Third, 58 per cent of our evidence suggests that macro-level informal interaction aspects affect risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions. The macro-level informal aspects indirectly affect boundary spanners' decisions about risk-taking behaviour through the prior dimension of willingness to suspend vulnerability, but informal routines and salient norms of administrative leaders were also argued to affect risk-taking behaviour directly. Informal routines may maintain risk-taking behaviour despite low willingness to suspend vulnerability due to mimetic and normative isomorphism (logic of appropriateness). Finally, administrative leaders' salient norms were argued to affect risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions due to normative isomorphism (logic of appropriateness), although the mechanism was described as a latent enabler rather than an active determinant. Again, the logic of appropriateness thus emerges as the most important explanation for this informal macro-level mechanism.

Third, our evidence strongly suggests that meso-level calculative aspects have direct effects on boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability, some evidence also suggests that meso-level calculative aspects have direct effects on perceived trustworthiness, but the findings suggest that meso-level calculative aspects only affect risk-taking behaviour in the interorganisational interactions through indirect mechanisms. First, 50 percent of our evidence suggests that meso-level calculative interaction aspects affect perceived trustworthiness in interorganisational interactions. Information and suspicions about horizontal departments' opportunistic interests were argued to affect the perceived integrity and benevolence of the trustee. In RI of distrust, much of this information was argued to stem from rumours, particularly when other sources of credible information about the counterpart were considered absent due to (temporary) institutional ambiguity. Our empirical evidence is contradictory regarding the relationship

between asset specificity and perceived trustworthiness. Second, 75 per cent of our findings suggest that meso-level calculative interaction aspects affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. The willingness to suspend vulnerability is indirectly affected by calculative interaction aspects which affect the dimension of perceived trustworthiness, but is also directly affected by meso-level calculative interaction aspects. Boundary spanners' perceptions of the risk involved in an interaction affect the extent of vulnerability they must suspend, and were thus argued to negatively affect the willingness to do so. A higher asset specificity was argued to increase the costs of interorganisational interaction and reduce boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability toward the trustee, although boundary spanners in trusted interactions seemed to consider that long-term benefits of cooperation outweighed short-term costs of information exchange. Interestingly, when we consider the extent to which boundary spanners considered the costs and benefits of interorganisational interactions in their trust evaluations, boundary spanners appeared more willing to suspend vulnerability when such consideration are more implicit, automatic and internalised, and less willing when such considerations are explicit and specific, although the causality behind this relationship cannot be clarified on the basis of the current evidence. Finally, 33 per cent of our evidence supports the hypothesis that meso-level calculative interaction aspects affect risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions. Calculative interaction aspects were mainly argued to affect risk-taking behaviour indirectly, and through their influence on other decision-makers with whom the boundary spanner shares decision discretion in the interorganisational interaction.

Fourth, meso-level relational aspects were argued to mainly affect the interorganisational trust process through the dimension of perceived trustworthiness. Evidence for a direct influence of meso-level relational aspects on the willingness to suspend vulnerability was limited, and risk-taking behaviour was argued to only be affected by meso-level relational aspects through indirect mechanisms. First, 75 per cent of our evidence supports the hypothesis that meso-level relational interactions aspects affect perceived trustworthiness in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. Value identification was argued to be a strong determinant of perceived integrity, and was argued to require both the macro-level presence of shared values as well as positive previous experiences with the operationalisation of those values in interorganisational interactions with the trustee. Relational reciprocity was also considered to be an important determinant of perceived trustworthiness, as signals of trust were argued to affect perceptions of the trustee's benevolence in interorganisational interactions. The empowerment of power equality in the interorganisational interaction in the form of allowing and using (constructive) feedback on interorganisational interactions was also argued to support the perceived benevolence of the trustee. Furthermore, good interpersonal relationships between boundary spanners were argued to affect perceived benevolence of the trustee organisation, under the condition that the counterpart boundary spanner is considered to have the ability to make 'credible commitments' on behalf of the organisation they represent. We controlled the meso-level relational interaction aspects for the extent of familiarity in the interaction, which indicates that relational familiarity in itself positively affects perceptions of the horizontal departments' trustworthiness, because accumulated relational information

adds to the predictability of the counterpart in the interorganisational interaction under conditions of institutional stability (macro), and because relational familiarity is a precondition for other meso-level calculative and relational interaction aspects to develop. Second, 35 per cent of our evidence suggested that relational interaction aspects affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions. The effect of meso-level relational interaction aspects on the willingness to suspend vulnerability was mainly argued to work through indirect mechanisms, affecting the willingness to suspend vulnerability through the dimension of perceived trustworthiness, although power equality was argued to directly and positively affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability by decreasing trustee-dependent vulnerability in interorganisational information exchange. However, in theory, this also means that power equality renders the willingness to suspend vulnerability less dependent on perceived trustworthiness. Furthermore, qualitative findings suggest that signals of trust sent by the counterpart stimulate 'automatic' reciprocation, and thus directly affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability through Gouldners' (1960) norm of reciprocity. The control aspect of relational familiarity, in the sense of previous interaction experiences, was also argued to affect the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability, as previous experiences inform boundary spanners' perceptions about the ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent vulnerability in the interorganisational interaction. Third, only 15 per cent of the evidence suggested a relationship between meso-level relational interaction aspects and risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. Our evidence suggests that relational interaction aspects indirectly affect risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions through the dimension of willingness to suspend vulnerability. Little to no evidence was found to suggest any additional direct effects of meso-level relational interaction aspects on risk-taking behaviour.

Finally we note that, compared to the other control variables, micro-level predispositions to trust others were particularly significant in a large majority of the quantitative cell analyses. Micro-level predispositions to trust others were found to affect every dimension of the interorganisational trust process in at least one sample of every interaction aspect model. This finding suggests that micro-level predispositions to trust others also affect interorganisational trust evaluations, which is in line with extant research, and confirms that it is important to take aspects of the individual boundary spanners' personality into account in research and management of interorganisational trust in public administration.

Table 56 summarises proposition E, the hypotheses associated with this proposition, and summarises the findings presented in this section. This overview shows clearly that the hypotheses we derived from proposition E were overly simplistic, and empirical reality is significantly more complicated. Although various hypothesised relationships are observed empirically, our findings do not suggest that macro-level formal and informal and meso-level calculative and relational interaction aspects have uniform effects on all three dimensions of the trust process, as we had hypothesised. Rather, we find that some interaction aspects affect some dimensions of the trust process directly, while other aspects only have an indirect effect on some dimensions, due to the interdimensional dynamics of the trust process. Rather than a clear-

Table 56: Asserting theoretical proposition E

Formulated propositions	Derived hypotheses	Empirical observations
Proposition E: Trust reasons on the macro and meso level of interorganisational interactions are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in both trusted and distrusted interactions	**HE1:** Formal institutional frameworks which are clear about mutual rights, functions and obligations, and informal institutional frameworks which create a 'culture of trustfulness', are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions and general control variables are kept constant	**HE1:** Largely supported, no rejection: evidence strongly supports direct positive causal relations between macro-level formal and informal aspects and all dimensions of trust process **Quantitative evidence:** support for hypothesised relationship was found for formal rules and perceived trustworthiness in sample 1 and for formal rules and all dimensions in sample 3. For informal institutions, support for hypothesised relationship was found between different informal aspects and all dimensions in sample 1 and between different informal aspects and all dimensions in sample 3. **Qualitative evidence:** For formal institutions, support for hypothesised relationship found for all dimensions in sample 2 and sample 4. Evidence suggests causal relations are explained by logic of consequences in dimensions of perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability, but by logic of appropriateness in dimension of risk-taking behaviour. For informal institutions, support for hypothesised relationship between different informal aspects and all dimensions in sample 2 and sample 4. Evidence suggests causal relations are mainly explained by logic of appropriateness.
	HE2: Perceived risks, interaction costs (asset specificity), and perceived counterpart opportunistic motivations are negatively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions, general control variables, organisational and personal utility preferences are kept constant.	**HE2:** Partly supported, partly rejected: evidence strongly suggests meso-level calculative aspects directly affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability, and some partly contradictory evidence that meso-level calculative aspects directly affect perceived trustworthiness, but weak evidence for a direct causal effect of meso-level calculative aspects on risk-taking behaviour. **Quantitative evidence:** Findings regarding asset specifity and perceived trustworthiness contradict hypothesis. Support for hypothesised relationship in sample 1 found between some calculative aspects and all dimensions. Support for hypothesised relationship found between some calculative aspects and all dimensions in sample 3. **Qualitative evidence:** No findings in contradiction to hypothesis. Support for hypothesised relationship in sample 2 found between some calculative aspects and perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability. Support for hypothesised relationship in sample 4 found between some calculative aspects and perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability. Findings also suggest calculative considerations are implicit in sample 2 but explicit in sample 4.
	HE3: Reciprocal trust, value identification, good interpersonal relationship and an equal power distribution are positively related to perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, when micro-level predispositions, general control variables and relational familiarity are kept constant.	**HE3:** Partly supported, no rejection: evidence strongly suggests meso-level relational aspects affect perceived trustworthiness directly. Weak evidence in support of direct effect of meso-level relational aspects on willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour. **Quantitative evidence:** no findings in contradiction to hypothesis. Hypothesised relationships found between some relational aspects and all dimensions in sample 1. Hypothesised relationships found between some relational aspects and all dimensions in sample 3. **Qualitative evidence:** No findings in contradiction to hypothesis. Support for hypothesised relationship in sample 2 mainly found between different aspects and dimensions of perceived trustworthiness. Support for hypothesised relationship in sample 4 mainly found for dimension of perceived trustworthiness.

cut image of uniform mechanisms in different dimensions in trusted and distrusted interactions, the findings reveal a highly complex picture of interconnected macro-, meso-, and micro-level interaction aspects, which affect different dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in direct and indirect ways. While our findings thus provide some partial support for the hypotheses, it is obvious that a more detailed theoretical framework can be developed on the basis of these findings, with the potential to bring forward research and management of interorganisational trust in public administration.

> 8.5. **Chapter conclusion: explaining administrational trust in the Flemish administration**

In this chapter we have combined quantitative and qualitative data to explain how the interorganisational trust process is embedded in and affected by macro- and meso- level aspects of interorganisational interactions. Based on these analyses, we argue that differences in boundary spanners' perceptions of macro- and meso-level interaction aspects explain why some interactions with horizontal departments are trusted while other are distrusted. Our core findings are that 1) interaction aspects were argued to have direct impacts on dimensions of the trust process, 2) Interaction aspects were also argued to have indirect impacts on dimensions of the trust process, 3) both the presence and the form of macro- and meso-level aspects of interorganisational interactions are important to understand their impact on the interorganisational trust process, and 4) interaction aspects may be analytically separated, but are empirically interrelated. Table 57 summarises our core findings concisely.

Table 57: Summary of chapter 8 findings regarding propositions D and E

Aspect level	Interaction aspect	Group comparison (proposition D)	Relation between interaction aspect and interorganisational trust process dimension (proposition E)
Macro-level aspects	1. Formal rule framework 2. Formal role framework	T= DT(!) T= DT(!)	**Direct effect on all dimensions**. Trustworthiness and willingness affected by LOC, behaviour by LOA.
	3. Informal routine framework 4. Admin. leader confirmatory norms 5. Pol. principal confirmatory norms	T> DT T> DT T> DT	**Direct effect on all dimensions**. LOA and LOC both affect trustworthiness, willingness and behaviour. 'Administrative community' additionally important.
Meso-level calculative aspects	6. No information of opp. motivations 7. Asset specificity (-) 8. Risk nature (-) 9(c). Personal cost-benefit analysis 10(c). Org. cost-benefit analysis	T> DT T= DT DT>T T= DT T= DT (!)	**Direct effect mainly on trustworthiness and willingness**. Knowledge of opportunistic motivations and perceived risk appears particularly important. Relationship between asset specificity and perceived trustworthiness is unclear.
Meso-level relational aspects	11. Signalled trust	T> DT	**Direct effect mainly on trustworthiness** due to impact on perceived benevolence and integrity**.** Value identification, power equality, signals of trust and quality of personal relationships appear particularly important.
	12. Value identification	T> DT	
	13. Good personal relationship	T= DT	
	14. Signalled distrust (-)	DT>T	
	15. Power equality	T> DT	
	16(c). Experience-based expectations	T= DT (!)	
	17(c). Interaction age	T= DT	
	18(c). Interaction frequency	T>DT	

(!) Qualitative data indicates differences between trusted and distrusted interactions regarding form rather than presence of interaction aspects

Our first core finding is that macro- and meso- level interaction aspects have direct impacts on the various dimensions of the interorganisational trust process. However, there is no simple theory to explain these direct impacts, as different interaction aspects directly affect different dimensions of the trust process through different mechanisms. In order to find solutions for the management of interorganisational trust in a particular interorganisational interaction context, it is thus essential to understand the dimension-specific impacts of the specific macro- and meso-level aspects in that particular interaction. Our analysis

indicated that perceived trustworthiness is strongly affected by macro-level and meso-level relational interaction aspects, and by calculative aspects to lesser extent. The willingness to suspend vulnerability is driven by 'good reasons' to take a 'leap of faith', and our findings indicate that macro-level and meso-level calculative interaction aspects are relatively successful in providing such good reasons, while relational aspects were found to have a limited direct impact on this dimension. Finally, the risk-taking behaviour dimension of the trust process was found to be directly affected by macro-level formal and informal interaction aspects, which constitute a framework of appropriateness for risk-taking behaviour through mechanisms of coercive, normative and mimetic isomorphism. The managerial implication of this finding is that management of interorganisational trust should start from an analysis of trust process dimensions in interorganisational interactions, followed by intervention aimed at shaping the interorganisational interaction aspects with the strongest effect on any problematic trust process dimensions.

Our second core finding is that interaction aspects also have indirect impacts on the dimensions of the trust process, due to the internal causal logic of the trust process. As perceived trustworthiness is argued to affect boundary spanner's willingness to suspend vulnerability, and the willingness to suspend vulnerability is argued to affect risk-taking behaviour, interaction aspects that affect prior dimensions of the trust process will indirectly also affect the subsequent dimensions of the trust process. The managerial implication of this finding is that while relational and calculative interorganisational interaction aspects may not affect risk-taking behaviour directly, they can have indirect effects on risk-taking behaviour under the condition that the internal dynamics of the trust process are strong. An important area for further inquiry is therefore whether and how macro- and meso-level interaction aspects affect the internal causal logic of the trust process. For instance, managerial interventions that strengthen the behavioural decision mandate of boundary spanners may be hypothesised to strengthen the causal link between willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions. Likewise, managerial interventions that increase the trustee-dependent component of the trustors' vulnerability may be hypothesised to strengthen the causal relation between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability. Further empirical research is required to test such hypotheses.

Our third core finding is that both the presence and the form of macro- and meso-level interaction aspects are important to understand their impact on the interorganisational trust process. On the one hand, the extent to which certain aspects were present in interorganisational interactions was argued to affect the trust process. Boundary spanners argued that the presence of clear informal routines, salient trusting normative frameworks of administrative leaders, an informal institutional sense of belonging to one single 'administrative community', value identification, expressed trust by the horizontal department, power equality, familiarity, knowledge about horizontal departments' opportunistic motivations, perceived risk and expressed distrust by the horizontal department affected the trust process due to their mere presence. On the other hand, the form of some interaction aspects, rather than their presence in interorganisational interactions, was considered to affect the trust process. The substantive and operational characteristics of macro-level formal frameworks were argued to affect interorganisational

trust, rather than the mere presence of clear macro-level formal frameworks. Cost-benefit considerations were equally present in trusted and distrusted interactions, but they were argued to be implicit and automatic in the former, and explicit and interaction-specific in the latter. Expectations based on previous interaction experiences were equally present in trusted and distrusted interactions, but their effect on the trust process was in part argued to depend on the positive or negative nature of those experiences. The implication of this finding is that management of interorganisational trust should not only focus on introducing more institutional, calculative and relational 'reasons' in the aspects of interorganisational interactions, but also consider how the boundary spanners perceive and experience those aspects in their interorganisational interactions.

Finally, our fourth core finding is that macro- and meso-level interaction aspects may be analytically separated, but are empirically interrelated. On the one hand, macro-level interaction aspects shape meso-level interaction aspects. For instance, formal macro-level frameworks were argued to affect the calculative characteristics by levelling and delineating the playing field of interorganisational interactions, and by providing reliable information about possible costs, risks and benefits of interorganisational trust. The informal macro-level aspect of an institutional culture promoting an 'administrative community' was argued to affect meso-level calculative interaction aspects by introducing a government-wide win-win consideration to boundary spanners' calculative considerations, and was also argued to affect meso-level relational aspects by empowering value identification in interorganisational interactions. On the other hand however, anecdotal evidence suggested that meso-level interaction aspects shape the macro-level institutional framework over time as well by becoming part of the organisational myths, interorganisational routines, and formal rules that encompass interorganisational interactions. In terms of Giddens' (1990) argument of 'the duality of structure', macro- and meso-level interaction aspects produce and reproduce each other through the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of the individual boundary spanners in a continuous process of structuration. The implication is that understanding and managing interorganisational trust necessitates studying and managing both social structures (macro-level formal and informal institutions) and the interaction between trustor and trustee within such structures (meso-level calculative and relational considerations) in a theoretical framework which allows for long-term interaction between these aspects.

Figure 27 combines our conclusions about the interaction-specific reasons for the trust process with our conclusions about the internal dynamics of the trust process we have presented at the end of chapter 7. It thus summarises our findings about the mechanisms of interorganisational trust in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, and illustrates the contribution of this chapter to interorganisational trust research: perceived trustworthiness is directly affected by macro-level formal and informal interaction aspects and meso-level calculative and relational interaction aspects. The willingness to suspend vulnerability is directly affected by macro-level formal and informal interaction aspects and meso-level calculative interaction aspects, but meso-level relational interaction aspects have only weak direct effects on this dimension of the interorganisational trust process. Finally, risk-taking

behaviour is directly affected by macro-level formal and informal interaction aspects, while meso-level calculative and relational interaction aspects only affect this dimension of the trust process via indirect mechanisms.

Figure 27: Revised model of the mechanisms of administrational trust
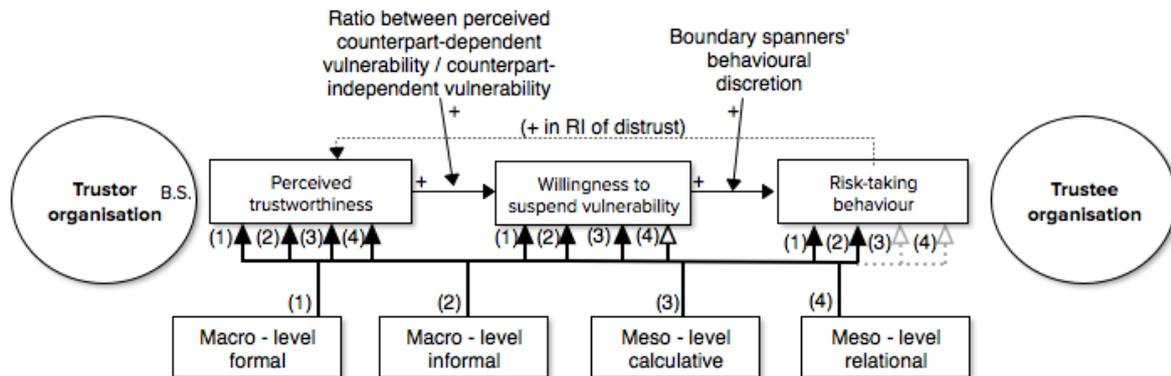
Full arrows 1, 2, 3, 4 indicate over 50% evidence with qualitative support for direct causal relationship; hollow arrows 1, 2, 3, 4 indicate under 50% evidence with qualitative support for direct causal relationship; dotted lines 1, 2, 3, 4 indicate lack of qualitative support for direct causal relationship.

This chapter provided an extensive analysis of the relations between macro- and meso- level interaction aspects and the interorganisational trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration on the basis of quantitative and qualitative data, thus answering the third and final research question of this dissertation. Having answered this question, we now move to the final section of this dissertation, in which we consolidate the findings, discuss the implications of our study for the management of administrational trust in the Flemish administration, take a look back on the research, and formulate proposals for future research on interorganisational trust in and beyond public administration.

SECTION D:

LAND AHOI: TAKING STOCK OF OUR VOYAGE

Begin thus from the first act,

and proceed;

and,

in conclusion,

at the ill which thou hast done,

be troubled,

and rejoice for the good.

Pythagoras

THIS FOURTH AND FINAL SECTION takes stock of the research conducted in the previous chapters and sheds a critical light on its results. In this section, we look back upon the work conducted and summarise the findings of our research about administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration.

Table 58: Objectives and results of section D

Chapter	Section objective:	Section result:
9	Summarise research findings and present conclusions and recommendations for (Flemish) public administration	• Concise presentation of answers to research questions • Development of management model for interorganisational trust • Application of developed management model to interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration
10	Look back on the research conducted, and look forward towards new iterations of research on interorganisational trust in the public sector	• Reflections and suggestions for methodological refinement concerning philosophical approach, identification and sampling of boundary spanners, and future research agenda

Chapter 9 summarises our contributions to the agenda of re-establishing interorganisational trust in the public sector, as we aimed to define and identify interorganisational trust in the empirical reality of public administration, to explain the mechanisms of interorganisational trust in the empirical reality of public administration, and develop instruments and strategies to optimise interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration where such is possible and functional. The latter objective in particular will be addressed in this chapter, where we develop a general management model for interorganisational trust and apply this model to interorganisational interactions with Flemish horizontal departments to suggest a limited number of concrete recommendations.

In Chapter 10, we will look back on the research conducted, discuss its limitations, and attempt to formulate lessons for future research questions, hypotheses and methods, in order to contribute to the further development of the agenda of investigating and building internal trust within the public sector. As such, we take stock of our voyage over the empirical sea that is interorganisational trust research, as we reach shore and draw lessons that may inform the preparation of future ventures, whether they be conducted by ourselves or by others.

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9. Managing administrational trust: discussion, consolidation and recommendations

> 9.1.   **Overview of the research: motivation, questions and methodology in a nutshell**

In our introductory chapter, we have referred to Bouckaert's contention that "(*t*)*he hyper-development of a performance-based control system puts pressure on the trust-based model for managing internal relations. Re-establishing T3 emerges as a new agenda for reform and improvement*" (Bouckaert, 2012: 109). Over the course of the previous chapters, we have aimed to make a first stab at this agenda. The goals of our research were threefold, aimed at defining and identifying interorganisational trust in the empirical reality of public administration, explaining the mechanisms of interorganisational trust in the empirical reality of public administration, and contributing to the development of instruments and strategies to optimise interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration where possible and functional. While the first two objectives were achieved in the previous chapters, the last objective remains to be completed, and will be addressed in this semi-final chapter.

We start this chapter with a discussion of our findings regarding the three research questions. Second, we develop a management model with general recommendations for the management of interorganisational trust in public administration. Finally, we formulate specific recommendations for the Flemish administration on the basis of this management model.

> 9.2.   **Discussion of findings: role, distribution and mechanisms of administrational trust**

The research objectives described above were operationalised in three research questions, which aimed at uncovering the role (chapter 3), distribution (chapter 6), and mechanisms (chapters 7 and 8) of interorganisational trust in public administration. We defined interorganisational trust in public administration (administrational trust), as "*a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions in public administration characterised by risk, dependency and uncertainty, comprising the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability, on the basis of positive expectations held about the counterpart organisation*". We argued that our research objectives could only be attained in a design with the descriptive broadness and generalisability of large-N approaches and the depth of qualitative explanations in small-N approaches. We therefore used a four-phase 'funnel' mixed-method research design, in which qualitative and quantitative exploratory, descriptive and explanatory methods were logically sequenced and integrated, with findings of preceding research phases determining the methodological choices in subsequent phases. Table 59 provides an overview of our efforts and findings in the preceding chapters. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss these findings in order to answer the research questions, and discuss the implications of our research within and beyond the Flemish administration.

Chapter	Chapter objective	Chapter results
1	Define objectives (a) and research questions (b) of this study	a) Objectives: • Define and identify interorganisational trust in public administration • Describe ánd explain interorganisational trust in public administration • Contribute to strategies for optimisation of interorganisational trust in public administration b) Research questions: • What is the role of interorganisational trust in a public administration context? (Exploratory) • What is the distribution of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration? (Descriptive) • Which mechanisms explain interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration? (Explanatory)
2	Conceptualise interorganisational trust in line with the objectives of this study	• Definition of 'administrational trust': "*a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions in public administration characterised by risk, dependency and uncertainty, comprising the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability, on the basis of positive expectations held about the counterpart organisation.*" • Development of conceptual frameworks for the three research questions
3	Explore the role of interorganisational trust in a public administration context (a), and explore research questions two and three (b)	a) Four core findings: • Functional trust: "Trust as rule": potential but unpredictable gains and cost-efficient cooperation • Dysfunctional trust: "Trust as dogma": unpredictable potential costs and gains • Functional distrust: "Distrust as reasonable exception": predictable (but high) transaction costs and predictable (but low) gains • Dysfunctional distrust: "Distrust as rule": foregone opportunities and associated high opportunity costs b) Explored research questions two and three to provide input for theoretical and methodological framework
4	Build theoretical framework for research questions two and three	Developed propositions and associated hypotheses for research questions two and three: • Proposition A - Opposite distribution of administrational trust and distrust • Proposition B - Dimensional variation between trusted / distrusted interactions • Proposition C - Interdimensional equivalence between trusted / distrusted interactions • Proposition D - Interaction aspect variation between trusted / distrusted interactions • Proposition E - Mechanism equivalence between trusted / distrusted interactions
5	Build methodological framework for research questions two and three	Developed four-phase nested mixed-method research design, progressively narrowing span while increasing depth of research: • Phase 1: Conceptual phase: literature review • Phase 2: Exploratory phase: exploratory survey + exploratory interviews • Phase 3: Quantitative phase: boundary spanner survey • Phase 4: Qualitative phase: Reference Interaction interviews
6	Describe the distribution of trusted and distrusted interactions in the Flemish administration	Three core findings: • Boundary spanners in the Flemish administration have 'rather much trust' and 'rather little distrust' in the Flemish horizontal departments. • Collective attitudes about administrational trust and distrust are characterised by polarisation and do not provide a clear 'black-and-white' picture of trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments. • Individual attitudes about administrational trust and distrust are not perfectly negatively related and characterised by a limited extent of ambivalence in trust/distrust attitudes regarding horizontal departments.
7	Compare dimensions of the trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions in the Flemish administration	Two core findings: • Significantly more perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability, and (reported) risk-taking behaviour in trusted than in distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. • Internal trust process dynamics are similar in trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, with exception of a feedback loop, which was only empirically identified distrusted interactions. Perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability are positively related, but moderated by trustee-dependent / trustee-independent vulnerability ratio. Willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour are positively related, but moderated by the extent of boundary spanners' behavioural discretion.
8	Explain relationships between interaction aspects and trust process dimensions in trusted and distrusted interactions in the Flemish administration	Three core findings: • Various interaction aspects have various direct and indirect impacts on various dimensions of the trust process • Both presence and form of interaction aspects are important to understand their impact on the interorganisational trust process • Interaction aspects may be analytically separated, but are empirically interrelated.

Research question one: the role of administrational trust and distrust

Our first research question had an exploratory nature, and asked 'what is the role of interorganisational trust and distrust in public administration'? While (interorganisational) trust research has mainly focused on the positive role of trust in interorganisational relations on the one hand and on the negative role of interorganisational distrust on the other hand, some authors have argued that interorganisational distrust can also be functional, while interorganisational trust can also be dysfunctional. We therefore conceptualised four distinct perspectives (functional trust, dysfunctional trust, functional distrust, and dysfunctional distrust) and invited 10 senior civil servants from both horizontal and vertical departments of the Flemish administration to participate in semi-structured exploratory interviews in order to explore the role of interorganisational trust and distrust in public administration. Our findings were summarised in table 11.

Our general conclusion was that both interorganisational trust and distrust have the potential to be functional (positive consequences for public administration systems) or dysfunctional (negative consequences for public administration systems), depending on how and under which circumstances they exist. First, both interorganisational trust and distrust have the potential to be functional and dysfunctional, meaning that both can have positive and negative consequences in interorganisational interactions. Positive consequences of trust are efficient and effective interorganisational cooperation, open communication and flexibility in interorganisational interactions in public administration systems. Positive consequences of distrust were argued to be the higher predictability of costs, the empowerment of critical thinking and feedback, and the identification of conflicting objectives in interorganisational interactions in public administration systems. Negative consequences of trust were argued to be the unpredictable costs in case of trust abuse, the possibility of groupthink and consequent lack of innovation in interorganisational networks and interactions, and comparative disadvantages for trusting actors in high-risk contexts with opportunistic stakeholders. The negative consequences of interorganisational distrust were considered to be the high opportunity- and transaction- costs, the relational deterioration associated with sustained distrust, and structural atomisation and relational withdrawal from interorganisational interaction in public administration. Second, the functionality (positive consequences of trust for the trustor) or dysfunctionality (negative consequences of trust for the trustor) of trust and distrust are dependent on how they are 'used' in interorganisational interactions. Trust was considered to be functional when it is the basic attitude in interorganisational interactions -trust as 'rule'- while distrust was considered to be functional as a reflexive attitude in interorganisational interactions -distrust as a 'reasonable exception'-. On the other hand, trust was considered to be dysfunctional when used as an absolute and uncritical attitude in interorganisational interactions -trust as 'dogma'-, while distrust was considered to be dysfunctional when assumed as a basic attitude in interactions -distrust as 'rule'-. Third, we argue that the functionality or dysfunctionality of interorganisational trust and distrust are dependent on the interorganisational circumstances in which they are 'used'. Trust is considered to be dysfunctional in high-risk environments where opportunistic stakeholder behaviour might be reasonably expected, but it is

considered to be functional in highly contingent environments with complex, unpredictable or transversal policy challenges that necessitate cooperation between well-intending actors. Interorganisational distrust is considered to be dysfunctional in contingent environments which lack proper evidence to reasonably expect negative intentions or risk actualisation, but is considered to be functional when reasonable expectations exist, under conditions of bounded rationality, that other stakeholders (including the counterpart) have ill intentions or opportunistic interests to abuse the trustors' vulnerability. In other words, functional trust requires only the absence of objective reasons to distrust, while functional distrust requires the presence of objective reasons to distrust in the interorganisational interaction or its context.

These conclusions illustrate that research on how to manage interorganisational trust has the potential to be functional for public administration, but also warns us that interorganisational trust should not be used as an 'applause concept' for public sector reform. Absolute and universal value judgements of interorganisational trust (or distrust) are not appropriate in public administration, as various individuals may have different preferences regarding certain functionalities and dysfunctionalities. A preference for distrust emphasises the functionality of predictable costs due to risk avoidance, but accepts that the opportunity- and transaction costs associated with interorganisational distrust are relatively high. A preference for interorganisational trust emphasises functionalities of interorganisational cooperation and unpredictable gains of cooperative initiative, but accepts the possibility of unpredictable costs when vulnerability is abused and actors become blind to failure. Ultimately, preferences for interorganisational trust or distrust in interorganisational interactions are enshrined in the preferences of individuals, which may be influenced by their moral, ideological, or cultural belief systems. This conclusion leads us to consider our own position as trust researchers. According to the philosopher Moore, we make a naturalistic fallacy when we derive moral conclusion from factual premises: an 'ought' cannot be derived from an 'is' (Moore, 1903). Our discussion of what the functionalities and dysfunctionalities of trust and distrust *are,* should not be interpreted as a moral judgement about the extent to which interorganisational trust and distrust *ought* to be present in (the Flemish) public administration. As trust researchers, we therefore identify whether and when interorganisational trust or distrust *have* certain functional and dysfunctional consequences in public administration, but decisions regarding what *ought* to be the distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust in interorganisational interaction involve a moral judgement about public administration reform, which must be made by the politico-administrative decision makers who are mandated to act as autonomous moral faculties regarding public administration reform. While our ambition is to understand interorganisational trust and contribute to its optimisation, it is up to the incumbent moral faculties to decide whether such optimisation is desirable or undesirable in the public administration systems they were mandated to manage and reform, and to use our research to that effect.

> 9.2.2. *Research question two: the distribution of administrational trust and distrust*

The second research question was of a descriptive nature, asking 'what is the distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration'? In order to appropriately describe the distribution of administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration, we considered three

perspectives on the relationship between trust and distrust in interorganisational interactions: the 'trade-off' perspective, the 'quadrant' perspective and the 'truncated quadrant' perspective. The 'trade-off' perspective treats trust and distrust as two ends of one bipolar continuum (Rotter 1967), and has dominated empirical research about trust in public administration, which means that distrust has been analysed and treated as the absence of trust. The 'quadrant' perspective directly challenges the 'trade-off' perspective, as it considers an individuals' trust and distrust in a particular relationship as separate, but linked constructs, and postulates that trust and distrust can have different antecedents, different consequences, relate to different facets of complex relations, and exist in quasi-stationary relational equilibria. According to this perspective, it is thus possible for an individual to experience simultaneous trust and distrust regarding a particular counterpart, and the main proponents of this perspective argue that sustained 'high trust, high distrust' relationships have been seriously understated in (inter-)organisational research. Finally, the third perspective proposes that both the 'trade-off' perspective and the 'quadrant' perspective should be considered as ideal types, as empirical reality falls in the middle, and is thus better described by a 'truncated quadrant' perspective, according to which trust and distrust are characterised by a strong negative relationship although 'high trust, high distrust' and 'low trust, low distrust' configurations also occur in relations, albeit only to a limited extent.

The research conducted in the exploratory phase of our project suggested that 'trust problems' were most prevalent in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments. Quantitative data from our exploratory survey indicated that trust in horizontal departments was lower than trust in other agencies of respondents' policy area, as well as trust in political principals. Qualitative data confirmed this finding, as respondents often referred to relations with horizontal departments when asked to provide examples of 'trust problems' in exploratory interviews. Therefore, our further inquiry into the distribution and mechanisms of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration focused on interorganisational relations with horizontal departments. An online 'boundary spanner survey' was sent to 767 civil servants working in organisational divisions which were likely to engage with horizontal departments. Civil servants were requested to opt-in as respondents if they had relevant interaction experience with any of the three horizontal departments. The data for this research question was collected in module II (n=189) of the boundary spanner survey. In module II, we measured trust and distrust in four 'typical' interactions with each horizontal department (interactions regarding the collection and use of horizontal information, regarding horizontal policy monitoring, regarding horizontal policy preparation and regarding horizontal policy evaluation). Boundary spanners indicated the extent of their trust in each interaction on one Likert scale, and indicated the extent of their distrust on another Likert scale. Module II also requested respondents to select one 'reference interaction' (RI) for strongest trust and one 'reference interaction' (RI) for strongest distrust from among the twelve 'typical' interactions with horizontal departments.

We drew three core conclusions from our analysis of the collected data. First, the large majority of boundary spanners have 'rather much trust' and 'rather little distrust' in the horizontal departments, leading us to conclude that Flemish horizontal departments are predominantly trusted by boundary

spanners in the entities of the Flemish administration. Second, collective attitudes of boundary spanners about administrational trust and distrust in the horizontal departments are polarised and do not provide a clear 'black-and-white' picture of trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments. The evidence did not conclusively suggest that one particular horizontal department is trusted or distrusted to far greater extent than others, and administrational trust and distrust appear to be highly respondent-specific. Some boundary spanners have strong trust in a particular interaction with a horizontal department, while other boundary spanners have strong distrust in the very same interaction. This finding challenges positivist assumptions about the ontological status of administrational trust and distrust and suggests that 'mapping' the distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust using epistemologically 'objectivist' methods is not straightforward, as the inter-subjective nature of trust and distrust necessitates a context-sensitive approach to trust and distrust in particular interorganisational interactions which has regard for boundary spanners' subjective experiences and trust theories. Third, there is a limited extent of ambivalence in individual boundary spanners' trust/distrust evaluations in interactions with horizontal departments. On the one hand, the 'trade-off' perspective proved inadequate to capture this ambivalence in individual boundary spanners' interorganisational trust / distrust evaluations, while on the other hand, the 'quadrant' perspective was also found to be an inadequate empirical model as it over-estimated the prevalence of the 'high trust, high distrust' and 'low trust, low distrust' configurations in individual boundary spanners' interorganisational trust / distrust distributions. Instead, we argue that the 'quadrants' perspective is most appropriately used as a Weberian ideal type model against which empirical reality can be interpreted and measured, in the framework of which our own findings are most supportive of a 'truncated quadrant' perspective, which suggests that individual boundary spanners' trust in a horizontal counterpart is negatively related to distrust in that horizontal counterpart, although 'high trust, high distrust' or 'low trust, low distrust' may occur to a limited extent.

> 9.2.3.   ***Research question three: the mechanisms of administrational trust***

The third, explanatory research question asked 'which mechanisms explain interorganisational trust in the Flemish public administration'? We argued that understanding what drives interorganisational trust requires the analytical deconstruction of these underlying mechanisms. On the one hand, this requires understanding the internal dynamics of the 'universal trust process', comprising measurement of the dimensions of interorganisational trust and investigation of the causal relations between these dimensions. On the other hand, it requires understanding how the characteristics of particular interorganisational interactions affect this trust process. An analytical framework was developed for this endeavour to allow comparison and explanation of the following elements in trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions:

- Internal dynamics of the universal trust process:
    - The dimensions of the trust process (perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability, and risk-taking behaviour) in trusted and distrusted interactions

- o The relations between the dimensions of the trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions
- Interaction-specific reasons for the trust process
    - o The presence of macro- (formal and informal institutions), meso- (calculative and relational) and micro- (the boundary spanners' predispositions to trust others) level interaction aspects in trusted and distrusted interactions
    - o The relations between these interaction aspects and the trust process in trusted and distrusted interactions

In module II of the 'boundary spanner survey' respondents were requested to select one 'Reference Interaction' (RI) for strongest trust, and one 'reference interaction' (RI) for strongest distrust from among twelve 'typical' interactions with horizontal departments. This RI choice in survey module II guided our collection of quantitative and qualitative data for the third research question. In survey module III, respondents answered Likert scale items measuring the internal dynamics and the interaction-specific reasons for the trust process in their selected RI of trust. In survey module IV, the same items were repeated for their selected RI of distrust. Furthermore, 20 respondents were invited for qualitative interviews based on their RI selection in module II of the boundary spanner survey. Ten respondents were interviewed about the most frequently selected RI for interorganisational trust (the collection and use of horizontal information by B), while another other ten respondents were invited for interviews about the most frequently selected RI for interorganisational distrust (the collection and use of horizontal information by A). A card sort method was used to facilitate discussion about the relationship between the internal dynamics of the trust process and the interaction-specific aspects in both RI. Thus, the data for this research question were based on the following four samples, all of which were selected on the basis of module II of the 'boundary spanner survey': a quantitative RI of trust sample (sample 1, data collected in survey module III, n=158), a quantitative RI of distrust sample (sample 3, data collected in survey module IV, n=145), a qualitative 'most frequently selected RI of trust' sample (sample 2, data collected in interviews about trust, n=8), and a qualitative 'most frequently selected RI of distrust' sample (sample 4, data collected in interviews about distrust, n=8).

Our findings about the internal dynamics of the trust process were presented and discussed in chapter 7, while our findings about the interaction-specific reasons for the trust process were presented and discussed in chapter 8.

Regarding the internal dynamics of the trust process (chapter 7), there are three core findings. First, we find, as expected, that there is significantly more perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability, and (reported) risk-taking behaviour in trusted interactions than in distrusted interactions with Flemish horizontal departments. Second, we find that the dimensions of the trust process are positively related to each other in both trusted and distrusted interactions with Flemish horizontal departments, although the hypothesised feedback loop between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness was only empirically present in distrusted interactions. We have interpreted this finding to

suggest that the feedback effect fades once a certain level of perceived trustworthiness is present. The behavioural dimension of the trust process can therefore be particularly crucial to break cyclical dynamics of interorganisational distrust. Third, qualitative interview findings suggested that relationships between the dimensions of the trust process are subjected to moderation: the relation between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability is suggested to be moderated by the ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent vulnerability. Also, the willingness to suspend vulnerability requires a catalyst before perceptions of trustworthiness are converted into an attitude of willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions. Finally, the causal effect of boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour was argued to be moderated by the boundary spanners' discretion to decide over organisational behaviour.

Regarding the interaction-specific reasons for the trust process (chapter 8), three more core findings emerge. First, we find that there are differences in both the extent and the form of macro- and meso- level interaction aspects between trusted and distrusted interactions with horizontal departments. Boundary spanners reported differences in the presence of informal routines, aligned normative frameworks, an informal institutional culture of 'shared identify', knowledge about the counterparts' opportunistic motivations, perceived risk, signalised trust and distrust, value identification, interaction frequency and power equality between trusted and distrusted interactions with Flemish horizontal departments. However, they also reported differences in the form of formal frameworks, organisational cost-benefit considerations and experience-based expectations. Both the extent of the presence of macro- and meso-level interaction-specific aspects and the form of macro- and meso- level interaction-specific aspects thus appear relevant to the interorganisational trust process. Second, we found that macro- and meso-level interaction aspects are interdependent due to neo-institutional structuration dynamics. While macro-level institutional aspects shape meso level calculative and relational considerations and experiences of boundary spanners, anecdotal evidence suggests that meso-level interaction aspects will, in turn and over time, also shape the macro-level aspects of the interorganisational interaction. Understanding interorganisational trust thus necessitates studying both social structures (macro-level formal and informal institutional aspects of interorganisational interactions) as well as boundary spanner agency (meso-level calculative and relational aspects of interorganisational interactions) in a neo-institutional structuration framework, which allows the possibility that aspects on different levels of interorganisational interactions affect and perpetuate each other. Third, there is no uniform and dominant theoretical mechanism which connects all interaction aspects with all trust process dimensions. Rather, different mechanisms explain why different interaction aspects are related to different dimensions of the trust process. While macro-level aspects provided causal explanations for all dimensions of the trust process, the willingness to suspend vulnerability and perceived trustworthiness were additionally explained by calculative interaction aspects, and perceived trustworthiness was additionally explained by relational aspects of interorganisational interactions. Furthermore, quantitative data indicate that micro-level 'predispositions to trust others' were positively related to all three dimensions of the trust process, although the causal mechanisms underlying this relationship were not examined empirically.

Our findings about the internal dynamics of the trust process (chapter 7) were combined with our findings about the interaction-specific determinants that affect this process (chapter 8) in figure 27, which thus summarises our research conclusions in a revised model of the mechanisms of administrational trust in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration.

> 9.3. A management model for interorganisational trust

In this paragraph, we will discuss the implications of these research findings in terms of the practical management of interorganisational trust in public administration. Our research findings, particularly those regarding the third research question, allow us to specify a management model for interorganisational trust that focuses on managerial interventions to address macro- and meso- level aspects of interorganisational interactions in order to allow and optimise the development of trust in interorganisational interactions. Figure 28 presents this 'management model for interorganisational trust'.

Figure 28: A management model for interorganisational trust
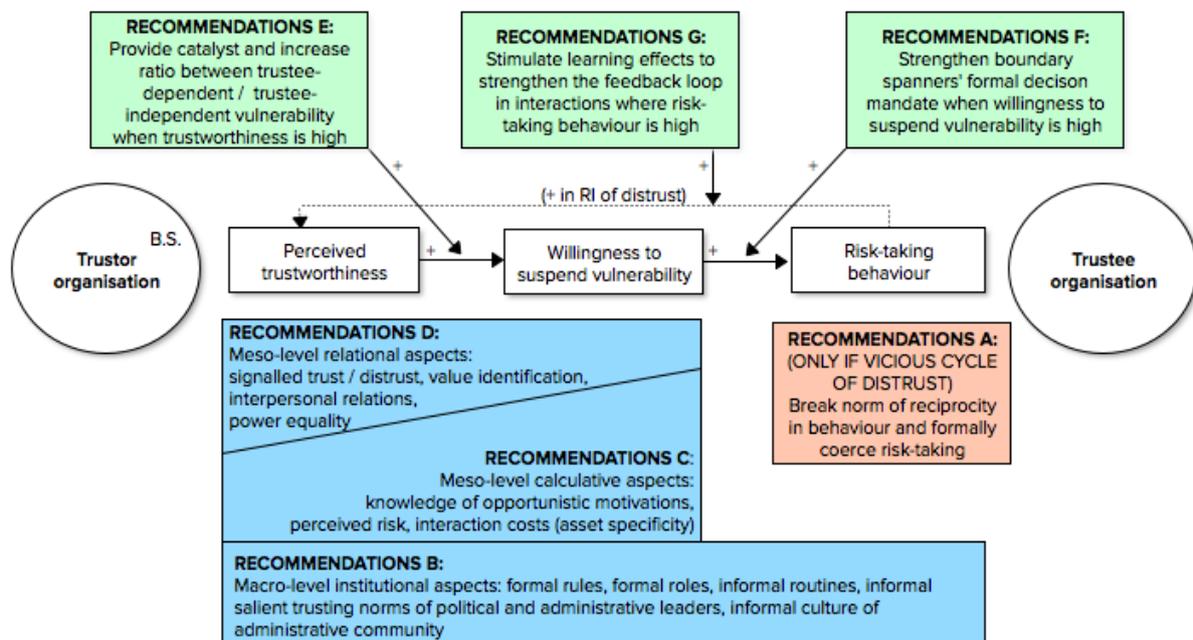
Our management model for interorganisational trust specifies seven groups of recommendations in three clusters. First, the model presents recommendation group A, which focuses on breaking cycles of interorganisational distrust by coercing risk-taking behaviour and removing the norm of reciprocity in interorganisational interactions. Second, recommendation groups B, C and D focus on building dimensions of trust. Group B aims at shaping macro-level aspects of interorganisational interactions in order to support boundary spanners' perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour. Recommendation group C has the objective of shaping meso-level calculative interaction aspects to further stimulate perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions. Recommendation group D focuses on meso-level relational interaction aspects to further strengten perceptions of trustworthiness further. Third, recommendation groups E, F and G seek to empower the internal dynamics of the interorganisational trust process after trust has been

established in the individual dimensions, thus establishing self-sustaining virtuous cycles of trust. Recommendation group E focuses on strengthening the interdimensional relationship between boundary spanners' perceptions of counterpart trustworthiness and their willingness to suspend vulnerability. Recommendation group F focuses on strengthening the interdimensional relationship between boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability and their risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions. Finally, recommendation group G emphasises experience-based learning in interorganisational interactions to support a feedback loop between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness in the interorganisational trust process.

It is important to note that these recommendations are not modular, but set in a four-step sequence. The first step should be a correct and informed diagnosis of interorganisational trust in the interorganisational interaction. Depending on the result of this diagnosis, any or all of three subsequent steps may be required: breaking vicious cycles of distrust (managerial intervention group A), shaping interaction aspects to build dimensions of the trust process (recommendation groups B, C, D), and empowering internal dynamics of the interorganisational trust process so self-reinforcing cycles of trust can be established in interorganisational interactions (recommendation groups E, F, G). Figure 29 presents this four-step sequential logic behind our recommendations.

Figure 29: A management flowchart for interorganisational trust
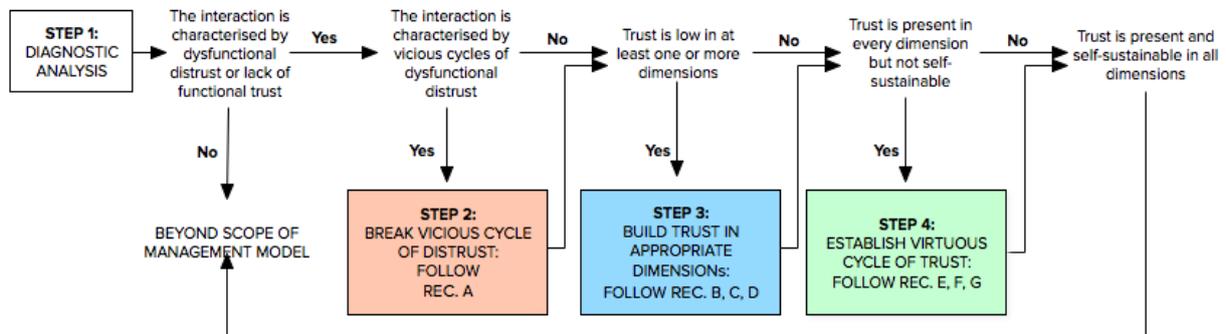
In the following paragraphs, we will discuss the management model according to these four steps and formulate general recommendations for the management of interorganisational trust in each step.

> 9.3.1.   *Step 1: three-step diagnostic analysis*

Before any initiative is undertaken to manage interorganisational trust in interorganisational interactions within public administration systems, we argue that a three-step diagnostic analysis must be conducted. First, the management model we describe here should only be applied if there is dysfunctional distrust or a lack of functional trust in interorganisational relationships, and when incumbent moral faculties consider that the optimisation of interorganisational trust is desirable in the public administration system. Second, after it has been established that there is a problem of either dysfunctional distrust or low functional trust, the diagnosis should map interorganisational trust and distrust in specific interactions in an interorganisational relation. Considering Lewicki et al.'s (1998) argument that (social) relations are complex and multifaceted, as well as the argument that trust is task-, context- and actor-specific (Zand, 1972; Hardin,

2002; Nooteboom; 2002), it is important to specify these interorganisational interactions in clear terms in order to identify in which facets of the interorganisational relation a trust problem is to be addressed. Third, once the interorganisational interaction is clearly identified, the diagnosis should entail an identification of which dimensions of the interorganisational trust process are under particular pressure, and due to which reasons this is so. The diagnostic analysis thus requires the application of three analytical tools we have developed in this dissertation. These analytical tools can be applied through a variety of methods, such as interviews and surveys as we have done in this dissertation, or they may be used as a guide for discussion in management meetings, management brainstorms or for individual strategic analysis.

> ➢ Conceptualise interorganisational relations in terms of whether interorganisational trust and distrust would be functional or dysfunctional for the interorganisational system, to identify interorganisational relations in which dysfunctional distrust and functional trust are problematic. We recommend the simple conceptual framework presented in table 3 for this exercise.

> ➢ Reformulate interorganisational relations in which dysfunctional distrust or functional trust are problematic as sets of clearly defined interorganisational interactions, for which the level of interorganisational trust and distrust is mapped in order to identify whether there is need for managerial intervention. We recommend to use the ideal-typical 'quadrant' perspective presented in figure 3 for this mapping exercise, and focus managerial intervention primarily on interactions that occur to greater extent in quadrants IV, II and III.

> ➢ Analyse interorganisational interactions in which a need for intervention is identified with respect to reasons which explain why particular trust process dimensions are under pressure. We recommend applying the analytical framework presented in table 6 for this diagnostic exercise.

> 9.3.2. *Step 2: break vicious cycles of distrust (A)*

The second step should occur only if self-reinforcing vicious cycles of distrust are identified in the interorganisational interaction. Lindenberg (2000) has argued that in order to start building trust, mistrust must already be strongly reduced. Thus, existing vicious cycles of distrust should be broken before interventions are made to build any of the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process. Theoretically, such vicious cycles emerge due to the meso-level relational norm of reciprocity in social relations (Gouldner, 1960) and due to the internal trust process dynamic which contains a feedback loop between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995; Luhmann, 1979). Our research supports the importance of the meso-level relational norm of reciprocity in the interorganisational trust process, as we found strong evidence of a positive effect of signals of trust on perceived trustworthiness (benevolence), as well as strong evidence for a negative effect of signals of distrust on perceived trustworthiness (benevolence), particularly in distrusted interactions. However, our findings only provided partial support for the presence of a feedback loop in the interorganisational trust process. The behavioural dimension of the trust process is the crucial point for managerial intervention aimed at breaking vicious cycles of distrust because it is here that the norm of reciprocity and the trust process feedback loop are constituted. In other words, breaking a vicious cycle of distrust requires us to address the trustor's risk-taking behaviour to remove the norm of reciprocity between boundary spanners

on the one hand, and to break the internal dynamics of the trust process on the other hand. It is important to note that this step therefore also destroys the potential for any virtuous cycles of trust to arise, and should thus only be applied if vicious cycles of distrust have become so pervasive that they render interorganisational cooperation and the generation of interorganisational trust virtually impossible.

First, breaking cycles of distrust requires removing the norm of reciprocity from risk-taking behaviour, so that the counterparts' signals of distrust are no longer reciprocated with behavioural risk avoidance. Koeszegi (2004: 654) argues that when negotiators (boundary spanners) in interorganisational relations find themselves in a cycle of distrust, they "*might have to ignore the norm of reciprocity*" in order to avoid escalation of conflicts and complete breakdown of negotiations. In other words, cycles of distrust can be broken when one party stops sending signals of distrust and starts sending strong signals of trust instead, despite the distrusting logic that dominates the interaction. Although this will likely seem irrational and dysfunctional to the boundary spanner in question (Brett et al., 1998), it is argued to break vicious cycles of distrust because the boundary spanner disturbs the prevalent pattern of interaction by taking a considerable social risk, which the counterpart cannot interpret as a response or reinforcement of earlier interaction (Koeszegi, 2004). Such signals of trust can take the form of 'conciliatory initiatives' (Pruitt and Carnevale, 1993) which are argued to be effective in breaking distrust when they are irrevocable, costly or risky, unexpected and noticeable, and continued at least for some time, even if the partner fails to cooperate (Koeszegi, 2004). Since this requires that boundary spanners understand the structure of the conflict and overcome their 'instinct' to reciprocate by suspending vulnerability despite the dominant logic of the interaction (Koeszegi, 2004), we argue that proper boundary spanner training is essential. However, even despite such training, breaking the cycle of distrust may still be hard to achieve in interactions in which distrust has become engrained in long-standing reciprocal interactions between boundary spanners. In such cases, the norm of reciprocity can be broken by replacing boundary spanners who are unable or unwilling to break the norm of reciprocity by others who are able to do so. When breaking the norm of reciprocity or replacing the boundary spanners is impossible, another strategy may be to take meso-level relational signals of distrust away by institutionalizing them as macro-level formal instruments, such as formal systems of audit, control, and accountability. This recommendation is in line with Luhmann's (1979: 72) consideration that the norm of reciprocity can be bypassed by institutionalising (meso-level relational) signals of distrust within legitimate, universal and depersonalised (macro-level) structures. Thus, rather than 'breaking' the norm of reciprocity, the institutionalisation of behavioural signals of distrust depersonalises and thus also removes them from relational reciprocation in interorganisational interactions.

Second, breaking cycles of distrust requires (temporarily) removing the interdimensional dynamic of the interorganisational trust process. Trust and distrust were argued to be cyclically dynamic because of a feedback loop in the trust process, which updates boundary spanners' judgements of their counterparts' trustworthiness on the basis of experiences with risk-taking behaviour in a continuous learning process. In the case of cycles of distrust, this means that perceived trustworthiness becomes ever more negative,

which negatively affects the willingness to suspend vulnerability and leads to a withdrawal of risk-taking behaviour due to which ever less relational information is produced which might positively affect perceived trustworthiness. Luhmann (1979: 72) has described this as distrusts' "*inherent tendency to endorse and reinforce itself in social interaction*" because distrust blocks the production of relational information that might contradict. Thus, it follows that cycles of distrust may be broken by surpressing the interdimensional relations in the trust process. In our own discussion, coercive formal frameworks were specifically argued to oblige boundary spanners to share information with the horizontal department despite a lack of willingness to do so in distrusted interactions, as such breaking a cycle of distrust. While the primary objective of such coercive macro-level formal frameworks is to simply maintain the interaction, the accumulation of relational information is also essential in order to (re-)build trust in the interaction for three reasons. First, it ensures that the interaction remains in existence, providing the opportunity for managerial interventions directed at its macro- and meso- level aspects, which would hardly be possible if the interaction would seize to exist due to relational withdrawal which is associated with distrust. Second, by 'overruling' boundary spanners' decision discretion through formally coercing risk-taking behaviour despite the absence of willingness to suspend vulnerability, interpersonal familiarity between boundary spanners may grow over time, on the basis of which new meso-level relational interaction aspects may emerge to support the development of perceived trustworthiness on the long term and thus update the counterparts' perceived trustworthiness in a positive sense. Third, in the long term, externally coerced interorganisational cooperation may come to be considered a 'normal state of affairs' and become institutionalised in macro-level informal routines, which may support perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk taking behaviour due to mimetic and normative isomorphism. Thus, due to such informal institutionalisation, the explicit formal coercive rule may be replaced with implicit informal socialising institutions.

We summarise this discussion in recommendation group A.

RECOMMENDATION GROUP A: If vicious cycles of distrust are identified, they should be broken by:

- ➢ Breaking the norm of reciprocity
    - o Train boundary spanners to ignore the norm of reciprocity and express risk-taking behaviour (conciliatory initiative) which is irrevocable, costly or risky, unexpected, noticeable, and continued even though partner fails to cooperate.
    - o Replace boundary spanners who are unable or unwilling to stop expressing signals of distrust
    - o Depersonalise distrust by institutionalising it in systems of audit, control, inspection and accountability: This may be expected to transform dysfunctional interpersonal distrust in functional institutionalised distrust, which:
        - ▪ Provides meso-level calculative credible information for 'good reasons' to suspend vulnerability.
        - ▪ Creates environments in which distrust is no longer the self-evident starting position because of institutional fora in which functional distrust is welcomed when based on 'good reasons'

- ➢ Breaking the interdimensional dynamics of the trust process
    - o Break interdimensional relations between boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour through macro-level formal coercion of risk-taking behaviour, which:

- Ensures that the interorganisational interaction is maintained through coercive isomorphism, so that it can be addressed with conciliatory initiatives and further trust-management strategies
- Allows positive interpersonal familiarity to emerge over time.
- May institutionalise in informal macro-level routines over time, and affect other trust process dimensions through normative and mimetic isomorphism.

> 9.3.3. *Step 3: build dimensions of trust (B, C, D)*

If vicious cycles of distrust are not present (anymore) in the interorganisational interaction, a third step in our flowchart becomes relevant, in which managerial interventions should focus on macro-and meso-level interaction aspects to support the three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process. The findings presented in chapter eight of this dissertation provide empirical guidance for managerial interventions aimed at such. Macro-level formal and informal institutional interaction aspects were found to have direct causal influence over all three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process. Meso-level calculative interaction aspects were found to have direct causal influence over the willingness to suspend vulnerability and perceived trustworthiness. Finally, meso-level relational interaction aspects were found to have direct causal influence over perceived trustworthiness, and to lesser extent, over the willingness to suspend vulnerability.

In our management model for administrational trust, we have presented this differentiated causal influence of interaction aspects in the form of a three-step approach to building trust in the dimensions of the trust process. First, appropriate macro-level formal and informal institutional interaction aspects are required to stimulate the three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process, as such 'laying the institutional groundwork' for interorganisational trust (recommendations B). Second, boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability and perceived trustworthiness can be additionally stimulated by focusing on meso-level calculative interaction aspects which provide information about 'good reasons' to trust the counterpart (recommendations C). Finally, our findings indicate that perceived trustworthiness, and to lesser extent, the willingness to suspend vulnerability, can be developed further by investing in meso-level relational interaction aspects to stimulate boundary spanners' perceptions of, mainly, the benevolence and integrity of the counterpart organisation (recommendations D).

> 9.3.3.1. *Recommendation group B: macro-level interaction aspects*

We first discuss recommendations regarding macro-level aspects in recommendation group B. Our findings show that macro-level formal interaction aspects which correspond to Sztompka's (1998) substantive and operational characteristics can directly, causally and positively affect the three dimensions of the trust process. First, perceived trustworthiness is directly, causally and positively affected by formal frameworks when they set clear expectations about the integrity, compliance, and commitment ability of a counterpart, due to which there is a lower chance that expectations are not met by actual perceptions (LOC). On the other hand, perceived trustworthiness is directly, causally and positively affected by formal frameworks when their operational characteristics establish an arena for interorganisational cooperation with clear boundaries (dependable use of institutions), but a relatively large extent of flexibility within those boundaries (sparing use of institutions), which provides the opportunity for expressions of flexibility

and benevolence in interorganisational interactions (LOC). Second, boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability is directly, causally and positively affected by formal frameworks when their substantial and operational characteristics create a level playing field for all actors involved, and thus reduce the probability of opportunistic behaviour by other stakeholders (including the counterpart), rendering the boundary spanner less vulnerable, and thus more willing to suspend vulnerability (LOC). Finally, risk-taking behaviour is directly, causally and positively affected by formal frameworks when their substantive and operational characteristics clearly delineate the lower (permissive) and upper (prohibitive) boundaries of boundary spanners' decision mandates (LOA).

Our findings further show that macro-level informal interaction aspects which create a 'culture of trustfulness' in interorganisational interactions causally, directly and positively affect the three dimensions of the trust process. First, boundary spanners' perceptions of trustworthiness are directly and causally affected by informal routines and salient norms expressed by administrative leaders due to mimetic and normative isomorphism (LOA), and are affected by an informal 'culture of administrative community' which enables boundary spanners to 'bridge unfamiliarity' and make assumptions about the horizontal counterparts' trustworthiness on the basis of cultural templates in this 'administrative community', which was also argued to provide a foundation for the development of meso-level calculative and relational trust-supporting interaction aspects (LOC). Second, the willingness to suspend vulnerability is directly and causally affected by informal routines due to mimetic isomorphism (LOA) and because clear informal routines extenuate vulnerability by introducing stability and predictability in the interaction (LOC), as well as by an 'institutional culture of administrative community' in which boundary spanners consider it a 'moral duty' to assume an attitude of openness and transparency toward other organisations in the 'community' (LOA). Third, risk-taking behaviour is directly and causally affected by informal routines due to mimetic and normative isomorphism (LOA), and by administrative leaders' salient norms due to normative isomorphism, which was described as a latent enabler rather than an active determinant of risk-taking behaviour (LOA).

On the basis of these findings about the relationship between macro-level interaction aspects and the interorganisational trust process, we propose recommendation group B, which serves to build the three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process, as well as to support the development of meso-level calculative and relational trust-supporting interaction aspects.

RECOMMENDATION GROUP B: In order to positively affect all dimensions of the trust process, and provide a foundation for the development of meso-level interaction aspects:

- ➤ Develop clear and unambiguous macro-level formal frameworks for interorganisational interactions
  - o Define clear and unambiguous boundary roles in specific interorganisational interactions to assign specific civil servants to take on these boundary roles (boundary spanners).
  - o Specify formal rules for the interorganisational interaction which guarantee normative certainty, transparency, stability, universal application, enactment of rights and enforcement of duties, non-violation of dignity, integrity and autonomy and moral justifiability (substantive), and which are applied in dependable but sparing fashion

(operational) in the interaction in order to level the playing field for all stakeholders in an interorganisational interaction.

- o Allocate boundary roles to civil servants on the basis of selection processes which are directed at specific competencies required for boundary spanning activities, and which correspond to the substantive characteristics outlined above, and provide boundary spanners with opportunities for training and promotion on the basis of those specific competencies, in order to enable clear role-based 'presumptive' expectations about boundary spanners' integrity, benevolence and competences.

- o Provide organisational boundary spanners with a clear formal mandate which specifies the lower and upper boundaries of their discretion to act on behalf of their organisations, which corresponds to the substantive characteristics outlined above and which is sufficiently broad to allow flexibility, but sufficiently clear to create correct expectations about boundary spanners' ability to make credible commitments on behalf of their organisations.

- ➢ Promote a government-wide culture of 'administrative community', especially among boundary spanners, focusing on satisficing collective interest and on cultural unity which is expressed in common objectives, challenges, values and standards, as opposed to a government-wide culture which emphasises satisficing individual or organisational interests, on zero-sum competition and on cultural divergence between administrative entities.

- ➢ Stimulate a 'culture of trustfulness' through (inter)organisational routines in interorganisational interactions. Public managers should present assumptions of counterpart trustworthiness, attitudes of willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour as the self-evident reality of public administration (trust as rule) in public administration, while they should ensure that assumptions of counterpart untrustworthiness, reluctance to suspend vulnerability and risk-avoiding behaviour are presented as 'abnormal' perspectives, which are considered functional only on the ground of clear reasons (distrust as reasonable exception).

- ➢ Responsibilise administrative leaders to stimulate a 'culture of trustfulness' by 'leading through example', explicitly expressing their perceptions of the counterparts' trustworthiness on the one hand, and not obstructing boundary spanners who want to engage in risk-taking behaviour toward counterpart organisations on the other hand.

> 9.3.3.2. *Recommendation group C: meso-level calculative interaction aspects*

Second, we discuss recommendations regarding meso-level calculative aspects in recommendation group C. Our findings show that meso-level calculative interaction aspects directly and causally affect perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability. First, perceived trustworthiness is directly, causally and negatively affected by boundary spanners' (subjective) knowledge about counterparts' opportunistic motivations, which was considered to be detrimental to perceived benevolence and integrity. This was related to the extent to which boundary spanners feel they lack sufficient credible information on which to base their subjective trust evaluations, which makes them turn to rumours as alternative sources of information about their counterparts. Second, boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability is directly, causally and negatively affected by the extent of perceived risk in the interorganisational interaction, as well as by the asset specificity (costs) of the interaction. However, we also noted that our controls of boundary spanners' utility preferences suggested that boundary spanners are less willing to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions which are characterised by more explicit considerations of organisational costs and benefits. This finding warrants some reluctance regarding managerial interventions that aim to increase interorganisational trust through the

implementation of explicit calculative incentivation of interorganisational cooperation. Third, risk-taking behaviour was not found to be directly affected by calculative interaction aspects.

On the basis of these findings about the relationship between meso-level calculative interaction aspects and the interorganisational trust process, and on the basis of our reluctance to suggest highly explicit calculus-based incentivation of the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process, we propose recommendation group C, which directly contributes to building the willingness to suspend vulnerability and perceived trustworthiness.

RECOMMENDATION GROUP C: In order to positively affect perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability:

➢ Make credible sources of honest and transparent information about the motivations, costs (asset specificity), benefits and risks of the interaction available to the trustor.
   o Since trust judgements are formed by 'overdrawing on information', which may stem from both relational (e.g. previous experiences with a counterpart) and institutional sources (e.g. audit reports), trustor boundary spanners require credible sources of information, particularly when faced with high contingency, in the absence of which they will search for alternative sources beyond the control of the trustee.
   o This requires a transparent, active and systematic approach towards the collection and disclosure of honest information about the motivations, costs (asset specificity), benefits and risks of the interaction through credible communication, which should be formulated as a core competency in boundary roles and a core task of boundary spanners (supra recommendations B).

➢ Limit suspicions about trustee's opportunistic motivations by stimulating interdependency and emphasising collective interest.
   o Interdependency between trustors and trustees should be stimulated by making the trustee's individual and organisational success dependent upon cooperative success by including measures of cooperative success in the performance evaluations of boundary spanners, organisational senior civil servants, and formal steering arrangements with organisational entities on the one hand (supra recommendations B), and by reducing power inequalities in the interorganisational interaction (infra recommendations D).
   o A government-wide culture of administrative community should emphasise the objective of satisficing collective interests over satisficing organisational, individual or political interests (supra recommendations B).

➢ Manage perceived (trustee-independent) risk in interorganisational interactions.
   o Macro-level formal frameworks level the playing field for all parties involved in an interorganisational interaction and thus reduce overall risk in interorganisational interactions (supra recommendations B).
   o If possible, cooperative interorganisational interaction phases requiring a strong willingness to suspend vulnerability should be planned not to occur during structural, systematic and thus predictable moments in which external risk is highly salient (for instance during election periods, periods of intense institutional reform, budgetary negotiation rounds under pressures of administrative austerity).

> 9.3.3.3. *Recommendation group D: meso-level relational interaction aspects*

Third, we discuss recommendations regarding meso-level relational interaction aspects in recommendation group D. Meso-level relational interaction aspects were found to directly and causally affect perceived trustworthiness, and to lesser extent, also the willingness to suspend vulnerability. First, perceived trustworthiness is directly, causally and positively affected by value identification (affects integrity), by relational power equality (affects benevolence), by the quality of interpersonal relationships between

boundary spanners provided that the counterpart boundary spanners have the ability to make 'credible commitments' on behalf of their organisation (affects benevolence), and by relational reciprocity through the counterparts' signals of trust and distrust (affects benevolence). These relational aspects were controlled for the effect of relational familiarity, which was found to positively affect perceived trustworthiness, particularly when historical experiences with the interaction were more positive. Second, the willingness to suspend vulnerability was also argued to be directly and causally affected by meso-level relational aspects, albeit to lesser extent than perceived trustworthiness. In particular, power equality was argued to positively affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability as it decreases trustee-dependent vulnerability, and signals of trust expressed by the counterpart were argued to inspire automatic 'mirroring' in terms of a greater willingness to suspend vulnerability. Third, we did not find systematic evidence to suggest any additional direct and causal effects of meso-level relational interaction aspects on risk-taking behaviour.

On the basis of these findings about the relationship between meso-level relational interaction aspects and the interorganisational trust process, we propose recommendation group D, which contributes directly to building perceived trustworthiness, and to lesser extent to the willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions.

RECOMMENDATION GROUP D: In order to positively affect perceived trustworthiness (and to lesser extent the willingness to suspend vulnerability):

➢ Promote value identification between organisational boundary spanners.
  o On the one hand, value identification can be promoted by developing a government-wide culture of 'administrative community' in which common values are defined on the institutional level (supra recommendations B)
  o On the other hand, value identification requires attention for how such common values are operationalised in particular interorganisational interactions.

➢ Ensure that boundary spanners invest in establishing relational reciprocation of trust signals in interorganisational interactions.
  o This requires boundary spanners to repeatedly send small signals of trust toward their counterparts by engaging in risk-taking behaviour, create an opportunity for reciprocation, and emphasising succesful reciprocation in future iterations of interorganisational interactions. Thorough understanding of this norm of reciprocity should be formulated as a core competency in boundary roles and a core task of boundary spanners (supra recommendations B).

➢ Ensure that boundary spanners invest in the development of quality interpersonal relationships with their counterparts.
  o Particularly when both boundary spanners have the ability to make credible commitments on behalf of their organisations (supra recommendations B)
  o This requires strong interpersonal skills, as well as the expression of interpersonal care and concern about the needs of the counterpart, which should be formulated as a core competency in boundary roles and a core task of boundary spanners (supra recommendations B).

- Promote power equality on the relational level of the interaction, even under conditions of formal power inequality
  - o An interactive approach to communication in interorganisational interactions in which the trustor is able to express feedback about an interorganisational interaction should be used to promote power equality, under the condition that:
    - The trustee boundary spanner has a mandate which is sufficiently broad to allow them to show care and concern toward such feedback (benevolence) on the one hand, and which is sufficiently clear about their ability to make a credible commitment on behalf of their organisation to take the counterparts' feedback into account in future iterations of the interorganisational interaction on the other hand (supra recommendations B).
  - o However, stimulating power equality must be treated with care, since although it may be expected to support trust by establishing stronger interdependency between the trustor and the trustee and reducing the extent of perceived risk in the interorganisational interaction on the one hand (supra recommendations C), it may also weaken the interdimensional relation between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability since it specifically reduces the trustee-dependent component of perceived risk (infra recommendations E).

- Empower the development of positive familiarity between boundary spanners, which acts as an incubator for other relational sources of interorganisational trust, and should thus be formulated as a core competency in boundary roles and a core task of boundary spanners (supra recommendations B).
  - o Positive familiarity can be stimulated by maintaining the specific boundary spanners in interactions characterised by high extents of interorganisational trust (personalising interorganisational trust), and replacing the specific boundary spanners in interactions characterised by high extents of interorganisational distrust (supra recommendations A).
  - o Familiarity can be stimulated by building an epistemic community of boundary spanners, allowing face-to-face encounters and exchange between boundary spanners in meetings, workgroups, training days, informal gatherings, etcetera.

> 9.3.3.4. *Recommendation regarding micro-level predispositions to trust*

As a final note, we note that the 'micro-level predisposition to trust' control variable was positively related to dimensions of the trust process in a clear majority of our quantitative models. Although we only considered this interaction aspect as a control variable in our analyses, and lack explanatory qualitative evidence on the basis of which we can make claims regarding the causality of the positive relationship relationships, we can recommend that individual civil servants' predispositions to trust in 'generalised others' should be taken into account as a relevant psychological aspect and competence for their engagement in boundary spanning roles.

- Having a trusting personality, i.e. having the predispositions to trust in generalised others, should be formulated as a core competency in boundary roles, and a criterion for the selection of boundary spanners.

> 9.3.4. *Step 4: maximise interdimensional relations (E, F)*

When macro- and meso- level interaction aspects are developed as outlined in the previous step, they provide capacity for interorganisational trust to develop in the three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process. At this point, a fourth step in the flowchart becomes relevant, in which managerial interventions should focus on strengthening the relations between the three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process. This strategy allows interaction aspects' effect on prior dimensions in the

causal logic of the interorganisational trust process (for instance, meso-level relational aspects, which mainly affect the perceived trustworthiness dimension) to indirectly affect latter dimensions in the causal logic of the trust process as well (for instance, meso-level relational aspects will thus indirectly affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour due to the interdimensional dynamics in the trust process). In other words, by maximising the interdimensional dynamics of the trust process, the impact of the step 3 recommendations may be greatly increased, and set in motion a virtuous cycle of self-reinforcing or self-sustaining trust. The findings regarding propositions B and C, presented in chapter seven of this dissertation, provide empirical guidance for such managerial interventions.

We first discuss recommendations regarding the interdimensional relation between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability, which has been argued to be moderated by the ratio between trustee-dependent vulnerability and trustee-independent vulnerability on the one hand, and to require a catalyst to 'trigger' boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability on the other hand. Second, we discuss recommendations regarding the interdimensional relationship between boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions, which is moderated by the behavioural discretion of the boundary spanner. Finally, we discuss recommendations regarding the feedback loop between the risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness dimensions of the interorganisational trust process.

> 9.3.4.1. *Recommendation group E: the effect of perceived trustworthiness on willingness to suspend vulnerability*

We have argued in chapter seven that the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability is mediated by two factors. First, we have discussed that the relation between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability requires a catalyst, which may be compared to a spark (the catalyst) which combusts a fuel (perceived trustworthiness) to power an engine (willingness to suspend vulnerability) which produces a useful result (risk-taking behaviour) in interorganisational interactions. The presence of perceived trustworthiness is thus not sufficient in and of itself to develop willingness to suspend vulnerability. In addition to perceived trustworthiness, there needs to be a catalyst, which may take the form of an attractive reason, a clear utility, a request or a necessity for actual interaction, before boundary spanners will develop a willingness to suspend their vulnerability in an interorganisational interaction. Thus, managerial interventions may focus on providing attractive cooperative opportunities to 'spark' the development of interorganisational trust in public administration.

Second, we have discussed that the relation between perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability is mediated by the ratio between the trustors' perceptions about trustee-dependent vulnerability and trustee-independent vulnerability as the components of their perceived total vulnerability in interorganisational interactions. In other words, the trustee's perceived trustworthiness will matter more for the trustors' decision to suspend vulnerability in the interaction if the trustee is considered to be responsible for a larger proportion of the trustors' vulnerability in the interaction. If the trustor considers that factors beyond the trustee's control determine the vulnerability in the interaction to a larger extent,

the trustee's perceived trustworthiness is expected to have less impact on the trustors' willingness to suspend vulnerability. Thus, on the basis of our findings, we may expect that the ratio between the trustee-dependent vulnerability (numerator) and the trustee-independent vulnerability (denominator) will positively affect the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability. As interorganisational interactions in public administration are often characterised by complexity, multilateralism and interdependency between various actors, we may assume that this ratio has a denominator of significant size, effecting an important moderating effect on the interdimensional relationship between perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions in public administration. Managerial interventions may thus focus on increasing this ratio's denominator (trustee-dependent vulnerability), decreasing its numerator (trustee-independent vulnerability), or doing both at the same time.

On the basis of these findings about the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability, we propose recommendation group E, which can be implemented after trust has been sufficiently established in the dimension of perceived trustworthiness.

RECOMMENDATION GROUP E: In order to positively affect the causal effect of perceived trustworthiness on the willingness to suspend vulnerability:

➢ Provide a catalyst for willingness to suspend vulnerability by incentivising interorganisational interactions
  o Introduce some formal valuation for successful interorganisational cooperation, for instance by including measures of cooperative success in the performance evaluations of boundary spanners, organisational senior civil servants, and the formal steering arrangements with organisational entities (supra recommendations B and C).

➢ Decrease the trustee-independent component of the trustors' perceived vulnerability
  o Macro-level formal rules which establish a level playing field will reduce the perceived vulnerability to third parties, and their qualities should therefore be emphasised in interorganisational interactions (supra recommendations B).
  o If possible, interorganisational interaction phases in which a large willingness to suspend vulnerability is required should be planned to occur during moments in which structural, systematic and predictable external risk is less salient (for instance, outside election periods, periods of intense institutional reform, budgetary negotiation rounds under pressures of administrative austerity) (supra recommendations C).

➢ Increase the trustee-dependent component of the trustors' perceived vulnerability
  o Responsibilise the trustee for ensuring a fair process by taking account of external risks
  o Increase relational interdependency between the trustor and the trustee, particularly in combination with strategies to increase power equality, which may be expected to decrease the proportion of trustee-dependent vulnerability (supra recommendations D)

> 9.3.4.2. *Recommendation group F: the effect of willingness to suspend vulnerability on risk-taking behaviour*

In chapter seven of this dissertation, we have also discussed that the relationship between boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability and the eventual risk-taking behaviour is moderated by the boundary spanners' decision discretion in interorganisational interactions. Where boundary spanners have

a large mandate to decide how they will behave on behalf of their organisations, a stronger causal effect of willingness to suspend vulnerability on risk-taking behaviour can be expected, which is in line with propositions suggested by the Theory of Planned Behaviour. However, where boundary spanners have only little decision discretion over their risk-taking behaviour, the willingness to suspend vulnerability may not have such a causal effect on risk-taking behaviour, and the large relationship between both dimensions could also be explained in the opposite direction, as boundary spanners' behaviour is effectively decided by other organisational decision-makers and internalised in their own attitudes through mechanisms of socialisation. Thus, the causal effect of willingness to suspend vulnerability over risk-taking behaviour as suggested in the 'universal trust sequence' can be supported by providing boundary spanners that have a strong willingness to suspend vulnerability with a large and broad mandate to act on behalf of their organisation in interorganisational interactions. In other words, empowering behavioural expressions of interorganisational trust also means empowering the boundary spanners that represent their organisation, and providing these boundary spanners with broad mandates to act and make credible commitments on behalf of their organisation.

Thus, we propose recommendation group F, which can be implemented after trust has been sufficiently established in the dimension of willingness to suspend vulnerability.

RECOMMENDATION GROUP F: In order to positively affect the causal effect of the willingness to suspend vulnerability on risk-taking behaviour:

- ➤ Provide organisational boundary spanners with a formal mandate offering broad discretion, which:
    - o corresponds to the substantive characteristics of formal frameworks (supra recommendations B)
    - o clearly specifies the lower and upper boundaries of their discretion to engage their organisation in risk-taking behaviour toward a counterpart organisation (supra recommendations B)
    - o allows the boundary spanner to make credible commitments on behalf of their organisations (supra recommendations B)
    - o is combined with systems for the professionalisation of boundary spanning tasks in public administration, including training for boundary spanners (supra recommendations B, C, D)

> 9.3.4.3. *Recommendation group G: the feedback loop between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness*

Finally, we have discussed the direct relationship between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness, for which we found (quantitative) empirical evidence in distrusted reference interactions. On the basis of the 'universal trust sequence', we have interpreted this direct relationship as a feedback loop in the trust process, in which experiences of risk-taking behaviour update trustors' perceptions about the trustee's trustworthiness. The absence of empirical evidence for this feedback loop in trusted reference interactions was interpreted as an indication that the trust process is only self-reinforcing until a certain level of perceived trustworthiness is achieved, after which the dynamic of the trust process becomes self-sustaining rather than self-reinforcing. In interorganisational interactions in which trust is being built, managerial interventions directed at maximising the learning effects underlying this feedback loop may thus be particularly useful.

On the basis of these findings we propose recommendation group G, which can be implemented after trust has been sufficiently established in the dimension of risk-taking behaviour.

RECOMMENDATION GROUP G: In order to strengthen the feedback loop between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness in interorganisational interactions.

➢ Assign only a limited number of boundary spanners in administrative organisations who take the role for long-term periods, in order to allow learning effects to occur and familiarity to grow in the interorganisational trust process (supra recommendation B)

➢ Allow moments for evaluation, feedback, reflection and learning between the trustor and trustee boundary spanners during and after the conclusion of collaborative projects, aimed at improving the interorganisational interaction in future iterations, which should be formulated as a core competency in boundary roles and a core task of boundary spanners (supra recommendations B).

➢ Allow boundary spanners to share their experiences about interorganisational interactions within their own organisations and within a boundary spanner epistemic community, with the objective of allowing positive learning about interorganisational interactions, which should be formulated as a core competency in boundary roles and a core task of boundary spanners (supra recommendations B).

> 9.4. Recommendations to the Flemish administration

In this paragraph, we will apply the steps discussed above to propose specific recommendations to the Flemish administration.

> 9.4.1. *Step 1: diagnostic analysis*

Throughout this dissertation, we have applied the first step to the Flemish administration, in the sense that we have made a 'diagnosis' of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration.

The first step of the diagnostic analysis was to identify interorganisational relations in which dysfunctional distrust and functional trust are possibly problematic. We found that both administrational trust and distrust were argued to be perceived as both potentially functional or dysfunctional in the Flemish administration. Examples of functional trust and dysfunctional distrust were especially prevalent regarding interorganisational relations between horizontal departments and vertical organisations.

The second step of the diagnostic analysis was to reformulate these interorganisational relations in terms of clear interorganisational interactions, and to 'map' the distribution of administrational trust and distrust in these interactions on the basis of the 'quadrants' perspective. We have specified interorganisational relations with horizontal departments in terms of twelve specific interorganisational interactions, and mapped the distribution of trust and distrust for these twelve interactions with horizontal departments. On average, boundary spanners were found to have rather much trust and rather little distrust in the horizontal departments of the Flemish administration. Interactions with horizontal departments regarding policy preparation and policy evaluation received lowest average administrational trust scores and highest average administrational distrust scores. These interactions were also least frequently selected as RI of trust, but interactions with horizontal departments regarding policy preparation and horizontal

information collection were most frequently selected as RI of distrust. Interactions with department A received highest administrational distrust scores and were also more frequently selected as RI for high administrational distrust than departments B and C. Specifically, interactions with department A regarding policy preparation, policy evaluation (and to lesser extent, policy monitoring) received significantly higher distrust scores, while interactions with department A regarding data collection, policy preparation and policy evaluation were the three most frequently selected RI of distrust. When mapped in the quadrants frameworks, interorganisational interactions with department A represented a lower proportion in quadrant I, and a higher proportion in quadrants II, III and IV, than interactions with department B and C. Thus, managerial interventions to establish interorganisational trust would be particularly effective for interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, and we recommend particular attention for interorganisational trust in department A concerning policy evaluation, policy preparation and data collection.

The third proposed step of the diagnostic analysis was to analyse these interorganisational interactions with respect to the dimensions of the trust process and the interaction aspects affecting these dimensions. We found, as hypothesised, that the dimensions of perceived trustworthiness, the willingness to suspend vulnerability, and (reported) risk-taking behaviour were all significantly lower in distrusted interactions than in trusted interactions. Interestingly, horizontal departments' benevolence was considered to be the weakest sub-dimension of perceived trustworthiness in both trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions. We also found clear differences between the presence of trust-supporting macro- and meso-level interaction aspects. First, macro-level 'formal frameworks' were considered to correspond better with Sztompka's trust-supporting substantive and operational characteristics in trusted than in distrusted interorganisational interactions, and were found to positively and directly affect all dimensions of interorganisational trust. Second, macro-level informal interaction aspects which support a 'culture of trustfulness', more specifically informal routines and norms, were found to positively and directly affect all dimensions of interorganisational trust. Additionally, the macro-level informal aspect of 'a single administrative community culture ' was argued to positively affect perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability. Third, the meso-level calculative 'knowledge of counterparts' opportunistic motivations and 'perceived interaction risks' were found to be present to a greater extent in distrusted interactions, and to negatively affect perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability, respectively. Fourth, meso-level relational 'value identification', 'signalled trust' and 'power equality' were significantly less present in distrusted interactions, and were found to positively and directly affect perceived trustworthiness (the two latter meso-level relational aspects were also argued to affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability). The relational aspect of 'signalled distrust' was significantly more present in distrusted interactions, and was argued to negatively and directly affect perceived trustworthiness.

Therefore, we recommend to the Flemish administration to:

- ➤ Focus managerial intervention on interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in general, and at policy evaluation, policy preparation and the collection of horizontal information by department A in particular.

- ➤ Focus these managerial interventions particularly on the following interaction aspects:
  - ○ The perceived ambiguity of macro-level formal frameworks,
  - ○ Leaders who stimulate a culture of trustfulness in their organisations through informal routines, salient norms and promotion of a 'sense of belonging to one single administrative community'
  - ○ The meso-level calculative 'information about opportunistic motivations' and 'risk perceptions'
  - ○ The meso-level relational 'signalled trust', 'signalled distrust' 'value identification', and 'power equality'.

> 9.4.2.   *Step 2: break vicious cycles of distrust*

We do not consider that vicious cycles of distrust occur in the interorganisational interactions we have investigated in the Flemish administration. Although 'signalled distrust' was significantly more present in distrusted interactions than in trusted interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, and although our evidence supported a negative and direct impact of signalled distrust on perceived trustworthiness, signalled distrust does not appear to pose a large problem for the Flemish administration considering the extent to which it was considered to be present in interorganisational interactions (see table 46). Furthermore, although 'risk-taking behaviour' was significantly lower in distrusted interactions than in trusted interactions, and although our qualitative evidence did provide clear examples of differences between trusted and distrusted interactions in the extent to which boundary spanners engaged in risk-taking behaviour, relational withdrawal from interorganisational interactions did not appear to occur in any extreme extent in the interactions we investigated. Therefore, we do not consider it advisable to apply the step 2 recommendations to the interorganisational interactions we have investigated in the Flemish administration.

> 9.4.3.   *Step 3: build dimensions of trust*

Although all general recommendations are derived from research in, and can thus be applied by the Flemish administration to build the dimensions of interorganisational trust, we specifically suggest that the Flemish administration focuses on the three following recommendations. These recommendations emphasise macro-level institutional interaction aspects which directly affect all three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process, and on the basis of which the development of meso-level calculative and relational interaction aspects is enabled in order to further support perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions.

- ➤ First, we emphasise the importance of stimulating a government-wide culture of 'administrative community' (B) in the Flemish administration, which emphasises collective interests over organisational interests in calculative considerations (C), and institutionally embeds relational value identification between organisational boundary spanners (D). Senior civil servants play an important role in creating such a 'culture of trust' by 'leading through example', and clearly expressing trust as a self-evident starting position for interorganisational relations in which their organisations' boundary spanners are engaged (B).

- ➤ Second, we emphasise the need to professionalise boundary spanners in the Flemish horizontal departments by clearly defining boundary spanning tasks and boundary spanner mandates, developing formal systems for the selection, training,

and evaluation of boundary spanners on the basis of the specific competencies required to conduct boundary role tasks (B), which include generalised predispositions to trust others, strong and transparent communication skills (C) and strong interpersonal skills (D).

➢ Third, we emphasise the crucial importance of clear formal rules (B) in interorganisational information exchange interactions with horizontal departments to 'level the playing field' for all stakeholders, reducing opportunities for opportunistic behaviour (C), and supporting accurate mutual expectations in the interaction and providing 'good reasons' to make a leap of faith. Thus, we recommend that a minimal framework of formal rules is specified including at least conceptual definitions, planning, activities, objectives and mutual rights and duties for interorganisational information-exchange in the Flemish administration.

> 9.4.4. *Step 4: maximise interdimensional relations*

We specifically suggest that the Flemish administration focuses on the following recommendations in order to ensure that interorganisational trust is effectively actualised in risk-taking behaviour, and allowed to set in motion a virtuous cycle of interorganisational trust. We do note that some of the recommendations proposed in the previous paragraph may also be expected to strengthen the interdimensional dynamics of the trust process.

➢ Provide a catalyst by including measures of cooperative success in the performance evaluations of boundary spanners, organisational senior civil servants, and formal steering arrangements with organisational entities (E)

➢ Provide organisational boundary spanners with a broad formal mandate and the ability to make credible commitments on behalf of their organisations in interorganisational interactions (F)

➢ Allow moments for evaluation, feedback, reflection and learning during and after collaborative projects, and allow boundary spanners to share their knowledge within their own organisations (G).

➢ Build an epistemic community of boundary spanners in the Flemish administration with resources to allow a basic functioning (G).

> 9.5. **Conclusion: managing administrational trust**

In this chapter, we have summarised the results of our research, provided an answer to the three research questions, proposed a management model for the optimisation of interorganisational trust, and used this model to formulate a number of recommendations to the Flemish administration.

In the final chapter, we will look back upon the limitations of our research and explore interesting questions, hypotheses, and methods for further research about interorganisational trust in and beyond the Flemish administration.

10. Looking back to understand the path ahead: reflections for future trustworthy administrational trust research

In this final chapter, we will look back on the research conducted, and discuss its limitations in order to draw lessons for future research, which may contribute to the further development of the agenda of investigating and building interorganisational trust within the public sector.

> ## 10.1. Reflections upon this research

In order to propose further avenues of research into interorganisational trust in the public administration, we must first discuss the limitations of the current research. Indeed, the research findings we have presented in this dissertation should be interpreted with due regard for a number of limitations, which we will discuss in this section.

> ### 10.1.1. *Reflections upon the critical realist approach in our research*

Our core concept of 'administrational trust' was defined in 2.2.3. as "*a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions in public administration characterised by risk, dependency and uncertainty, comprising the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability, on the basis of positive expectations held about the counterpart organisation*".

On the basis of this definition, we have assumed a critical realist position as discussed in 5.2.3., which entailed the ontological premise that interorganisational trust is embedded in objective social structures, but is also continuously interpreted, reformulated and reshaped through intersubjective mechanisms in interactions. Epistemologically, our critical realist position entailed that complete objective knowledge about administrational trust lies beyond the reach of the positivist methodology, but that positivist methods can be used to map and categorise the distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust, and causally investigate the subjective theories of mechanisms of interorganisational trust held by boundary spanners. Thus, we have deductively developed conceptualisations, typologies and theories which we have used to analyse the subjective evaluations of boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, using questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. It is important to emphasise that in doing so, we have progressively reduced the complexity of the social phenomenon that is 'interorganisational trust' by disregarding alternative approaches of ontological, epistemological, conceptual, theoretical and methodological nature. Of course, this is not neccesarily problematic, as one could argue that such analytical reduction of complexity is the very ambition of social scientific research. Still, it remains important to emphasise that a model of any social phenomenon is never a full and complete representation of that phenomenon.

Our critical realist approach was thus neither positivist, nor constructivist, which leads us to take into account certain limitations regarding the conclusions of our research.

On the one hand, we have not collected data about objective realities, but rather about boundary spanners' perceptions. In other words, we have not studied objective differences between horizontal departments or between the macro- and meso-level aspects of trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions, but only differences as perceived by the boundary spanners involved in interactions with those horizontal departments. Since interorganisational trust was argued to be a subjective evaluation of boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions, this approach can be argued to be justified. However, the question arises whether differences in boundary spanners' perceptions of aspects in trusted and distrusted interorganisational interactions actually represent objective differences. Are formal frameworks regarding information exchange with department A truly more ambiguous than formal frameworks for information exchange with department B? This research does not answer that question. However, does this matter? In his study of the role of citizens' perceptions on trust in the public administration, Van de Walle (2004: 231) concluded that "*opinions about the public administration should not in the first place be studied by analysing objective realities (i.c. performance of specific services, or characteristics of the public administration), but by applying current knowledge of attitude formation to the public administration*". Our current knowledge of trust formation, as summarised in our definition of 'administrational trust', suggests that perceptions and expectations are most crucial to understand and manage (interorganisational) trust. The question that remains is how subjective perceptions of macro- and meso-level interaction aspects are then affected by interventions directed at the objective presence of such aspects.

Although our research was thus not positivist on the one hand, it has not been constructivist either, as it centered around epistemologically 'positivist' methods of data collection through which we constrained boundary spanners' perceptions and 'subjective trust theories' in deductively developed conceptual and theoretical frameworks about the role, distribution, and mechanisms of interorganisational trust. We emphasise that there would be great value in an inductive study of interorganisational trust, its underlying reasons and the intersubjective sense-making mechanisms behind interorganisational trust as a socially constructed phenomenon. However, at the same time, we are confident that there is also great value in the research we have conducted here, as our own 'critical realist' position with its assumption of 'humbled' objectivity has allowed us expand our knowledge about the embeddedness of interorganisational trust in the structures of social reality, without complete disregard for the subjective theories and perspectives held by the boundary spanners in the interorganisational interactions we have investigated.

> 10.1.2. *Reflections upon the research methodology*

Our research design was developed on the basis of a discussion of requirements to answer our research questions appropriately. These requirements were discussed in section 5.3, and in section 5.4 we have argued that the requirements could only be met in a mixed-method research design which combined the descriptive broadness and generalisability of large-N approaches with the depth of qualitative explanations in small-N approaches. In section 5.4. we operationalised our mixed-method research design in order to describe boundary spanners' administrational trust and distrust in twelve relatively specific

interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, and to compare and explain the mechanisms of administrational trust in trusted and distrusted reference points of those specific interactions.

Looking back, our research also supports the added value of such mixed-method research designs. Under the assumption that trust evaluations are universal processes in contextually embedded interactions which restrict any claim of trust to particular parties and particular matters, the integrated combination between 'broad' quantitative data-collection and 'deep' qualitative data-collection provided both the conceptual reduction and the contextual embeddedness required to make sense of boundary spanners' trust evaluations. By selecting our interview respondents on the basis of their answers in the quantitative component and by triangulating and explaining the quantitative results on the basis of the qualitative interview data, both the external and internal validity of our study are strengthened. Internal validity is strengthened because the mixed method research design allowed us to triangulate the quantitative correlational findings with qualitative narratives through comparison and contrasting, on the basis of which the quantitative results could be corroborated, illustrated, and meaningfully interpreted. The external validity of the qualitative interviews is increased because the interview samples were nested in and representative of the broader quantitative samples from which they were drawn, thus allowing a limited form of statistical generalisation from the qualitative samples to the quantitative samples (we will discuss external validity of the quantitative samples further in a following paragraph). Furthermore, through integration of quantitative and qualitative data by testing quantitative correlations through qualitative in-depth interviewing, we were able to draw causal inferences which would otherwise not have been possible. In other words, the mixed method research design allowed us to triangulate, complement, develop and expand (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989) upon insights gathered through the constituent single methods through integration of the findings, thus increasing internal and external validity as well as the explanatory power of the research. In this respect, we remain convinced that the mixed method research design was the most appropriate methodological approach to address the requirements of our three research questions.

However, we have also outlined the (pragmatic) weaknesses of mixed method research designs in section 5.4. A particular challenge faced while conducting this mixed method research design is the extensive requirement of familiarity and skills with both quantitative and qualitative methods, which need to be developed and applied in sequential order due to the requirement of integration, in the limited time in which the study is to be conducted. In this respect, we faced some difficulties and will discuss some limitations and suggest some methodological improvements for future replication of this research. Most of these difficulties, limitations and suggested improvements relate to the quantitative phase 3 component of our mixed-method research design, the boundary spanner survey.

> 10.1.2.1.   *Reflections upon the boundary spanner survey*

The identification (and sampling) of boundary spanners

A first point of methodological improvement relates to the selection and sampling of the respondents, boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions with Flemish horizontal departments. Under 5.5.3.4. we have argued how the identification and selection of these boundary spanners happened in three steps, including a screening for organisational divisions in the Flemish administration in which employees would likely have regular interactions with at least one of the horizontal departments, followed by pre-notification of senior civil servants about upcoming invitations for participation to an online survey about interorganisational trust, and finally the dissemination of invitiations in which the invitees were requested to opt-in for participation in the boundary spanner survey on the basis of their self-assessed status as boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments. Respondents who explicitily replied that they did not have a boundary spanner role were deleted from the survey population and received no further reminders to participate. Respondents received three reminders for participation, unless they explicitily informed us that they did not have any boundary spanning roles.

The problem with this approach was that it did not enable us to adequately and structurally clarify the sample frame. Thus, we could not determine whether non-response happened because invited respondents did not consider themselves to be boundary spanners in interactions with horizontal departments (which would mean they are not to be considered as part of the sample frame), or because they did consider themselves to be boundary spanners in interactions with horizontal departments, but did not complete the boundary spanner survey for other reasons. Table 21 suggests that 52 per cent of the invited respondents opened the survey after the third reminder, about 31 per cent completed the second module, and about 23 per cent completed the full survey, suggesting that there is both a significant extent of opt-out, and a significant extent of drop-out after opening the boundary spanner survey. Methodological refinement should thus be aimed at decreasing this ambiguity about the opt-out on the one hand, and decreasing the extent of the drop-out on the other hand. We will discuss these issues below.

A first problem is the ambiguity regarding opt-out. Due to the lack of a clear sample frame, such as a list of all boundary spanners who regularly engage in boundary spanning activities, it is unclear to which extent our sample represents the population of boundary spanners with horizontal departments in the Flemish public administration, which renders the response rate an inappropriate measure of the survey's external validity. Considering that the main problem was the absence of a priori knowledge about the population of boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions with Flemish horizontal departments, we suggest that a fourth step is added to better identify the sample frame for the study. In particular, after the organisational screening and the pre-notification to senior civil servants, the pre-selected individuals should be sent an email notification that they have been 'flagged' as possible respondents for a study, requesting them to indicate

- whether or not they consider themselves to engage in regular interactions with one or more of the referent organisations (in our case, horizontal Flemish departments)
    o If no, the respondent is not counted as part of the population
    o if yes, the respondent is counted as part of the population and the sample and is asked to participate in a survey about interorganisational trust regarding this (these) interaction(s)
        ▪ if the respondent refuses, the respondent is briefly asked to state a reason for their refusal and is then counted as non-response.

Those answering yes to the first question would then constitute the sample population, and be sent the access link to the online boundary spanner survey. A more valid response rate could then be calculated as the ratio of respondents providing a positive answer on the first question and the number of completed surveys received. Furthermore, reasons for non-participation can then be investigated more closely by studying the answers to the third question. One of the possible reasons for non-participation by individuals with boundary roles is survey overload in the Flemish administration. Multiple invited respondents explicitly informed us that they did take up boundary spanner roles in interorganiaitonal interactions with the horizontal departments, but had already received multiple requests to participate in survey research in a limited time-frame, and could not find the time to acknowledge all requests due to their significant workload. Sheehan (2001) argues that the increase in unsolicited e-mail to Internet users in combination with increases in the amount of surveys a particular group of respondents is asked to complete, are important explanations for decreasing response rates. Good coordination of data collection in the framework of various research efforts towards a particular group, such as civil servants in the Flemish administration, is thus not only necessary for reasons of efficiency but also for reasons of data quality.

A second problem is the drop-out of respondents who opened but did not complete the survey. Although the boundary spanner survey was pre-tested in two rounds on the basis of which we adapted question formulation, survey length and survey structure, several respondents used the free-text comment option in the boundary spanner survey to indicate that the survey was long and that some questions were difficult to answer. Although the effect of survey length on response rates is quite contested (see footnote 21 under 5.5.3.), methodological considerations of respondent fatigue as well as the principles of parsimony, efficiency and respect for the respondents' time suggest giving preference to shorter surveys whenever possible. We thus suggest reducing the total length of the boundary spanner survey (one obvious avenue is to delete module V of the boundary spanner survey, which gauged organisational culture but was not used for this dissertation, and adapting some items in the survey to make them easier to interpret (infra).)

Mapping the distribution of administrational trust and distrust

Some further methodological reflections relate to our efforts to map the distribution of administrational trust and distrust in the Flemish administration, which we have presented in chapter 6.

First, although our findings did not confirm Lewicki et al.'s (1998) postulation that 'high trust, high distrust' configurations are most prevalent in modern and complex interactions, they did suggest that the dominant

'trade-off' perspective on individuals' trust and distrust in a counterpart is an overly simplistic typology, as individual boundary spanners' trust and distrust evaluations are sometimes (albeit not frequently) ambivalent. Thus, rather than a predictive theory of the distribution of interorganisational trust and distrust in complex interactions, we argue that the 'quadrants' perspective is a valuable typology through which the social reality of (interorganisational) trust can be interpreted, measured and 'mapped'.

Second, we note that our efforts to map the distribution of administrational trust and distrust through epistemologically 'objective' methods such as Likert scales and RI selection frequency tallies confronts us with the social constructivist nature of administrational trust and distrust and challenges underlying positivist assumptions about the ontological status of administrational trust and distrust. While our research has highlighted that the assumption of (at least) partial objectivism is a useful premise on the basis of which to expand our knowledge about interorganisational trust, we suggest that there may be great value in more social constructivist approaches to interorganisational trust in the public administration.

Measuring dimensions and internal dynamics of the trust process

The quantitative measures we have used to assess and investigate the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process were based on tried and tested instruments, and were discussed elaborately in 5.3.3.3. Perceived trustworthiness was assessed on the basis of the Mayer and Davis (1999) Organisational Trust Inventory measure, as it was adapted by Beccera et al. (2008) and extended by an additional four-item construct for perceived compliance. The willingness to suspend vulnerability was assessed using Curall and Judge's (1996) Boundary Spanner Trust' instrument with regards to communication and surveillance, using item prompts for behavioural intentions as suggested by McEvily and Tortoriello (2011). Risk-taking behaviour was assessed using the same Boundary Spanner Trust instrument, but using item prompts for actual behaviour rather than intentions. All measures showed high internal consistency, suggesting reliable scales and good internal validity. However, as we have noted in chapter 7, the correlation between the quantitative measures for willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour was particularly high, surpassing the threshold of r= .8, which suggests that the respondents did not make an empirical distinction between both constructs (Field, 2009). We see two possible explanations for the extremely high values of the correlation coefficients in the quantitative samples (which are not mutually exclusive). The first explanation is that the correlation between both constructs is really as high as the quantitative findings suggest, but that this correlation hides two positive causal effects which work in opposite directions. The second explanation is that the correlation between both constructs is not as high as the quantitative findings suggest, and that there is thus an issue of internal validity. Both explanations require further research on the basis of different methodologies.

The first possibility is that the relationship between boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability and their risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions is really as high as the quantitative findings suggest, and that there is thus barely any difference between boundary spanners'

willingness to suspend vulnerability and their risk-taking behaviour. However, while qualitative interviews did corroborate the finding of a strong positive relationship between boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability and their effective risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions, they also suggested (especially in interviews about distrusted interactions) that boundary spanners' decision discretion mediates the causal effect of their individual willingness to suspend vulnerability on effective risk-taking behaviour. Thus, we have suggested that the large quantitative correlation may hide bidirectional causality, as the individual willingness to suspend vulnerability of boundary spanners with a large extent of decision discretion may determine their risk-taking behaviour in interorganisational interactions, while the attitudes of boundardy spanners with little decision discretion may, over time, become socialised into the behavioural risk-taking behaviours they are instructed to carry out by their organisations.

The second possibility is a problem of internal validity regarding the quantitative measures for willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour, meaning that the measures did not succeed in successfully measuring both dimensions as separate constructs. There are various explanations for such a lack of empirical distinction between both dimensions. A first possible explanation for a lack of internal validity is that the item prompt differences for the willingness to suspend vulnerability items and the risk-taking behaviour items were too similar to seperately measure the 'attitudinal' willingness to suspend vulnerability and the behavioural manifestation of such an attitude. Indeed, the high correlation between both items may suggest that most respondents did not significantly distinguish between both items. This would suggest that McEvily and Tortoriello (2013) were overly optimistic in their assertion that the 'Boundary Spanner Trust' instrument can be used to measure both the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour (at least when both dimensions are measured in one single study). A second possible explanation for a lack of internal validity is the occurrence of question order effects, or 'priming': prior items (primes) in a questionnaire affect subsequent items (targets). It is possible that the items for willingness to suspend vulnerability primed the responses to the (highly similar) items for risk-taking behaviour, as the former immediately preceded the latter. However, question order is not a mechanical phenomenon, the precise effect of priming is still disputed in the methodological literature, and it is acknowledged that some effect of context on respondents' answers can never be fully avoided, particularly when using survey measures as proxies to gauge human judgement and human attitudes (Van de Walle and Van Ryzin, 2011). It is for instance possibile that asking respondents about their risk-taking behaviour directly after asking them about their willingness to suspend vulnerability primed them to provide answers that show that they 'believe in what they do, and do what they believe in'. Thus, we conjecture that the high correlation between willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour may be, at least in part, an artefact of our measurement instrument. One possible solution to avoid structural issues with question order effects and structural priming is to have the survey software automatically randomise the order in which each respondent is presented with the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process, much like we did during qualitative interviews by randomising the order in which we discussed the various dimensions with the respondents. A third explanation is that survey

methods are appropriate to measure attitudes but less appropriate to measure actual behaviour. While knowledge about latent attitudes such as the willingness to suspend vulnerability must neccesarily rely on self-reported measures that act as proxies to tap into latent constructs, explicit behaviour is observable, and is thus more accurately measured through direct observation such as in experimental 'trust games' or participatory observation rather than through self-reports and proxy measures which are more sensitive to social desirability bias. Thus, if doing so is feasible in the context of the research design, the internal validity for risk-taking behaviour can be improved by measuring risk-taking behaviour through direct observational methods rather than survey or interview methods.

Therefore, although the theoretical framework, the quantitative data and the qualitative data all support a strong and positive relation between willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour we suggest that the very large correlation found on the basis of the boundary spanner survey is to be interpreted with due care for possible problems of internal validity and the possibility of bidirectional causality.

Measuring interaction-specific reasons for the trust process

While scales to measure micro-level trusting predispositions have received significant attention in various strains of the trust literature, we did not find validated measures in the extant trust literature for interaction-specific macro- and meso-level determinants of interorganisational trust. Therefore, we have developed our own set of items to measure the perceived presence of macro- and meso-level interaction aspects in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. The measures were developed in order to assess the perceived presence of interaction aspects expected to affect the trust process, on the basis of the theoretical expectations formulated in chapter 4. However, in hindsight we note that the quantitative measures developed for this purpose require further refinement, as some items were formulated in a way that made analysis and interpretation challenging. In particular, we do suggest to reformulate the items used to measure macro-level informal salient normative frameworks. The formulation in their current form asked respondents to report their agreement with the statement that their supervisor/politically responsible minister 'clearly had trust in this organisation with regard to this relationship' in survey module III (RI of trust), while it asked respondents to report their agreement with the statement that their supervisor/politically responsible minister 'clearly had distrust in this organisation with regard to this relationship' in survey module IV (RI of distrust). While both items measure the extent to which the normative referent's norms are in line with the boundary spanners' own trust evaluation, and both indicate the extent to which normative referents contribute to a 'culture of trust' regarding the interorganisational interaction, the difference in the formulation of this question complicated comparison between trusted and distrusted interactions regarding the average scores and the correlations of this variable with dimensions of the interorganisational trust process. Therefore, the internal validity and comparability of these items can be improved by formulating them in the same way for survey modules III and IV, asking respondents to indicate their agreement with the statement that their

administrative supervisors / politically responsible ministers 'clearly had trust in this organisation with regard to this relationship'.

Furthermore, considering the results of our study, we also recommend to adopt an additional macro-level informal measure that gauges the perceived presence of an institutional culture of 'government-wide administrative community'.

> 10.1.2.2.   *Reflections upon the boundary spanner interviews*

Some reflections upon the qualitative component of our research are in place here. The qualitative interviews were essential to understand the causal mechanisms behind correlations observed on the basis of the cross-sectional survey, and to identify additional macro- and meso-level interaction aspects with an important impact on the interorganisational trust process which were not included in the initial theoretical model. On the whole, the data we collected in the qualitative interviews was richer and provided more relevant insights about boundary spanners' trust evaluations than the boundary spanner survey, especially considering the context-dependent and subjective nature of interorganisational trust and distrust, which we only managed to capture to a limited extent with standardised survey questions. During the debriefing at the end of the interviews, multiple boundary spanners emphasised that interorganisational trust and distrust are never absolute truths, that trust evaluations are very rarely black and white, and that in-depth interviews are essential instruments to provide nuanced descriptions and contextualised insights into the mechanisms behind interorganisational trust and distrust in the horizontal departments. Both our own experiences and boundary spanners' comments during interview debriefing support Saunders' (2012) contention that the card sort method in qualitative interviews allows more focus on the participants' perspectives, the contexts of their interactions, and the meanings they attribute to particular feelings and opinions. This is illustrated in the following quotes.

- *I: A very final question then, the method of this interview, do you think we focused on the right issues, or are there still elements of which you say... I didn't spend enough time on this to really understand that trust well?*

    A10: (...) I think that it is important that when you see texts about this, that you shouldn't always believe them. I do think that the interview method is in fact a better technique than studying documents. I do believe that. Documents don't always contain the whole truth.

- *I: (...) do you feel like you were able to say everything you had to say about your relation with [department A]? Or are there any other elements...*
    B1: No, no, If I now think about what was said, it's far more nuanced than what I indicated (in the boundary spanner survey), because that sounded rather harsh, the distrust in the interaction with [department A],... and these cards do allow to nuance that. But what I will remember most is that it is highly context-dependent. The situation in which you find yourself, and what the possibilities are toward the future. It may be very different in five, ten years from now.

The boundary spanners generally considered the card sort interview technique to be an interesting and enjoyable experience that challenged them to think about interorganisational trust in their own professional realities in a structured way. These observations are also in line with Saunders' (2012) contention that using the card sort method in qualitative interviews builds rapport between researcher and respondent and are enjoyable for the respondents.

- **A4**: *I am surprised we have been talking for an hour an a half.*
  I: Well, time flies when you're having fun!
  A4: *That is true, so that means that it was interesting for me, and it is an opportunity to take a moment and think about it, because that is something you usually don't do.*

- **I: Was everything clear, was it not too abstract, not too difficult to answer some of these questions?**
  A7: *No, not at all. It does make you think in fact (...) I think it is interesting that these things are also investigated, perhaps I go a bit further along with it. But I hope such things can also have an effect on the practice...*

- **B2**: *I think you guide the interviews in a good way, because it was very difficult to... it's very subtle, the differences are very subtle. If you talk about it with an HR-consultant, it'll soon seem like one big soup (...) Yeah, it is structured, while it isn't self-evident, that much is clear.*

The qualitative card sort interviews were primarily aimed at better understanding why respondents selected a particular interorganisational interaction as a reference for high interorganisational trust or distrust. This included understanding how boundary spanners perceive the trustworthiness of the selected counterpart, their willingness to suspend vulnerability toward the counterpart, and their risk-taking behaviour in interactions with the counterpart, and understanding how these three dimensions were affected by macro- and meso- level aspects of the selected interactions. In other words, by inviting boundary spanners to speak about their reference interactions of trust or distrust, we actively 'primed' the boundary spanners' responses towards trust or distrust, in order to better understand which mechanisms explain their trust evaluations in these two 'extreme cases'. In this instance, the priming effect of boundary spanners' RI selection should not be considered as a problem for internal validity, but rather as a conscious methodological choice in order to enable the comparison of the theoretical model in two extreme cases, thus supporting the reliability and external validity of the theoretical model over the widest possible variety of cases. Although it is possible that the invitation to speak about their own RI of trust or distrust may have primed the respondents to be more positive or negative about dimensions of their trust in the counterpart organisation and aspects of their interaction with the counterpart organisation, there is no reason to expect that this would somehow affect how respondents consider the mechanisms of their interorganisational trust evaluation to work. Furthermore, by consistently asking boundary spanners to illustrate their answers with real-life examples, we were able to detect whether boundary spanners' responses were based on specific experiences, motivated by more general beliefs, values and predispositions, or whether boundary spanners simply did not have an opinion regarding certain dimensions or interaction aspects (Van de Walle and Van Ryzin, 2011). Indeed, active priming of the respondents toward trusted or distrusted referents by forcing them to specifiy two particular interorganisational interactions was the methodological premise that allowed comparative analysis by creating a maximum extent of variation on the dependent variables in both the quantitative and the qualitative component of our study. The following quote illustrates that boundary spanners experienced this forced selection of two different RI as a confrontational, but useful method to better understand how and why interorganisational trust varies among different referents.

- **I: (...) do you feel like you were able to say everything you had to say about your distrust in [department A]?**

  B4: *Oh I think so... because I have the feeling that I've been so negative now, and I don't want to come across so negative because they do good work, [department A]. But it was just at that moment I thought I have to*

complete this so I will choose [department A],... and it is effectively so because they do score lower on that... because I always compare with something else.

Nonetheless, some further methodological refinement of the card sort interviews is in place. In particular, in the light of our findings, we suggest to add two cards to the card sort excersice, to reflect the findings of our research. These cards could suggest 'a sense of belonging to an administrative community', and 'the distribution of power in this interaction' as potentially important determinants of the dimensions of the respondents' subjective trust process.

> 10.1.3. *Reflections upon the external validity of the conclusions and recommendations*

A final reflection regards the external validity of the conclusions and recommendations resulting from this research. We will first discuss generalistation of the findings within the Flemish administration, and then discuss generalisation of the findings beyond the Flemish administration.

We first discuss generalisation of our findings within the Flemish administration. We argue that the causal explanations found in the qualitative samples can be generalised to the quantitative samples, as they were shown to be representative for the broader quantitative samples of trusted and distrusted interactions. The question that remains is to which extent the quantitative sample can be generalised to the wider population of 'boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration', considering the problem of not having a reliable sample frame, as discussed in 10.1.2.1. Yin (1994) refers to the difference between analytical generalisation and statistical generalisation, and argues that analytical generalisation is not generalisation to some defined population that has been sampled, but to a theory of the phenomenon being studied, a theory that may have much wider applicability than the particular case studied. Calder, Philips and Tybout (1982) argued that theory is applied beyond the research setting rather than beyond the sample, and that inquiry into general theory thus does not neccesarily require statistical generalisation. Our research questions one and three were aimed at better understanding the roles and mechanisms of interorganisational trust in public administration, thus aiming at analytical, rather than statistical generalisation. In this respect, we argue that analytical generalisation of our theoretical and explanatory findings regarding the role and the mechanisms of administrational trust, as well as generalisation of our recommendations which are built upon these findings, is appropriate for all interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. However, we recommend reluctance in generalising findings regarding research question two, since the generalisation of descriptive findings does require statistical generalisation. While statistical generalisation should thus be avoided regarding the finding that a large majority of the surveyed boundary spanners has high trust, low distrust in the Flemish horizontal departments, we do argue that analytical generalisation is appropriate for the finding that the 'quadrant perspective' provides a more accurate typology than the 'trade-off' perspective for the examination of the surveyed boundary spanners' evaluations of interorganisational trust and distrust.

Of course, the generalisation of our findings within the Flemish administration must also be related to the temporal context in which this research has been conducted. For instance, respondents referred

extensively to the institutional ambiguity before, during and after the May 2014 Flemish elections, and to the pressure of budgetary austerity that emerged in the wake of the European sovereign debt crisis and was amplified by the new Flemish coalition, which was more conservative in terms of fiscal expenditure than the previous Flemish coalition. As this temporal context changes, the macro- and meso- interaction aspects of interorganisational interactions with Flemish horizontal departments will change too, which may make it difficult to replicate the results of this study at future points in time. One particularly important difference is of course that the post-2014 Flemish coalition has fused the horizontal departments DAR and BZ into the new horizontal department KB (Kanselarij en Bestuur), as such de facto changing the set of interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration. Although our findings are thus based upon a temporally contextualised 'snapshot', and the descriptive findings in particular are thus already 'obsolete' by the time this dissertation is presented, we argue that our exploratory findings about the role of administrational trust and distrust and our explanatory findings about the mechanisms of administrational trust will still apply to interorganisational interactions in the Flemish administration, and provide a useful perspective on interorganisational trust. However, the external validity beyond the specific temporal context in which our research was conducted can only be established with certainty through future replication of our research.

The question of generalisation beyond the unit of analysis of interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, is more difficult to answer. Can our revised model of the mechanisms of administrational trust generalise to interorganisational trust in a broader sense? Statistical generalisation is problematic as there are no data available about how boundary spanners in the Flemish public administration compare with boundary spanners in other organisational, professional or cultural contexts. However, even analytical generalisation to other contexts is challenging in this case, because there is substantial evidence to suggest that culture might moderate the mechanisms that drive (interorganisational) trust (Reiche et al., 2014 Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2013; Deakin and Wilkinson 1998). Saunders, Skinner, Dietz, Gillespie and Lewicki (2010) edited a book that focused on the etic - emic debate in organisational trust research, which was built around the premise that sectoral, professional and organisational cultures may provoke variance in trust's fundamental dynamics. Although much of the research on trust has adopted an etic perspective, assuming that trust concepts, models and measures developed in Western countries are adequate for the study of trust in other (national) cultural contexts, this approach has been criticised by scholars calling for a 'fresh approach' that starts from the premise that the level, nature and meaning of trust may vary across different national contexts (emic) while some core mechanisms of the trust process are universal (etic). For instance, Ferrin and Gillespie (2010) argued that there are both culturally specific and universally applicable determinants and consequences of trust. A study by Wasti, Tan, Brower, and Onder (2007) argues that Turks, Singaporeans and Americans privilege 'ability, benevolence and integrity' indicators of perceived trustworthiness very differently. Culture determines in part how we think and what we do (Tinsley, 1998), including what we understand as foundational to trust and what we consider to be trustworthy conduct, not only from ourselves but also from others (Zaheer and Zaheer, 2006; Dietz et al. 2010). Integrated emic/etic approaches, such as the one

we have developed here by combining a model of 'universal' internal dynamics of the trust process with interaction-specific reasons for that trust process, can thus be considered as a promising avenue for future research (Zaheer and Zaheer, 2006). In this respect, we argue that the 'internal dynamics of the trust process' apply to interorganisational trust problems beyond the samples investigated here, where the trust process is embedded in the macro,- meso- and micro- level interaction aspects of the particular contexts in which it is investigated. Thus, we do consider that the theoretical and analytical frameworks developed in this dissertation are applicable in a wide variety of interorganisational interaction contexts. In particular, the revised model of the mechanisms of administrational trust we have presented in section 8.5 would allow interesting replication in a variety of contexts, as it combines an 'etic' perspective on the internal dynamics of the interorganisational trust process with an 'emic' perspective on the effects of interaction-specific aspects on the trust process.

> 10.2.   Contributions of this study and suggestions for further research

By pondering about these reflections upon the research conducted, it should become clear that much work still remains to be done. The multidisciplinary field of trust research is densely populated, but despite the now very substantial and dispersed literature, explanatory mechanisms underlying interorganisational trust are still not very well understood. In particular, we note that the conceptual and theoretical work that is being done by trust scholars is rarely applied and tested comprehensively in empirical research agendas, which has severly restricted the accumulation of knowledge regarding the mechanisms of interorganisational trust. In this study, we have attempted to deductively develop a conceptual model in which the universal trust process was presented as inhertently embedded in the context of interaction-specific aspects of boundary spanners' interorganisational cooperative processes and exchanges. This model was applied to study interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, theoretical conjectures on the basis of this model were tested, and it was complemented with new insights stemming from this analysis. In that respect, this research has been an effort in theory-testing as well as theory-building.

The academic contribution of this study lies on the one hand in the proposals it has made to employ new perspectives in interorganisational trust research in and beyond the discipline of public administration, and on the other hand in its proposal for a revised model of the mechanisms of administrational trust, which was presented in section 8.5, discussed as practical management model for interorganisational trust in section 9.3, and operationalised in specific recommendations to the Flemish administration in section 9.4. However, as we have argued in the previous sections, further research is required to empirically validate this revised model of mechanisms of administrational trust. On the one hand, further research can test the extent to which the revised model is statistically generalisable by replicating our study within and beyond (the Flemish) public administration on the basis of a revised boundary spanner survey, as discussed in the previous section. On the other hand, further research can explore the internal dynamics and interaction-specific mechanisms of the trust process more in- depth, by submitting the revised model to rigourous empirical testing using a variety of methodological designs. We particularly consider experimental research

designs useful to strengten both the internal and external validity of our revised model by testing the causal explanations underlying the revised model as suggested by our study. In what follows, we therefore discuss replication, validation and application of new perspectives in future research about interorganisational trust in and beyond (the Flemish) public administration.

> 10.2.1. *Replicating the study within and beyond (Flemish) public administration*

The conclusions and recommendations of this study can be validated further through replication within and beyond the context of (Flemish) public administration, using an amended version of the boundary spanner survey (see our discussion about the limitations of the boundary spanner survey in section 10.1.2.1). More particularly, we have suggested that the internal and external validity of the boundary spanner survey can be improved by further efforts to establish a clear sample frame for boundary spanners, shortening the boundary spanner survey by dropping module V, automatically randomising the order in which respondents are requested to answer items about the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in RI of trust and distrust, and reformulating the interaction-specific aspects items gauging the perceived presence of administrative and political leaders' salient norms of trust.

In addition to increasing the validity of our research through these methodological refinements, we argued that the external validity beyond the specific temporal context of our study can only be established through future replication of our study in the Flemish administration. Such future replication would also enable an assessment of the consistency of our findings, as we have discussed in the previous section that respondents repeatedly mentioned the May 2014 Flemish elections as well as the pressure of budgetary austerity in relation to particular temporal characteristics which affected their perceptions about institutional ambiguity and calculative considerations in interorganisational information exchange interactions with horizontal departments.

Furthermore, we have also argued that the external validity of our findings can be increased by replicating our study in the context of other interorganisational interactions, both within and beyond public adminisration. The boundary spanner survey, particularly after the methodological refinements described above are implemented, is a modular tool which may be applied in a variety of interorganisational interaction contexts to map interorganisational trust and distrust and describe the mechanisms of interorganisational trust in trusted and distrusted Reference Interactions. Modules III and IV in particular are highly generic, while module I would require only minimal reformulation. Module II was specifically developed for interorganisational interactions with Flemish horizontal departments, but it can be adapted to any set of interorganisational interactions for which researchers have an interest in investigating interorganisational trust and distrust.

> 10.2.2. *Validating the revised model of the mechanisms of administrational trust*

Further research can submit our revised model of the mechanisms of administrational trust to rigourous empirical testing, particularly when such testing is conducted on the basis of research designs that allow statistical generalisation of causal inferences. Cross-sectional survey methods are limited in this respect.

However, experimental designs, or mixed-method approaches in which qualitative investigation of causality in small-N samples is embedded in correlational analysis of representative large-N samples, are more appropriate to combine statistical generalisation with determination of causation. The moderating factors in the interdimensional dynamics of the interorganisational trust process in particular require further validation, as our evidence for these factors is currently only based on qualitative interviews with boundary spanners in the Flemish administration. The following elements of our revised model of the mechanisms of administrational trust in particular could be tested as future research hypotheses:

- The feedback loop between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness in distrusted interactions: we have argued that our finding of a direct partial relationship between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness in RI of distrust suggests that the trust process is self-reinforcing, but only until a certain level of perceived trustworthiness is achieved, after which its self-reinforcing dynamic becomes a self-sustaining dynamic. On the basis of this finding, we argued that the behavioural dimension of the trust process is an important point of managerial focus when breaking vicious cycles of distrust, as behavioural experiences engender learning effects that feed new relational information into perceptions of counterpart trustworthiness. This argument is in line with Luhmann's (1979) contention that distrust has an inherent tendency to endorse and reinforce itself because it does not produce relational information to contradict it. This conclusion may be validated in future research by formulating it as an experimental hypothesis. For example, an experimental design could consist of four phases with a 'trust treatment group (TGt)', a 'distrust treatment group (TGdt)', and a control group (CG).
    - Phase 1: TGt receives positive reputational information about a counterpart, TGdt receives negative reputational information about a counterpart, and CG receives neutral information about a counterpart.
    - Phase 2: Pre-test survey measure of control variables and perceived trustworthiness in all experimental groups to verify that treatment was succesfull, thus perceived trustworthiness in TGt > CG > TGdt.
    - Phase 3: All groups engage in ten subsequent trust games with a (virtual) counterpart with a randomised sequence of four negative, four positive, and two neutral outcomes.
    - Phase 4: Post-test survey measure of perceived trustworthiness in all experimental groups to test H_o, which predicts a statistically equal increase in trustworthiness in all three groups after the behavioural experience, while H_a states that the increase in trustworthiness will be significantly greater in TGdt than in TGt after the behavioural experience.
- A causal relationship between perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability which is moderated by the ratio between perceived trustee-dependent / trustee-independent vulnerability: we have argued that the causal effect of perceived trustworthiness on the willingness to suspend vulnerability will be larger when trustors perceive that their vulnerability is

largely dependent upon the actions of their counterpart rather than upon factors over which the counterpart has no control. In other words, we would expect that the causal effect of perceived trustworthiness on the willingness to suspend vulnerability is stronger in an interaction in which the trustor considers that 80 per cent of their vulnerability is dependent upon the trustee's actions than in an interaction in which the trustor considers that only 20 per cent of their vulnerability is dependent upon the trustee's actions. This insight has large repercussions for trust management in public administration, as the consequence is that an individual counterparts' trustworthiness is a highly relevant dimension for trust management in bilateral interactions with a high degree of interdependency between the actors, but is of lower consequence in extremely complex, multilateral interactions in which trustors are vulnerable to factors over which their counterpart has little control. The validity of this finding, which is based on qualitative interview data, can be increased by testing it as a hypothesis in future research. While this moderation hypothesis could be tested in a cross-sectional survey design by including a measure that asks respondents to assess the perceived ratio between trustee-dependent/trustee-independent vulnerability and quantitatively estimating the moderating impact upon the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability, a more rigorous test could entail an experimental design. For example, a potential experiment could consist of four phases with a 'high ratio treatment group' (TGhr), a 'low ratio treatment group' (TGlr), and a control group (CG).

- o Phase 1: TGhr is informed that they will engage in a trust game of which the outcome depends upon the trustee in 7/10 exchanges and upon chance in 3/10 exchanges, TGlr is informed that the outcome depends upon the trustee in 3/10 exchanges and upon chance in 7/10 exchanges, CG is informed that the outcome depends upon the trustee in 5/10 exchanges and upon chance in 5/10 exchanges. All groups receive the same briefing about the counterparts' trustworthiness.

- o Phase 2: Pre-test survey measure of control variables and perceived trustworthiness in all experimental groups to verify that groups are equal.

- o Phase 3: All groups engage in ten subsequent trust games with a (virtual) counterpart with a randomised sequence of four negative, four positive, and two neutral outcomes.

- o Phase 4: Post-test survey measure of perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability in all experimental groups to test H_0, which predicts a statistically equal positive relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in all three groups, while H_a states that the positive relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability is stronger in TGhr than in TGlr.

- A causal relationship between willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour that is moderated by the boundary spanners' decision discretion: we have argued that the causal effect of a boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability upon their risk-taking behaviour in the interorganisational interaction will be greater if the boundary spanner has a larger extent of

discretion to decide how to act on behalf of their organisation in the interorganisational interaction. Particularly when the boundary spanners' discretion is high, the large correlation found between these two dimensions can be explained as a strong causal effect from willingness to suspend vulnerability to risk-taking behaviour on the basis of the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Where such discretion is low however, we have argued that a positive causal effect may occur in the opposite direction, as boundary spanners internalise the risk-taking behaviour they are instructed to profess, and their attitudes are socialised along the lines of organisational behaviour decided by other decision-makers on the long term due to institutional isomorphist mechanisms. Although the empirical evidence mainly supported the former directional effect rather than the latter, further understanding of the mechanisms by which these dimensions are related is essential for the development of effective strategies to activate the behavioural potential of interorganisational trust and break vicious cycles of distrust, and should therefore be elaborated through further hypothesis testing. For this relationship in particular, causal inference is essential, which limits the potential of cross-sectional survey research. Experimental designs also seem inappropriate here, as mechanisms of socialisation and internalisation work on the long term, and are difficult to emulate in an articifical experimental setting. Therefore, qualitative approaches aimed at gaining deeper understanding of the causal mechanisms between willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour within the real-life interaction contexts of interorganisational boundary spanners, seem to be the most useful approaches to test this mechanism further.

- Differential causal effects of macro-formal, macro-informal, meso-calculative and meso-relational interaction aspects on the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process: Our findings suggest that macro- and meso-level interaction aspects directly affect the various dimensions of the interorganisational trust process to various degrees. While macro-level formal and informal interaction aspects were found to have direct causal effects on all three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process, meso-level calculative interaction aspects were found to directly affect perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability, while meso-level relational interaction aspects were found to directly affect perceived trustworthiness, and only to lesser extent the willingness to suspend vulnerability. This finding constitutes an essential contribution to our understanding of how the (etic) 'universal trust process' is embedded in (emic) interaction-specific characteristics, and thus represents a fundamental contribution to the general interorganisational trust literature. We suggest that any due understanding of interorganisational trust must acknowledge the multi-level emic embeddedness of the interorganisational trust process, and must therefore acknowledge that institutional, rational and social exchange theories provide complementary perspectives through which the mechanisms of interorganisational trust can be studied and understood. However, these findings do require further validation, particularly in larger quantitative samples and through more advanced quantitative analytical techniques, which allow the estimation of both direct and indirect relations between the dimensions of the

interorganisational trust process and the interaction-specific aspects of particular interorganisational exchanges. Considering the limited size of the quantitative samples collected for this dissertation, we did not attempt such advanced quantitative modelling.

- A final avenue for further valiation of the revised model of the mechanisms of interorganisational trust involves further inquiry into the causal relationship between calculative interaction aspects and the dimensions of interorganisational trust.

  o First, some contradictory findings were found regarding the relationship between asset specificity and interorganisational trust. In our research, quantitative evidence in sample 1 indicated a counter-hypothesised positive relationship between asset specificity and perceived trustworthiness, although qualitative evidence in sample 4 did support the expected negative relationship between asset specificity and perceived trustworthiness. Furthermore, evidence from samples 1, 2 and 4 also supported the hypothesised negative relationship between asset specificity and boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability, although boundary spanners in sample 2 argued that they were willing to suspend vulnerability even though the costs (asset specificity) outweighed the benefits in order to maintain close relationships with the horizontal counterpart, due to the implicit assumption that cooperation would bring benefits to their organisation on the longer term. Thus, although findings regarding the relationship between asset specificity and the interorganisational trust process mainly support the hypothesised negative causal relationship, they also contradict it to some extent. In their meta-analysis of drivers of interorganisational trust, Zhong et al. (2014) also noted inconsistent empirical findings regarding the relationship between asset specificity and interorganisational trust. They argued that rational choice perspectives consider asset specificity as a cost component in interorganisational interactions, which motivates organisations to behave opportunistically in order to avoid such costs, and thus reduces interorganisational trust. However, social exchange perspectives suggest that boundary spanners may accept a high extent of asset specificity in interorganisational interactions in order to express goodwill and capability toward trusted partners, with the intention to elicit reciprocation and develop relation-based trust in the interorganisational interaction. Thus, where asset specificity is concerned, calculative (considerations of costs and benefits) and relational (considerations of reciprocated care, concern and familiarity) perspectives contradict rather than complement each other. Zhong et al. (2014) found that asset specificity is negatively related to interorganisational trust in their meta-analysis of literature on interorganisational trust, but their analysis did not take the multi-dimensional nature of interorganisational trust into account, and therefore did not allow for the possibility that different dimensions of the trust process may relate in different ways to particular interaction-specific aspects. Thus, we suggest that further investigation of the relationship between asset specificity and interorganisational trust takes the

multidimensional nature of the interorganisational trust process into account, and considers the hypothesis that the relationship between asset specificity and interorganisational trust may behave differently in different dimensions of the trust process: boundary spanners accept more asset specificity from counterparts they consider trustworthy, but they are more willing to suspend vulnerability if they consider that asset specificity in the interaction is lower.

o Second, we have introduced the extent to which boundary spanners ground their evaluations on organisational and personal cost-benefit considerations as a control variable in our quantitative analysis of the relationship between calculative interaction aspects and the dimensions of the interorganisational trust process. Quantitative findings suggest a negative relationship between the extent to which boundary spanners ground their evaluations in such calculative considerations and their willingness to suspend vulnerability and engagement in risk-taking behaviour. In qualitative interviews about the most frequently selected RI of distrust, boundary spanners provided examples of far more explicit and specific calculative costs/benefit considerations than in interviews about the most frequently selected RI of trust, where such considerations were more implicit and automatic. We have no theoretical explanation for these findings, but postulate that this relationship between the boundary spanners' 'calculativeness' and interorganisational trust may be an interesting avenue for further research, as it raises the important question whether interorganisational trust can be managed and stimulated by attributing explicit benefits to the suspension of vulnerability in interorganisational interactions, for instance by allocating a bonus to boundary spanners who successfully intitiate and complete interorganisational cooperative projects. The discussion about this important topic is certainly far from over in the trust literature, although more than two decades have passed since Oliver Williamson (1993) challenged calculative perspectives on trust by arguing that calculative trust is a contradiction in terms, which is misleading and at best reduntant, Quod Erat Demonstrandum by the 2014 'Journal of Trust Research' special issue, which was titled 'Trust, calculativeness, and relationships: A special issue 20 years after Williamson's warning' (Möllering, 2014). In our own approach to interorganisational trust, we have considered that the trust process encompasses calculation but also goes beyond it, as even the most calculative trustor must 'overdraw' on available information and make a 'leap of faith' by acting *as if* they were completely sure of their decision, even though this is impossible under conditions of radical uncertainty and boundary rationality. Thus, future research should (and indoubtedly will) be conducted regarding this "*potentially never-ending but, nevertheless, productive debate on what counts as trust and what is in the domain of trust research*" (Möllering, 2014: 12).

> 10.2.3. *New perspectives on interorganisational trust in and beyond public administration*

Finally, our study highlighted a number of perspectives which challenge traditional approaches to interorganisational trust, which have been argued to inhibit constructive progress in how we understand and investigate interorganisational trust in (but also beyond) public administration. Application of these perspectives can be valuable for researchers who are dedicated to investigating interorganisational trust in detail, but also for researchers who only touch upon the surface of the subject when investigating interorganisational interaction and cooperation in the context of other research topics, such as public sector coordination, the implementation of policy regarding so-called 'wicked issues', public-public or public private partnership research, or research about grand-scale models of public sector reform.

> 10.2.3.1. *Breaking free from an optimistic bias toward trust*

A first perspective highlighted by our study challenges the optimistic bias toward trust in and beyond public administration research. Both (interorganisational) trust and distrust must be considered to have the potential to be functional or dysfunctional in interorganisational interactions, depending on the way and the context in which they are used in interorganisational interactions. Furthermore, preferences for trust or distrust as principles of coordination in interorganisational relations are in part subjective, and thus depend on individuals' personalities and their moral, ideological, or cultural belief systems. We certainly support the contention made by public administration scholars that interorganisational trust becomes ever more important in post-bureaucratic contexts (see for instance the dissertation of Jan Rommel (2012)), in particular where public administration is confronted with 'wicked' issues involving organisations in different policy fields and different levels of government (for instance the fight against fiscal fraud, climate change, international terrorism, comprehensive public sector reform, etcetera). Thus, we plead for a more conservative, balanced and neutral attitude toward interorganisational trust (and distrust), with more awareness for potential dysfunctional aspects of interorganisational trust and functional aspects of interorganisational distrust, as a complement to the existing emphasis on functional aspects of interorganisational trust and dysfunctional aspects of interorganisational distrust. Researchers must avoid treating trust as unchallengeable catch-all panacea to problems of interorganisational cooperation.

> 10.2.3.2. *Breaking free from a trade-off perspective on trust and distrust*

A second perspective highlighted by our study challenges the trade-off perspective on trust and distrust, which has dominated approaches to interorganisational trust in public administration research due to the disciplines' reliance on secondary datasets containing traditional unidimensional survey items which assume a trust–distrust continuum (Van de Walle and Six, 2013; Bouckaert, Van de Walle and Van Roosbroeck, 2005). Our findings supported the existence of a limited extent of ambiguity in individual boundary spanners' trust/distrust evaluations toward horizontal departments in the Flemish administration, and showed that the distribution of individual boundary spanners' trust/distrust resembled a 'truncated quadrant' perspective. Therefore, we consider the 'quadrant' perspective to be a more appropriate Weberian ideal type model to describe the extent of individuals' trust/distrust in interorganisational interactions than the traditional 'trade-off' perspective. However, we acknowledge that

much research on trust will continue to rely on unidimensional measures due to pragmatic considerations in the development of questionnaires and limitations to the time spent on discussing trust during qualitative interviews. At the very least, researchers should avoid automatically equating 'high trust' to 'low distrust', and vice versa.

> 10.2.3.3. *Breaking free from unidimensional measures of trust*

A third perspective in our study challenges the unidimensional operationalisation of trust which pervades public administration research, for similar reasons as those discussed in the previous paragraph. Rommel (2012) already argued that operationalisations of interorganisational trust in public administration research should be more sophisticated than a one-dimensional item asking respondents to indicate a score between 1 and 10, and highlighted that research could explore how various dimensions of trust are managed and manipulated. Our study took the multidimensional 'universal trust process' as its point of departure, and shows that our understanding of the mechanisms of interorganisational trust may be affected by which dimension is empirically considered, and how respondents interpret uni-dimensional questions to assess their 'trust' in a counterpart; do they think about how they perceive the counterparts' trustworthiness, do they ponder about their own willingness to suspend vulnerability in a risky interaction with the counterpart, do they consider to which extent they actually engage in risk-taking behaviour with their counterpart? Conceptual discussions and empirical operationalisations of trust are often confounding because they fail to distinguish these distinct dimensions of trust (Hardin 2001), and even dedicated trust scholars only rarely use these dimensions in an integrative way. Of course, we acknowledge that studies which do not consider trust as their central topic cannot conceptualise and measure trust as elaborately as we have done here. At the very least however, researchers should clearly define which dimension of interorganisational trust they seek to assess in their empirical studies and theoretical discussions.

> 10.3. **Conclusion: looking back to understand the path ahead**

In this chapter, we have reflected about the research conducted, discussed its limitations, and suggested a number of lessons for future research about interorganisational trust in and beyond the Flemish public administration. Keeping these considerations, reflections and contributions in mind, we hope that our study about administrational trust in the Flemish administration manages to provide insights that "*advance management and policies so that government can function*" (Rabin et al., 1989: iii), which we highlighted in the very first paragraph of this dissertation as the central objective of those who are, and those who aspire to become, public administration scholars.

Samenvatting in het Nederlands

Dit proefschrift gaat over interorganisationeel vertrouwen in de Vlaamse Overheid. Het proefschrift is het resultaat van een vierjarig onderzoeksproject in opdracht van de Vlaamse Regering, in het kader van het Steunpunt Bestuurlijke Organisatie Vlaanderen – Slagkrachtige Overheid (2012-2015). De doelstelling van het onderzoek was drievoudig: het definiëren en identificeren van interorganisationeel vertrouwen in de empirische context van de overheid, het verklaren van de mechanismen van interorganisationeel vertrouwen in de empirische context van de overheid, en bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling van strategieën om interorganisationeel vertrouwen in de Vlaamse overheid te optimaliseren waar mogelijk en functioneel. Op basis van deze doelstellingen hebben we drie onderzoeksvragen voor dit project gespecifieerd:

- Wat is de rol van interorganisationeel vertrouwen in een overheidscontext? (Verkennend)
- Wat is de verdeling van interorganisationeel vertrouwen in de Vlaamse Overheid? (Beschrijvend)
- Welke mechanismen verklaren interorganisationeel vertrouwen in de Vlaamse Overheid? (Verklarend)

We hebben interorganisationeel vertrouwen in de overheid (bestuurlijk vertrouwen) gedefinieerd als "*een subjective evaluatie door boundary spanners in interorganisationele interacties binnen de overheid die worden gekarakteriseerd door risico, afhankelijkheid en onzekerheid, met betrekking tot de intentionele en gedragsmatige bereidheid om kwetsbaarheid op te schorten, op basis van positieve verwachtingen van de andere organisatie*". We ontwikkelden een 'trechtervormig' mixed-method onderzoeksdesign met vier fasen, waarin kwalitatieve en kwantitative verkennende, beschrijvende en verklarende methoden op een logische wijze aan mekaar werden geschakeld en geïntegreerd om een antwoord te kunnen bieden op de onderzoeksvragen. De eerste fase was gericht op desk research om conceptuele definities en kaders te ontwikkelen om de onderzoeksvragen mee te bestuderen. In de tweede fase verkenden we de drie onderzoeksvragen om de verkennende onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden, en beter bekend te worden met de empirische realiteit van het interorganisationele vertrouwen in de Vlaamse Overheid, in het bijzonder met betrekking tot veelvoorkomende 'trust problems' in de Vlaamse Overheid, waarbij interorganisationele interacties met horizontale departementen in het bijzonder naar voor kwamen. De derde fase bestond uit een online-survey die gericht was op boundary spanners in interorganisationele interacties met horizontale departementen in de Vlaamse overheid, en die ons in staat stelde om het interorganisationele vertrouwen en wantrouwen in de Vlaamse horizontale departementen in kaart te brengen, en kwantitatieve data over Referentie-Interacties van vertrouwen in horizontale departementen te vergelijken met kwantitatieve data over Referentie-Interacties van wantrouwen in horizontale departementen. In de vierde fase werden twintig survey-respondenten uitgenodigd voor kwalitatieve interviews, die ons in staat stelden de vaakst geselecteerde Referentie-Interactie voor interorganisationeel vertrouwen in horizontale departmenten te vergelijken met de vaakst geselecteerde Referentie-Interactie voor interorganisationeel wantrouwen in horizontale departmenten.

De bijdrage van dit proefschrift aan de eerste doelstelling (het definiëren en identificeren van interorganisationeel vertrouwen in de empirische context van de overheid) ligt in de ontwikkeling en toepassing van raamwerken om interorganisationeel vertrouwen te bestuderen en in kaart te brengen. Meerbepaald stellen we op basis van dit proefschrift dat onderzoek over interorganisationeel vertrouwen binnen en buiten de bestuurskunde kritisch moet staan tegenover:

- de optimistische vertekening naar vertrouwen, en op zijn minst moet erkennen dat interorganisationeel vertrouwen disfunctioneel kan zijn en dat interorganisationeel wantrouwen functioneel kan zijn.

- het trade-off perspectief dat uitgaat van een continuum van vertrouwen tot wantrouwen, en op zijn minst 'hoog vertrouwen' niet automatisch mag gelijkstellen aan 'laag wantrouwen' en vice versa.

- ééndimensionele metingen van vertrouwen, en er op zijn minst naar moet streven duidelijk te definiëren naar welke dimensie van interorganisationeel vertrouwen men verwijst in empirische studies en theoretische discussies

Met betrekking tot de tweede doelstelling (het verklaren van de mechanismen van interorganisationeel vertrouwen in de empirische context van de overheid), maakt dit proefschrift een bijdrage aan inzicht over hoe het 'universeel vertrouwensprocess' is ingebed in specifieke karakteristieken van interorganisationele interacties. De volgende specifieke bijdragen worden gemaakt:

- Gepercipieerde betrouwbaarheid beïnvloedt de bereidheid om kwetsbaarheid op te schorten, maar dit effect wordt gemodereerd door de ratio tussen de gepercipieerde tegenpartij-afhankelijke / tegenpartij-onafhankelijke kwetsbaarheid.

- De bereidheid om kwetsbaarheid op te schorten beïnvloedt risico-nemend gedrag, maar dit effect wordt gemodereerd door de mate waarin boundary spanners over bevoegdheid beschikken om in naam van hun organisatie te handelen.

- De feedback loop vanuit risico-nemend gedrag versterkt gepercipeerde betrouwbaarheid, maar enkel tot een bepaald niveau van gepercipeerde betrouwbaarheid is bereikt, waarna deze zelf-versterkende dynamiek een zichzelf in stand houdende dynamiek wordt.

- Macro- en meso-niveau interactie-aspecten hebben diverse directe effecten op de drie dimensies van het interorganisationele vertrouwensproces:
    - Macro-niveau 'formele' en 'informele' interactie-aspecten hebben rechtstreekse invloeden op de drie dimensies van het interorganisationele vertrouwensproces
    - Meso-niveau calculatieve interactie-aspecten hebben rechtstreekse invloeden op de 'bereidheid om kwetsbaarheid' op te schorten, en in mindere mate, op 'gepercipieerde betrouwbaarheid'.

o   Meso-niveau relationele interactie-aspecten hebben rechtstreekse invloeden op de 'gepercipieerde betrouwbaarheid', en in mindere mate, op de 'bereidheid om kwetsbaarheid op te schorten'.

De bijdrage van het proefschrift aan de derde doelstelling (bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling van strategieën om interorganisationeel vertrouwen in de Vlaamse overheid te optimaliseren waar mogelijk en functioneel) ligt in de vertaling van deze inzichten in een generiek managementmodel voor bestuurlijk vertrouwen. Dit managementmodel voor interorganisationeel vertrouwen specifieert zeven groepen aanbevelingen in drie clusters, en werd toegepast om specifieke aanbevelingen aan de Vlaamse Overheid voor te stellen.

- Ten eerste is aanbevelingsgroep A gericht op het doorbreken van vicieuze cycli van wantrouwen door 'risico-nemend gedrag' op te leggen en de norm van wederkerigheid uit te schakelen in interorganisationele interacties.

- Ten tweede zijn aanbevelingsgroepen B, C en D gericht op het bouwen van dimensies van vertrouwen.
    o   Groep B richt zich op de macro-niveau aspecten van interorganisationele interacties om 'gepercipeerde betrouwbaarheid', 'bereidheid om kwetsbaarheid op te schorten', en 'risico-nemend gedrag' te ondersteunen.
    o   Groep C richt zich op meso-niveau calculatieve aspecten om 'gepercipeerde betrouwbaarheid' en 'bereidheid om kwetsbaarheid op te schorten' verder te stimuleren.
    o   Groep D richt zich op meso-niveau relationele aspecten om 'gepercipieerde betrouwbaarheid' en in mindere mate de 'bereidheid om kwetsbaarheid op te schorten' verder te versterken.

- Ten derde richten aanbevelingsgroepen E, F en G zich op het ondersteunen van de interne dynamiek van het interorganisationele vertrouwensproces, nadat vertrouwen tot stand is gebracht in de drie dimensies van het proces, om zo cycli van vertrouwen op gang te brengen.
    o   Groep E richt zich op het versterken van de interdimensionele relatie tussen 'gepercipieerde betrouwbaarheid' en 'bereidheid om kwetsbaarheid op te schorten'.
    o   Groep F richt zich op het versterken van de interdimensionele relatie tussen 'bereidheid om kwetsbaarheid op te schorten' en 'risico-nemend gedrag'.
    o   Groep G richt zich op leren uit ervaring in interorganisationele interacties om een feedback loop te ondersteunen tussen 'risico-nemend gedrag' en 'gepercipieerde betrouwbaarheid'.

Tot slot toont het proefschrift ook nieuwe paden voor verder onderzoek, waarin de statistische veralgemeenbaarheid van het aangepaste model kan worden beproefd, of waarin de dynamieken van het aangepaste model in uiteenlopende methodologische designs aan verdere wetenschappelijke toetsing onderworpen kunnen worden.

Summary in English

This dissertation focuses on interorganisational trust in the Flemish public administration. It is the result of a four-year research project commissioned by the Flemish Government to the Flemish Policy Research Centre – Governmental Organisation – Decisive Governance (2012-2015). The objectives of our research were threefold: to define and identify interorganisational trust in the empirical reality of public administration, to explain the mechanisms of interorganisational trust in the empirical reality of public administration, and to contribute to the development of strategies to optimise interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration where such is possible and functional. On the basis of these objectives, the following research questions were specified for the project.

- What is the role of interorganisational trust in a public administration context? (Exploratory)
- What is the distribution of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration? (Descriptive)
- Which mechanisms explain interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration? (Explanatory)

We defined interorganisational trust in public administration (administrational trust), as "*a subjective evaluation made by boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions in public administration characterised by risk, dependency and uncertainty, comprising the intentional and behavioural willingness to suspend vulnerability, on the basis of positive expectations held about the counterpart organisation*". We developed a four-phase 'funnel' mixed-method research design in which qualitative and quantitative exploratory, descriptive and explanatory methods were logically sequenced and integrated in order to answer these three questions. The first phase comprised desk research in order to construct the conceptual definitions and frameworks and to address the research questions in this project. In the second phase, an exploration of all three research questions was conducted in order to answer the exploratory research question, and get more acquainted with the empirical reality of interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration, in particular regarding prevalent trust problems in the Flemish administration, which highlighted interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments. In the third phase, an online survey was conducted, which focused on boundary spanners in interorganisational interactions with horizontal departments within the Flemish administration and allowed us to 'map' interorganisational trust and distrust in the horizontal departments and to compare quantitative data about boundary spanners' Reference Interactions of trust with quantitative data about their Reference Interactions of distrust. In the fourth phase, twenty survey respondents were invited for qualitative interviews, which allowed us to compare qualitative data about the most frequently selected Reference Interaction for trust with qualitative data about the most frequently selected Reference Interaction for distrust.

The contribution of the dissertation toward the first objective (to define and identify interorganisational trust in the empirical reality of public administration) lies in the development and application of

frameworks to study and map interorganisational trust. In particular, our study suggests that research in and beyond the discipline of public administration should be critical toward dominant perspectives of:

- An optimistic bias toward trust, and, at the very least, should acknowledge that interorganisational trust can also be dysfunctional and interorganisational distrust can also be functional.
- A trade-off perspective which assumes a trust–distrust continuum, and, at the very least, should avoid automatically equating 'high trust' to 'low distrust', and vice versa.
- Unidimensional measures of trust and, at the very least, should clearly define which dimension of interorganisational trust is referred to in empirical studies and theoretical discussions.

Regarding the second objective (to explain the mechanisms of interorganisational trust in the empirical reality of public administration), this dissertation makes a contribution to our understanding of how the 'universal trust process' is embedded in interaction-specific characteristics. In particular, the following contributions are made:

- Perceived trustworthiness affects the willingness to suspend vulnerability, but the effect is moderated by the ratio between perceived trustee-dependent / trustee-independent vulnerability.
- Willingness to suspend vulnerability affects risk-taking behaviour, but the effect is moderated by the extent of boundary spanners' behavioural discretion.
- The feedback loop from risk-taking behaviour strengthens perceived trustworthiness, but only until a certain level of perceived trustworthiness is achieved, after which its self-reinforcing dynamic becomes a self-sustaining dynamic.
- Macro- and meso-level interaction aspects directly affect the various dimensions of the interorganisational trust process in various ways:
  - Macro-level formal and informal interaction aspects directly affect all three dimensions of the interorganisational trust process
  - Meso-level calculative interaction aspects directly affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability, and to lesser extent, perceived trustworthiness
  - Meso-level relational interaction aspects directly affect perceived trustworthiness, and to lesser extent, the willingness to suspend vulnerability.

The contribution of the dissertation toward the third objective (to contribute to the development of strategies to optimise interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration where such is possible and functional) lies in the translation of this revised model in a generic management model for administrational trust. This management model for interorganisational trust specifies seven groups of recommendations in three clusters, and was applied to propose specific recommendations to the Flemish administration.

- First, recommendation group A focuses on breaking cycles of distrust by coercing risk-taking behaviour and removing the norm of reciprocity in interorganisational interactions.
- Second, recommendation groups B, C and D focus on building dimensions of trust.

- Group B aims at shaping macro-level aspects of interorganisational interactions to support perceived trustworthiness, willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour.
- Group C aims at shaping meso-level calculative interaction aspects to further stimulate perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability.
- Group D focuses on meso-level relational interaction aspects to further strengthen perceptions of trustworthiness.

- Third, recommendation groups E, F and G seek to empower the internal dynamics of the interorganisational trust process after trust has been established in the individual dimensions, thus establishing self-sustaining virtuous cycles of trust.
  - Group E focuses on strengthening the interdimensional relationship between perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability.
  - Group F focuses on strengthening the interdimensional relationship between willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour.
  - Group G focuses on experience-based learning in interorganisational interactions to support a feedback loop between risk-taking behaviour and perceived trustworthiness.

Finally, the dissertation sets out news paths for future research, which may test the extent to which the revised model is statistically generalisable or explore its dynamics in further depth by submitting it to rigourous empirical testing using a variety of methodological designs.

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ANNEX

Annex to chapter 3: Exploratory survey - items

Exploratory survey items regarding distribution of administrational trust problems

From your perspective, how would you describe the trust between your organisation and different actors in Flemish public administration?"

- "Trust of my organisation in minister or his cabinet"

- "Trust of my organisation in horizontal departments such as Finances and Budgeting and Public Governance"

- "Trust of my organisation in other agencies in my policy area" (this question was not included in the survey sent to departments, and was thus only answered by agencies.)

Own measures. Items were not listed in this order in survey.
Answer options on Likert scales ranging from 1 (very limited level of trust) to 5 (very high level of trust)

Exploratory survey items regarding dimensions of administrational trust

To which extent do you agree with the following statements, considering the relationship between [your agency and the department / your department and the largest agency in your policy area]?

- The level of trust by my organisation in [...] is high (Direct trust measurement)

- [...] has enough specialised knowledge and resources to perform their tasks well (Trustworthiness measurement: ability)

- [...] tries hard to be fair in dealings with others (Trustworthiness measurement: integrity a)

- [...] is flexible in accommodating to us if special problems or needs arise (Trustworthiness measurement: benevolence)

- [...] consistently meet their promises towards us (Trustworthiness measurement: integrity b)

- In general, [...] is a trustworthy actor (Trustworthiness measurement: trustworthy actor)

- We would be comfortable giving [...] a task or problem which was critical to us, even if we could not monitor their actions (Willingness to suspend vulnerability measurement)

- Our organisation is sharing information with [...] (Risk-taking behaviour measurement)

Measures based on Mayer and Davis (1999) with additional compliance measurement. Items were not listed in this order in survey.
Answer options on Likert scales ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree)

Annex to chapter 3: Exploratory interviews - topic list

1) Introduction: Role of trust in public administration (10 min)

   a) Is trust neccesary in public administration? Are high trust and low distrust between entities crucial for a well functioning administration in your opinion? Why?

2) Presence of trust and distrust in the administrative context (50 min)

   a) Could you give me an example of a relation (process, cooperation, event) between two organisations in the Flemish administration that is, in your opinion, clearly characterised by strong trust and an absence of distrust?
       - Could you give me a concrete example about how this trust showed?
       - Why was trust so strong in your opinion?
       - Is trust always a good thing? Could you give an example of 'unhealthy trust'?

   b) Could you give me an example of a relation (process, cooperation, event) between two organisations in the Flemish administration that is, in your opinion, clearly characterised by strong distrust and an absence of trust?
       - Could you give me a concrete example about how this distrust showed?
       - Why was distrust so strong in your opinion?
       - Is distrust always a bad thing? Could you give an example of 'healthy distrust'?

   c) (Show figure 7) The typical questions about trust and distrust usually focus on the extreme cases of pure high trust and pure high distrust. It is thinkable however, that an interorganisational relationship is characterised as 'high trust, high distrust' or 'low trust, low distrust'. Is this something you can relate to? Do certain examples come to mind that illustrate these positions?
       - Could you give an example of relations which are characterised by a combination of high trust and high distrust?
       - Could you illustrate this fourth position, in which both trust and distrust are absent?

   d) To which extent do interorganisational trust and distrust exist in the Flemish administration in you opinion?
       - Which area of this figure (figure 7) describes the state of interorganisaitonal trust in the Flemish administration best, in your opinion?
       - Do you think that there is a large difference between policy areas regarding the extent of interorganisational trust? Why?

3) Drivers and obstacles of trust in the Flemish administration (20 min)

   a) What do you consider to be important drivers for interorganisational trust in the Flemish administration?

b) We referred to interorganisational distrust earlier. What gives rise to distrust between organisations, in your opinion?

4) Institutional drivers of trust (15 min)

a) To what extent is interorganisational trust built upon laws and regulations? For instance, regulation concerning openness of information, regulated task- and competence distributions, etc.

b) Do the horizontal entities play a special role for the interorganisational trust within the Flemish administration? If so, what role is that?

c) Do you think that the 'control on the control' plays a role for the trust between organisations? I am thinking for instance about audits of organisations control systems by IAVA or financial inspection by the Inspector of Finances.

5) Remarks/suggestions/questions

6) End of interview

Annex to chapter 3: Exploratory interviews - respondents

	Respondent	Function
1	Eddy Guilliams	Head of internal Audit of the Flemish administration
2	Martin Ruebens	Secretary-General of horizontal department DDAR
3	Luc Lathouwers	Secretary-General of horizontal department DBZ
4	Brigitte Mouligneau	Head of division at Stafdienst van de Vlaamse Regering at horizontal department DDAR
5	Hedwig Van der Borght	Secretary-General of horizontal department DFB
6	Marijke Verhaevert	Head of division process- and information policy at horizontal department DBZ
7	Dirk Vanderpoorten	Secretary-General of vertical department Work and Social Economy
8	Jules Van Liefferinge	Secretary-General of vertical department Agriculture and Fisheries
9	Micheline Scheys (*)	Secretary-General of vertical department Education and Training

Annex to chapter 3: Exploratory interviews - quotes

3.1

- *"I think that trust is absolutely crucial. Especially considering the challenges we are confronted with today. They are complex and much harder to catch in a single entity. In the old days, you had a problem in one entity. A problem of mobility was a problem of [the entity dealing with] Mobility, not of [the entities dealing with] Environment or Spatial Planning. Today we see that a problem of mobility is also a problem of [the entities dealing with] Environment and Spatial Planning. Sometimes even of [the entities dealing with] Employment, Economics,... so you can see immediately that there are a lot of cross-sections there. So it is absolutely necessary for us to cooperate more around these problems, and that will only be possible if we trust one another."*

3.2

- *"Without trust you'll work both inefficiently and ineffectively. Inefficiently because... why do you create efficiency, let's define it like that, you do so by allocating tasks where they are conducted fastest and best. And if you want to conduct each of those tasks yourself, or if you want to elaborately control what one does... then you'll create unproductivity and efficiency losses because you are not allocating tasks where they should be allocated. Two, ineffectively because you're actually... what government should be doing is not controlling one another, but making sure that society works a bit better. And you're not doing that by controlling each other."*

3.3

- *"There are also situations in the Flemish government in which they say like yeah, this person says you have to do this and follow them, because that person is very important and has all the necessary charisma and so on, and nobody will contradict them. You see this in organisations sometimes as well, but I've noticed that this often leads to lags in the evolution of such an organisation, because after a while, they start working on the basis of the tempo and the thinking of a single person, and that's no good."*

3.4

- *"I think that we're an organisation that shows a lot of trust, and that we regret doing so sometimes. But we won't turn it back either. But is so that politicians have to make do with what they've got, and are only able to react to information they have. And the more you, as a civil servant, show what you know, the more vulnerable you are positioning yourself. On the short term, doing so might turn against you every now and then. They will take decisions to cut in your organisation, and not in other organisations that deserve the cuts more but don't show it. But I am convinced that on the long term, it is okay to take such a vulnerable position. (...)."*

3.5

- *"(...) you should not be naïve, you need some healthy distrust. For me, that's also a professional analysis. When there is execution of a certain task, which is requested by the minister on the political level, a conflict of interest might originate between two entities, in terms of strategic positioning or strategic power that you need to maintain or reinforce. You shouldn't be blind to that. And you should take it into your tactical approach. But again, that tactical approach is a cooperative approach, to a certain extent. You'll do it together (...), but don't be naïve, and know that this is the playing field in which they will effectuate."*

3.6

- *"That's what they call healthy distrust. Be critical, but be constructive. And that is the function of everything. I'll say yeah, let's do this proposal now. We'll take it to an organ where they have the opportunity to express their distrust in a good way. They'll get the proposal, everybody can see it, they get a platform to express it, because otherwise you'll create dissatisfaction in the background, rumours through the grapevine... and that's unhealthy. So you have to organise an outlet for that distrust."*

3.7

- *I think that the well-known siloisation is the most painful problem in our administration, and the feeling that you're doing a good job if you mainly take care of the interests of the own entity. Looking over the wall and looking how we could cooperate for the entirety of the interests of the Flemish administration becomes in fact... one of the painful problems is that they are afraid that others are going to get their credit. Or that others have desires that don't allow them to achieve their own successes. And beneath that surface lies the trust conflict. That they, working together on a certain initiative, they don't think it is evident that we will both win by doing that. (...) and if everyone takes that position, yeah, you'll get distrust. Because everyone assumes that the most important thing is to score for the own results and the own minister.*

3.8

- *"The discussions we've had there... (...) makes me say "come on"; how many meetings, how much time and energy and how many discussions about budgetary peanuts this took... It makes me think, yeah, the problem there, was that there was so much distrust amongst each other on that issue, and especially towards (organisation x) in the sense of; either they are going to steal our money, or they are going to force us to take on*

extra costs… you can't imagine it. (…) Looking back at it from a distance, we've been creating financial accounts there, been composing big, fat Excel sheets about encryptions (…) it was escalated to the political level, they sent it back to the CAG (administrative forum), the CAG sent it back to the working groups… Truly a Kafkaesque circus"

3.9

- *"And now we have to rebuild of course, those decisions are taken or are being taken now, so we need to rebuild those relations because we are continuously consulting with that policy area, and we need each other on many areas… but you're starting from zero once again… it has soured the relationship…"*

3.10

- *"I think that many people in our organisation (…) really wouldn't function if they would have a basic distrust, like real natural distrust. I can't hire someone like that, because I've got no use for them. You need to start somewhere, from a certain trust in your colleagues, that they will really take up things and do good, and that you also strive for that trust. If you don't start from a certain idealism, in the sense of 'this is what we want to do and this is the right trajectory for Flanders', of course it won't work."*

3.11

- *"My vision is that trust is a basis of the Flemish government. We are an organisation that is paid by taxpayers, who don't have a choice in this, so I think that the least we can do is to be open. I think we don't have a choice in that as a government. We have to be open and transparent. At least give society access to ourselves and allow them to give feedback. And I think we don't score well enough there. (…) And actually, that is our duty. I also think we shouldn't even have the discussion about "can I make data available or not?"… we shouldn't have it. Even though politics will take decisions now and then that will go against us as civil servants. But we, as civil servants, we are obliged to be obedient to politics. That is the basis of democracy."*

3.12

- *"I think, a good example of trust was at a certain moment in "Ruimte voor Morgen". That is one of the "Flanders in Action" transitions. It had a very difficult start (…), but I think that because of the interaction between the people that came together there, and were coached well by a transition manager who worked in a quite engaging way, it became a good trajectory in which there was shared ownership between the people of that project group, who came from different backgrounds from different entities. And I think that that is an example of how it can be done. Really working together in trust, and really investing in that."*

3.13

- *"What we are developing right now around modern HR-policy. Now, there is a lot of support, across the entire organisation, in which everybody recognises that this is something we have to address, and also the way and the actors involved, that's okay. We are going to be able to get results there. Apart from the fact that there is of course still… I'll say, the feeling of trust, distrust in relation to the political level is not completely right yet. Amongst each other, amongst the civil servants, we agree about the importance, about the final objective we want to achieve, also largely about the roads by which… there are a number of small differences… But the vision of the political level in this matter… We've still got an issue there."*

3.14

- *"This immediately reminds me of ORAFIN, our concept of financial management in the Flemish government. I'll be the first one to say that there is a huge amount of expertise in Finances and Budgeting, and I think that there is also the will to make something out of it. On the other side, I think that if you would ask all policy areas, there will be a lot of critical questions, distrust, all kinds of issues that are not addressed by the system, and they remain unsatisfied. And it won't match. There is a good system, but for some reason, they can't get the full potential out of it."*

3.15

- *"I think from our side that is mostly located in the area of reporting to the matrix. It's less connected to the matter… I think the matter will always… you can see that a policy area always gets a boost if it is about its matter. Because we are a 'matter' policy area, the 'matrix' is less of a priority for us. (…) few people that come here will say like yeah "I am going to [the respondents' policy area], and I'm going to do the logistics!"*

3.16

- *"The discussions we've had there… (…) makes me say come on; how many meetings, how much time and energy and how many discussions about budgetary peanuts this took… It makes me think, yeah, the problem there, was that there was on that issue so much distrust amongst each other, and especially towards (xxx) in the sense of; either they are going to steal our money, or they are going to force us to take on extra costs… you can't imagine it."*

3.17

- *"Distrust is especially high towards the cabinet of Public Governance. I don't think that you will find five civil servants who, if they would be completely honest, would be positive towards it. Bridges were really burned there for many. (…) And I have to admit that the tempo of the budget cuts, and the environment of imposing things top down, that doesn't make it easier."*

3.18
- *"But it is also necessary I think, in the starting period of the cooperation to agree upon the formalities of the cooperation and to say what we will do together, but also what we won't do together. (…) but I am convinced that the groups that did that well in the beginning will make a lot of profits and will avoid many conflicts afterwards."*

3.19
- *"I think that it doesn't always requires regulation, but different governance models. What I really miss concerning regulation right now is the allocation of people and resources. It is incredibly complicated to pool budgets of different entities for a single objective."*

3.20
- *"Chaotic, truly chaotic. Irresponsibility about who would do what, ambiguities in the transparency of the deployed resources (…) it was chaos in multiple areas."*

3.21
- *"…the decree on openness of administration, I can say as many times as I want, "I'm only going to give it to them", but if someone asks openness of administrative information tomorrow in that framework, and I cannot find enough (…) grounds of exception… yeah, I'll have to give it to the one calling for openness. But yeah, then it's out there … so that was the cause of distrust in the beginning, that is, yeah if they really want to, they will always find something."*

3.22
- *"Yeah, for instance in modern HR-policy, they put a lot of effort in spelling out "who has which role"? (…). It looks a bit bureaucratic, but at the same time it gives a certain dynamic."*

3.23
- *"Right now, it happens too often that the leading role in that kind of theme is given to the one who is closest to its content. And that doesn't always work (…). You've got in very large infrastructural projects, they say "ah, that's the engineer of the bridge-builders, he is going to do that". He might be a very good engineer, but he isn't necessarily the best person to get the best people around the table at the right moment."*

3.24
- *"I don't believe in those floating clubs that are going to take the theme of poverty first and the theme of mobility next… that's nonsense. They have to be people that start from the organisation, that also know about the content, and that are anchored well in the organisation. But that also means that you have to work on development of competency in the policy areas. And that you really have to allow people the time to take up those transversal themes."*

3.25
- *"There are overlaps hé… both between agencies within policy areas as between policy areas (…). And then a factor of trust, distrust, suspicion plays of course. Like "ow, they are on my turf now, am I going to have to give something up or something."*

3.26
- *"If you request information you will get a lot of headwind in the first six months, and afterwards it is considered to be normal and you just get the information. So from the moment they are used to delivering that information they don't make a fuss around it anymore."*

3.27
- *"…But young leading civil servants who arrive in an organisation where that discourse of internal cooperation is held to high esteem, they are more willing to also realise that in practice."*

3.28
- *"I am going to go back to leadership here, that's fundamental. They are very determinative. If they have a very open perspective about what needs to happen and about cooperation, you feel that it is permeating into the organisation (…). If they don't show such an open perspective and show distrust themselves, then the rear guard will be more cautious in their cooperation with others (…) That might also be a perception, or well, an image people have."*

3.29

- *"… where we have three ministers from three different coalition partners, where it is difficult on the political level, (…) they don't succeed on the administrative level to deal with that problem of three ministers with different perspectives (…) No; what do they do is, they say "it would be better if we would adapt our structure and split up in three parts, and have every part working for one minister". So we are amplifying as an administration, (…) the mirror image we see of politics."*

3.30
- *"The trust between organisations is partially bounded by rationality. (…) Organisational [trust] is costs and benefits. It doesn't have to be calculated every day, but it has to be felt like yes, this has a positive impact for me."*

3.31
- *"An important motivation I think is that there are a number of challenges that are no longer determined by us. Affairs that play on a European level, but also international (…). That reaction to those big challenges (…). So also there I think that there is more pressure to cooperate, to find efficiency gains, because if you get bigger challenges and always less resources, you have to look at that as well… the abundance is over …"*

3.32
- *"So then I say, by this way of working I saved money that you don't have to spend any more. But that is never put in the picture (…). We need to solve that paradox by being more transparent in what we are setting up as a win for them (…). They're not realising that they are getting a profit because of that, we are not communicating that enough."*

3.33
- *"Because they are afraid of a threat in the first request for information, (…). [They are afraid of] the interpretation of information in one's own favour I think (…) which actually does not occur (…)."*

3.34
- *"We are preparing that with a few members of the staff of the Secretaries-General, leading rather quickly to a concept document about which we would say that most people could follow … So then we bring it to the level of a forum of Secretaries-General and then it starts… the turf protection like "oooeeh he is on my turf now" and "I'm not sufficiently represented in this" (…). Yeah okay… we are making it so hard on ourselves as senior civil servants sometimes."*

3.35
- *"And I have to admit that the rhythm of the economisation and the environment of what they are imposing manu military from politics, that doesn't make things any easier. So if it's about trust low, and distrust high: '[the government-wide reform project] decisive government'. I'm sorry to say that because I would rather have seen it differently."*

3.36
- *"Yeah it weren't just the procedures, it's also just… the image that [the agency] had. [it] had the image of not being customer-friendly, bureaucratic, too stiff, (…) simply because they had that image, the other policy areas were very reluctantly with a lot of distrust to [that agency]. And I can only observe that instead of talking in to each other an open and transparent way, that dialogue did not succeed and the distrust only increased.*

3.37
- *"Trust between persons, that also exists within the Flemish government, that is often based on experiences. (…) and that plays between persons. Organisations can hardly trust each other. Trust plays between persons."*

3.38
- *"Trust grows every time you can do it and we have been able to apply it and been allowed to apply it many times in our policy area, and you see that the agency and the department can continuously find each other there. "*

3.39
- *"It's the senior civil servants that can set the tone in the end (…) they know each other too well sometimes, from other experiences of ten, fifteen years ago… some vindictive situations keep having an effect on all those relations. (…) that is the little personal component in that club that keeps playing."*

3.40
- *"Real distrust… it happens, but then it is mostly based on incidents. Experiences they have… I sometimes feel in a meeting that there is distrust between certain senior civil servants (…) it is often even their entire environment that is more careful in such a constellation (…). But if you really go and see there are often one or more incidents at the basis of it. That can be as dumb as personal incidents of for instance two people applying for the same job, and one made it and the other didn't… "*

3.41

- *"I also had to deal with that distrust because of ideological differences (…).I'm just naming one thing, reduction of the vacation system (…) you will have some who sit on the right and say ah yes, that's just normal, and some who sit on the left and will say ah no, we are not giving up our rights."*

3.42
- *"I am convinced that a large part of trust is connected to the people that are in it. If they are in there with a natural distrust against humanity, and there really are people walking around like that, that think like "I am sitting around this table with four sharks…" then it won't work. (…) and that is yeah… that is simply the enthusiasm of that person I think."*

3.43
- *"I think that there is distrust with individuals of which I'm waiting for… I'm going to be blunt here… waiting for them to retire."*

Annex to chapter 5: Boundary Spanner Survey - codebook

Variabele	Variable label	Variable type	Item	Source
Module I: demographic controls and individual predispositions				
AGE	Age	Cont. Num	In what year were you born?	own measure
SEX	Sex	Female/Male	What is your gender?	
EDU	Education	Catvar (4)	What is the highest degree you have obtained?	
EMY	Employment years	Cont. Num.	In which year did you start working for the Flemish Government (regardless whether this was contractual or statutory)?	
CAR	Career	Cont. Num	In how many other organisations within the Flemish Government have you worked before? Can be broadly defined. Temporary assignments or internships in Flemish cabinets, other agencies and departments and ministries or the former VOI also fall within this definition)	
CAR2	Horizontal Career	Yes/No	Are you now or were you ever employed in the departments "Services for General Government Policy" (DAR), "Administrative Affairs" (BZ) or "Finances and Budgeting" (FB)?	
EMF	Employment form	Catvar (3)	According to which legal framework are you employed?	
BS	Boundary spanner	Discrete 1-7	Are you often in contact with the departments "Services for General Government Policy" (DAR), "Administrative Affairs" (BZ) or "Finances and Budgeting" (FB) in your job?	
Please indicate the extent to which you personally agree with the following statements				Adapted based on Frazier et al. 2013
GT1	Generalised trust	Discrete 1-7 disagree-agree	I usually trust people until they give me a reason not to trust them	
GT2	Generalised trust	Discrete 1-7 disagree-agree	Trusting another person is not difficult for me	
GT3	Generalised trust	Discrete 1-7 disagree-agree	My typical approach is to trust new acquaintances until they prove I should not trust them.	
GT4	Generalised trust	Discrete 1-7 disagree-agree	My tendency to trust others is high	
excrit1	exclusion criterion 1	Discrete 1-7 disagree-agree	I believe that this research can have a positive impact on the Flemish Government.	own measure
Module II: Distribution of administrational trust and distrust				
How would you describe your **trust** in the following departments regarding the following interactions (you are not obliged to answer all items) DAR= Diensten Algemeen Regeringsbeleid; BZ=BestuursZaken; FB=Financiën en Begroting Trust can be seen as "the intentional or effective suspension of vulnerability on the basis of positive expectations about another party. Trust can be associated with hope, faith, confidence and assurance.				own measure
TmgDAR	Trust in datamgmt by DAR	Discrete 1-7 low T-high T	The Department DAR with respect to the collection and use of information about our government-wide themes and policies that cross-cut policy areas	
TmoDAR	Trust in monitoring by DAR	Discrete 1-7 low T-high T	The Department DAR with respect to monitoring of government-wide objectives and policies that cross-cut policy areas	
TprDAR	Trust in preparation by DAR	Discrete 1-7 low T-high T	The Department DAR with respect to the preparation of new regulation on government-wide objectives and policies that cross-cut policy areas	
TevDAR	Trust in evaluation by DAR	Discrete 1-7 low T-high T	The Department DAR with respect to the evaluation of government-wide objectives and policies that cross-cut policy areas	
TmgBZ	Trust in datamgmt by BZ	Discrete 1-7 low T-high T	The Department BZ with respect to the collection and use of our information on personnel and organisational development (for example on personnel numbers, ICT infrastructure, management support, etc.)	
TprBZ	Trust in preparation by BZ	Discrete 1-7	The Department BZ relating to the preparation of new regulations on personnel-and organisational development policy	

		low T-high T		
TevBZ	Trust in evaluation by BZ	Discrete 1-7 low T-high T	The Department BZ with regard to evaluating personnel- and organisational development policy	
TmoBZ	Trust in monitoring by BZ	Discrete 1-7 low T-high T	The Department BZ with regard to monitoring of government-wide personnel- and organisational development objectives	
TmgFB	Trust in datamgmt by FB	Discrete 1-7 low T-high T	The Department FB relating to the collection and use of our information about organisational budget and finance	
TmoFB	Trust in monitoring by FB	Discrete 1-7 low T-high T	The Department with regard to monitoring of government-wide financial-FB and budget targets	
TprFB	Trust in preparation by FB	Discrete 1-7 low T-high T	The Department FB relating to the preparation of new regulations on financial and budgetary policies	
TevFB	Trust in evaluation by FB	Discrete 1-7 low T-high T	The Department FB with respect to evaluating financial and budgetary policies	
Tref	Strongest trust referent	Alpha	Please choose the interaction for which your trust is strongest. This is important for the rest of the questionnaire.	

How would you describe your **distrust** in the following departments regarding the following interactions (you are not obliged to answer all items)

DAR= Diensten Algemeen Regeringsbeleid; BZ=BestuursZaken; FB=Financiën en Begroting

Distrust can be seen as "the intentional or effective avoidance of vulnerability on the basis of negative expectations about another party. Distrust can be associated with fear, sceptisism, cynicism and vigilance.

DTmgDAR	Distrust in datamgmt by DAR	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department DAR with respect to the collection and use of information about our government-wide themes and policies that cross-cut policy areas	
DTmoDAR	Distrust in monitoring by DAR	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department DAR with respect to monitoring of government-wide objectives and policies that cross-cut policy areas	
DTprDAR	Distrust in preparation by DAR	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department DAR with respect to the preparation of new regulation on government-wide objectives and policies that cross-cut policy areas	
DTevDAR	Distrust in evaluation by DAR	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department DAR with respect to the evaluation of government-wide objectives and policies that cross-cut policy areas	
DTmgBZ	Distrust in datamgmt by BZ	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department BZ with respect to the collection and use of our information on personnel and organisational development (for example on personnel numbers, ICT infrastructure, management support, etc.)	
DTprBZ	Distrust in preparation by BZ	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department BZ relating to the preparation of new regulations on personnel-and organisational development policy	
DTevBZ	Distrust in evaluation by BZ	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department BZ with regard to evaluating personnel- and organisational development policy	
DTmoBZ	Distrust in monitoring by BZ	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department BZ with regard to monitoring of government-wide personnel- and organisational development objectives	
DTmgFB	Distrust in datamgmt by FB	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department FB relating to the collection and use of our information about organisational budget and finance	
DTmoFB	Distrust in monitoring by FB	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department with regard to monitoring of government-wide financial-FB and budget targets	
DTprFB	Distrust in preparation by FB	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department FB relating to the preparation of new regulations on financial and budgetary policies	
DTevFB	Distrust in evaluation by FB	Discrete 1-7 low DT-high DT	The Department FB with respect to evaluating financial and budgetary policies	
DTtref	Strongest Distrust referent	Alpha	Please choose the interaction for which your distrust is strongest. This is important for the rest of the questionnaire.	
Module III: the RI of trust (reference interaction chosen in 22Tref is shown in every question)				
FAM	Interaction age	Discrete 1-7	How long are you already involved in your interaction with (* 22Tref *)	own measure

FAM2	Interaction frequency	Discrete 1-7	How often are you generally in contact with this organisation?	
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about *(22Tref*)				
poweq	power equality	Discrete 1-7	We are equal partners in most interactions with each other	
assetspec	asset specificity	Discrete 1-7	The content we share in this interaction (information resources, knowledge) is very specific and difficult to establish	
risknat	risk nature	Discrete 1-7	This interaction with this organisation implies certain risks to our organisation	
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about *(22Tref*).				
Please indicate if an item is not applicable to your situation. If you prefer not to answer a question, you can leave it blank. We do stress that it is important for the research to complete as many items the survey as you can.				
re1	relational aspect 1	Discrete 1-7	This organisation shows trust in us in this relationship	
ca1	calculative aspect 1	Discrete 1-7	My trust in this relationship is determined by the balance between the advantages and disadvantages for our own organisation	
re2	relational aspect 2	Discrete 1-7	I can identify well with the values of this organisation in this relationship	
ca2	calculative aspect 2	Discrete 1-7	As far as I know this organisation has no interest to behave themselves opportunistically in this relationship	
re3	relational aspect 3	Discrete 1-7	From previous experiences I know exactly what I can expect of this organisation in this relationship	
ru1	rule aspect	Discrete 1-7	Formal rules provide a clear framework for mutual tasks, rights and duties in this relationship	
re5	relational aspect 5	Discrete 1-7	I have a good personal relationship with my contact person (s) in this organisation	
re6	relational aspect 6	Discrete 1-7	This organisation shows distrust in us in this relationship	
ca4	calculative aspect 4	Discrete 1-7	A trade-off between my personal advantages and disadvantages in this relationship determines my trust in this organisation	
ro1	role aspect	Discrete 1-7	My formal task- or role description offers a clear framework for mutual functions, rights and obligations in this relationship	
rou1	routine aspect	Discrete 1-7	Unwritten routines in this relationship offer a clear framework for mutual functions, rights and obligations	
adnorms	admin. leader norms aspect	Discrete 1-7	My supervisor clearly has trust in this organisation with regard to this relationship	
polnorms	pol. leader norms aspect	Discrete 1-7	My politically responsible Minister (s) clearly has (have) trust in this organisation with regard to this relationship	
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about *(22Tref*).				Becerra, Lunnan, Huemer's (2008) adaption of Mayer et al. 1999
it1	Trustworthiness integrity 1	Discrete 1-7	This organisation has a strong sense of justice	
ab1	Trustworthiness ability 1	Discrete 1-7	This organisation is very capable of performing its tasks	
ben1	Trustworthiness benevolence 1	Discrete 1-7	This organisation has attention for the issues we find important	
it2	Trustworthiness integrity 2	Discrete 1-7	This organisation tries hard to be fair in dealing with others	
it3	Trustworthiness integrity 3	Discrete 1-7	Sound principles seem to guide the behaviour of this organisation	
ab2	Trustworthiness ability 2	Discrete 1-7	We feel very confident about this organisation's competences	
comp1	Trustworthiness compliance 1	Discrete 1-7	This organisation adheres strictly to the relevant procedures	own measure
ben2	Trustworthiness benevolence 2	Discrete 1-7	This organisation is very concerned about our interests	Becerra, Lunnan, Huemer's (2008) adaption of Mayer et al. 1999
it4	Trustworthiness integrity 4	Discrete 1-7	We never have to worry about the question whether this organisation will keep to its word	
ben3	Trustworthiness benevolence 3	Discrete 1-7	Our needs and desires are very important to this organisation	
comp2	Trustworthiness compliance 2	Discrete 1-7	This organisation has respect for the regulatory framework	Own measure
ab3	Trustworthiness ability 3	Discrete 1-7	This organisation is known to be successful at realising its ambitions.	Becerra, Lunnan, Huemer's (2008) adaption of Mayer et

				al. 1999
comp3	Trustworthiness compliance 3	Discrete 1-7	Individual employees in this organisation won't do anything that is against management's instructions	Own measure
ben4	Trustworthiness benevolence 4	Discrete 1-7	This organisation would go out of its way to help us	Becerra, Lunnan, Huemer's (2008) adaption of Mayer et al. 1999
ab4	Trustworthiness ability 4	Discrete 1-7	This organisation has much knowledge about the tasks it conducts.	
comp4	Trustworthiness compliance 4	Discrete 1-7	This organisation respects the unwritten rules in our interaction	Own measure
Please indicate what you would want to do for *(22Tref*) if you would be completely free to choose to do so				Currall and Judge 1995 (partial instrument adoption)
co1*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability comm. 1	Discrete 1-7	I would carefully consider my opinions before I share my opinions with this organisation	
su1	Willingness to suspend vulnerability surveillance 1	Discrete 1-7	I would feel at ease after I have asked this organisation to do something	
co2	Willingness to suspend vulnerability comm. 2	Discrete 1-7	I would give this organisation all relevant information on important matters, even when that could get me in trouble	
su2*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability surveillance 2	Discrete 1-7	I would keep a close eye on this organisation to ensure that they don't do something detrimental to my organisation	
co3*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability comm. 3	Discrete 1-7	I would limit the information I give to this organisation	
su3*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability surveillance 3	Discrete 1-7	I would check with others to what extent this organisation is reliable	
co4	Willingness to suspend vulnerability comm. 4	Discrete 1-7	I would give this organisation all relevant information on important matters, even when that could get my organisation in trouble	
su4*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability surveillance 4	Discrete 1-7	I would keep a close eye on this organisation after I have asked them to do something	
co5*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability comm. 5	Discrete 1-7	I would deliberately withhold some information when I communicate with this organisation	
su5*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability surveillance 5	Discrete 1-7	I would check the correctness of statements made by this organisation in formal documents	
Please indicate what you usually do for (*22Tref*)				Currall and Judge 1995 (partial instrument adoption)
bco1*	Risk-taking behaviour comm. 1	Discrete 1-7	I carefully consider my opinions before I share my opinions with this organisation	
bsu1	Risk-taking behaviour surveillance 1	Discrete 1-7	I feel at ease after I have asked this organisation to do something	
bco2	Risk-taking behaviour comm. 2	Discrete 1-7	I give this organisation all relevant information on important matters, even when that could get me in trouble	
bsu2*	Risk-taking behaviour surveillance 2	Discrete 1-7	I keep a close eye on this organisation to ensure that they don't do something detrimental to my organisation	
bco3*	Risk-taking behaviour comm. 3	Discrete 1-7	I limit the information I give to this organisation	
bsu3*	Risk-taking behaviour surveillance 3	Discrete 1-7	I check with others to what extent this organisation is reliable	
bco4	Risk-taking behaviour comm. 4	Discrete 1-7	I give this organisation all relevant information on important matters, even when that could get my organisation in trouble	

bsu4*	Risk-taking behaviour surveillance 4	Discrete 1-7	I keep a close eye on this organisation after I have asked them to do something	
bco5*	Risk-taking behaviour comm. 5	Discrete 1-7	I deliberately withhold some information when I communicate with this organisation	
bsu5*	Risk-taking behaviour surveillance 5	Discrete 1-7	I check the correctness of statements made by this organisation in formal documents	
Module IV: the RI of distrust (all questions automatically refer to reference interaction chosen in 24DTref)				
dfam	Interaction age	Discrete 1-7	How long are you already involved in your interaction with (* 24DTref *)	own measure
dfam2	Interaction frequency	Discrete 1-7	How often are you generally in contact with this organisation?	
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about *(24DTref*)				
dpownat	power nature	Discrete 1-7	We are equal partners in most interactions with each other	
dassspecnat	asset specificity nature	Discrete 1-7	The content we share in this interaction (information resources, knowledge) is very specific and difficult to establish	
drisknat	risk nature	Discrete 1-7	This interaction with this organisation implies certain risks to our organisation	
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about *(24DTref*).				
Please indicate if an item is not applicable to your situation. If you prefer not to answer a question, you can leave it blank. We do stress that it is important for the research to complete as many items the survey as you can.				
dre1	relational aspect 1	Discrete 1-7	This organisation shows trust in us in this relationship	
dca1	calculative aspect 1	Discrete 1-7	My distrust in this relationship is determined by the balance between the advantages and disadvantages for our own organisation	
dre2	relational aspect 2	Discrete 1-7	I can identify well with the values of this organisation in this relationship	
dca2	calculative aspect 2	Discrete 1-7	As far as I know this organisation has no interest in to behave themselves opportunistically in this relationship	
dre3	relational aspect 3	Discrete 1-7	From previous experiences I know exactly what I can expect of this organisation in this relationship	
dru1	rule aspect	Discrete 1-7	Formal rules provide a clear framework for mutual tasks, rights and duties in this relationship	
dre5	relational aspect 5	Discrete 1-7	I have a good personal relationship with my contact person (s) in this organisation	
dre6	relational aspect 6	Discrete 1-7	This organisation shows distrust in us in this relationship	
dca4	calculative aspect 4	Discrete 1-7	A trade off between my personal advantages and disadvantages in this relationship determines my distrust in this organisation	
dro1	role aspect	Discrete 1-7	My formal task- or role description offers a clear framework for mutual functions, rights and obligations in this relationship	
drou1	routine aspect	Discrete 1-7	Unwritten routines in this relationship offer a clear framework for mutual functions, rights and obligations	
dadnorms	admin. leader norms aspect	Discrete 1-7	My supervisor clearly has distrust in this organisation with regard to this relationship	
dpolnorms1	pol. leader norms aspect	Discrete 1-7	My politically responsible Minister (s) clearly has (have) distrust in this organisation with regard to this relationship	
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about *(24DTref*).				Becerra, Lunnan, Huemer's (2008) adaption of Mayer et al. 1999
dit1	Trustworthiness integrity 1	Discrete 1-7	This organisation has a strong sense of justice	
dab1	Trustworthiness ability 1	Discrete 1-7	This organisation is very capable of performing its tasks	
dben1	Trustworthiness benevolence 1	Discrete 1-7	This organisation has attention for the issues we find important	
dit2	Trustworthiness integrity 2	Discrete 1-7	This organisation tries hard tob e fair in dealing with others Deze organisatie doet haar best om eerlijk om te gaan met anderen	
dit3	Trustworthiness integrity 3	Discrete 1-7	Sound principles seem to guide the behaviour of this organisation	
dab2	Trustworthiness ability 2	Discrete 1-7	We feel very confident about this organisation's competences	
dcomp1	Trustworthiness compliance 1	Discrete 1-7	This organisation adheres strictly to the relevant procedures	Own measure
dben2	Trustworthiness	Discrete 1-7	This organisation is very concerned about our interests	Becerra, Lunnan,

	benevolence 2			Huemer's (2008)
dit4	Trustworthiness integrity 4	Discrete 1-7	We never have to worry about the question whether this organisation will keep to its word	adaption of Mayer et al. 1999
dben3	Trustworthiness benevolence 3	Discrete 1-7	Our needs and desires are very important to this organisation	
dcomp2	Trustworthiness compliance 2	Discrete 1-7	This organisation has respect for the regulatory framework	Own measure
dab3	Trustworthiness ability 3	Discrete 1-7	This organisation is known to be successful at realising its ambitions.	Becerra, Lunnan, Huemer's (2008) adaption of Mayer et al. 1999
dcomp3	Trustworthiness compliance 3	Discrete 1-7	Individual employees in this organisation won't do anything that is against management's instructions	Own measure
dben4	Trustworthiness benevolence 4	Discrete 1-7	This organisation would go out of its way to help us	Becerra, Lunnan, Huemer's (2008) adaption of Mayer et al. 1999
dab4	Trustworthiness ability 4	Discrete 1-7	This organisation has much knowledge about the tasks it conducts.	
dcomp4	Trustworthiness compliance 4	Discrete 1-7	This organisation respects the unwritten rules in our interaction	Own measure
Please indicate what you would want to do for *(24DTref*) if you would be completely free to choose to do so				Currall and Judge 1995 (partial instrument adoption)
dco1*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability comm. 1	Discrete 1-7	I would carefully consider my opinions before I share my opinions with this organisation	
dsu1	Willingness to suspend vulnerability surveillance 1	Discrete 1-7	I would feel at ease after I have asked this organisation to do something	
dco2	Willingness to suspend vulnerability comm. 2	Discrete 1-7	I would give this organisation all relevant information on important matters, even when that could get me in trouble	
dsu2*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability surveillance 2	Discrete 1-7	I would keep a close eye on this organisation to ensure that they don't do something detrimental to my organisation	
dco3*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability comm. 3	Discrete 1-7	I would limit the information I give to this organisation	
dsu3*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability surveillance 3	Discrete 1-7	I would check with others to what extent this organisation is reliable	
dco4	Willingness to suspend vulnerability comm. 4	Discrete 1-7	I would give this organisation all relevant information on important matters, even when that could get my organisation in trouble	
dsu4*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability surveillance 4	Discrete 1-7	I would keep a close eye on this organisation after I have asked them to do something	
dco5*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability comm. 5	Discrete 1-7	I would deliberately withhold some information when I communicate with this organisation	
dsu5*	Willingness to suspend vulnerability surveillance 5	Discrete 1-7	I would check the correctness of statements made by this organisation in formal documents	
Please indicate what you usually do for (*24DTref*)				Currall and Judge 1995 (partial instrument adoption)
dco1*	Risk-taking behaviour comm. 1	Discrete 1-7	I carefully consider my opinions before I share my opinions with this organisation	
dsu1	Risk-taking behaviour surveillance 1	Discrete 1-7	I feel at ease after I have asked this organisation to do something	
dco2	Risk-taking behaviour	Discrete 1-7	I give this organisation all relevant information on important matters, even when that could get me in trouble	

	comm. 2			
dsu2*	Risk-taking behaviour surveillance 2	Discrete 1-7	I keep a close eye on this organisation to ensure that they don't do something detrimental to my organisation	
dco3*	Risk-taking behaviour comm. 3	Discrete 1-7	I limit the information I give to this organisation	
dsu3*	Risk-taking behaviour surveillance 3	Discrete 1-7	I check with others to what extent this organisation is reliable	
dco4	Risk-taking behaviour comm. 4	Discrete 1-7	I give this organisation all relevant information on important matters, even when that could get my organisation in trouble	
dsu4*	Risk-taking behaviour surveillance 4	Discrete 1-7	I keep a close eye on this organisation after I have asked them to do something	
dco5*	Risk-taking behaviour comm. 5	Discrete 1-7	I deliberately withhold some information when I communicate with this organisation	
dsu5*	Risk-taking behaviour surveillance 5	Discrete 1-7	I check the correctness of statements made by this organisation in formal documents	
Module V: Organisational culture (not used in this study)				
ind 1	individualist culture 1	Discrete 1-7	In my organisation, employees are promoted on the basis of individual performance	Wouters and Maesschalck 2013 (adaptation): While we did not use the data collected in this module for the current research, an overview of the module is provided here to allow a correct assessment of the length of the boundary spanner suvery.
ind 2	individualist culture 2	Discrete 1-7	In my organisation, when employees break the rules a mix of incentives and sanctions is used in order to prevent it in the future	
ind 3	individualist culture 3	Discrete 1-7	The top executive of my organisation emphasises that it is important to evaluate every employee's performance individually	
ind 4	individualist culture 4	Discrete 1-7	In my organisation we believe that we are doing well when everyone performs well individually	
ind 5	individualist culture 5	Discrete 1-7	The glue that holds this organisation together is the fact that it is useful for everybody to work together in the same organisation.	
hier1	hierarchical culture 1	Discrete 1-7	In my organisation, when employees break the rules there is an extensive inquiry about what happened and why.	
hier 2	hierarchical culture 2	Discrete 1-7	My organisation emphasises clear lines of accountability	
hier 3	hierarchical culture 3	Discrete 1-7	In my organisation we believe that we are doing well when formal rules are respected	
hier 4	hierarchical culture 4	Discrete 1-7	In my organisation, relations with other organisations are based on relation-specific rules and procedures	
hier 5	hierarchical culture 5	Discrete 1-7	The glue that holds my organisation together is the respect for public office and for each distinct role	
egal 1	egalitarian culture 1	Discrete 1-7	In my organisation the shared opinion of the staff is taken into account when promotions are given.	
egal 2	egalitarian culture 2	Discrete 1-7	The top executive of my organisation emphasises consensus on all levels of the organisation	
egal 3	egalitarian culture 3	Discrete 1-7	My organisation emphasises teams within which all members are equally important	
egal 4	egalitarian culture 4	Discrete 1-7	My organisation defines success as promoting the organisation's values.	
egal 5	egalitarian culture 5	Discrete 1-7	The glue that holds this organisation together are shared values and commitment to our common principles	
fat 1	fatalist culture 1	Discrete 1-7	It is difficult to know what is important for my direct supervisor	
fat 2	fatalist culture 1	Discrete 1-7	My organisation is characterised by the fact that we constantly have to react to things over which we have no control.	
fat 3	fatalist culture 1	Discrete 1-7	In my organisation we believe that we are doing well when we deal with problems at the moment in which they present themself	
fat 4	fatalist culture 1	Discrete 1-7	In my organisation, we deal with other organisations only when this is necessary	
fat 5	fatalist culture 1	Discrete 1-7	There is nothing holding this organisation together and binding its members to one another except for the fact that the law or the management has decided that this organisation should exist	

| Genrem | general remarks | Alpha | The box below provides space for comments or questions regarding the survey or this research. | / |

Annex to chapter 5: Reference Interaction interviews - topic list and protocol

THE CARD SORT INTERVIEW

1) Introduction (5 min)
   a. General introduction of myself and the research
   b. Outline of the interview: we will start with some general questions, then more specific questions about different dimensions of what it can mean to have trust or distrust in the horizontal counterpart regarding the RI, and then we will go into detail about possible reasons to have trust or distrust in this relationship. We will use a 'think out loud' card exercise to keep our discussion focused on the research hypotheses of our study.
   c. Overview of protocol, give respondents the opportunity to ask questions before starting the interview, signing the protocol.

2) Interaction description

Can you tell me something more about your organisation's involvement with [the RI]? (10 min)

   a. What is your role in this interaction?
   b. What is expected of your organisation in this interaction?
   c. What do you expect from your counterpart organisation in [the RI]?
   d. In the survey, you selected this interaction as your reference-interaction for [trust /: distrust]. Can you explain why you chose exactly this interaction out of the 12 options you were presented with?

3) Mechanisms of the administrational trust process (1u 15 min)

We will now delve into some questions about the [trust / distrust] you experience in this relationship. I have here three cards; each indicating a different dimension of your [trust / distrust] in [the RI]. (explain the three dimensions and in detail to the respondent, then ask if they understand the distinction between the dimensions) Could you please randomly pick one of these cards, with which we will start the exercise?

   a. Have a look at this card. To which extent would you say that [the RI] is trustworthy? Feel free to take some time to think about it. **(25 min)**
      i. Do you think other people in your organisation feel the same way?
      ii. Now, can you please use these small cards to show me what your reasons are for this evaluation? Please move the reasons you consider to be most important closest to the dimension card and move those less important further away. If you think something doesn't matter, just leave it out. And please think aloud when you do so! (Probe during exercise)

b. Let's move to another dimension: Looking at this card, how do you consider your own willingness to be vulnerable in this relation? Think about it as if you would be completely free to choose how to position yourself in this relationship. **(25 min)**

    i. Do you think other people in your organisation feel the same way?

    ii. Now, can you please use these small cards to show me what your reasons are for this evaluation? Please move the reasons you consider to be most important closest to the dimension card and move those less important further away. If you think something doesn't matter, just leave it out. And please think aloud when you do so! (Probe during exercise)

c. Let's move to the last part: What do you think about this third card? How do you really position yourself or your organisation in this relation? Please tell about how you really act in this relation, not about how you would like to act or how somebody else would like you to act. **(25 min)**

    i. Do you think other people in your organisation feel the same way?

    ii. Now, can you please use these small cards to show me what your reasons are for this evaluation? Please move the reasons you consider to be most important closest to the dimension card and move those less important further away. If you think something doesn't matter, just leave it out. And please think aloud when you do so! (Probe during exercise)

4) Interdimensional relationship: willingness to be vulnerable and risk-taking behaviour (5 min)

Do you think there is a difference between what you would be personally willing to do and what you actually do in [the RI]? Why do you think this is the case?

5) Wrapping up (5 min)

a. Do you think we talked about everything that's important regarding interorganisational trust in [the RI]?

b. How did you like this interview? Do you have any more questions or suggestions for me?

c. Thank the respondents elaborately for their time and willingness to help!

TOTAL ENVISAGED DURATION: 1u40min

Qualitative interview cards presented to respondents for selection and discussion

Card no.	Card print (translated into English)
Card 1	The trust they show in us in our relation
Card 2	A consideration of possible advantages and disadvantages for my organisation
Card 3	The extent to which I can identify with their values
Card 4	My knowledge about the interest they have to behave opportunistically toward us
Card 5	Expectations that grew on the basis of my previous experiences in this relation
Card 6	The presence or absence of formal rules in this relation
Card 7	Self-evident habits that grew as time progressed
Card 8	My personal relation with my contact person(s) in this organisation
Card 9	Rumours and other information about the reputation of this organisation
Card 10	The distrust they show in us in this relation
Card 11	A consideration of possible advantages and disadvantages for me personally
Card 12	The presence or absence of formal task and role description in this relation
Card 13	The presence or absence of unwritten routines in this relationship
Card 14	My supervisor's attitude regarding this relationship
Card 15	My ministers' attitude regarding this relationship
Card 16 - 20	Other reasons (which?)
Card D1	DIMENSION 1: My expectations regarding this organisation's trustworthiness (Their competence, integrity, benevolence, and compliance to rules and agreements)
Card D2	DIMENSION 2: My willingness to place myself or my organisation in an open, vulnerable and interdependent position in this relationship.
Card D3	DIMENSION 3: The extent to which I actually act in an open, vulnerable and interdependent way in this relationship.

Boundary spanners were requested to randomly choose a dimension card and indicate the interaction aspects they considered most important to explain the dimension of their trust, explain their selection, and answer the interviewer's follow-up questions. This exercise was repeated for every dimension card.

Illustration of qualitative interview cards: perceived trustworthiness in RI of distrust interview

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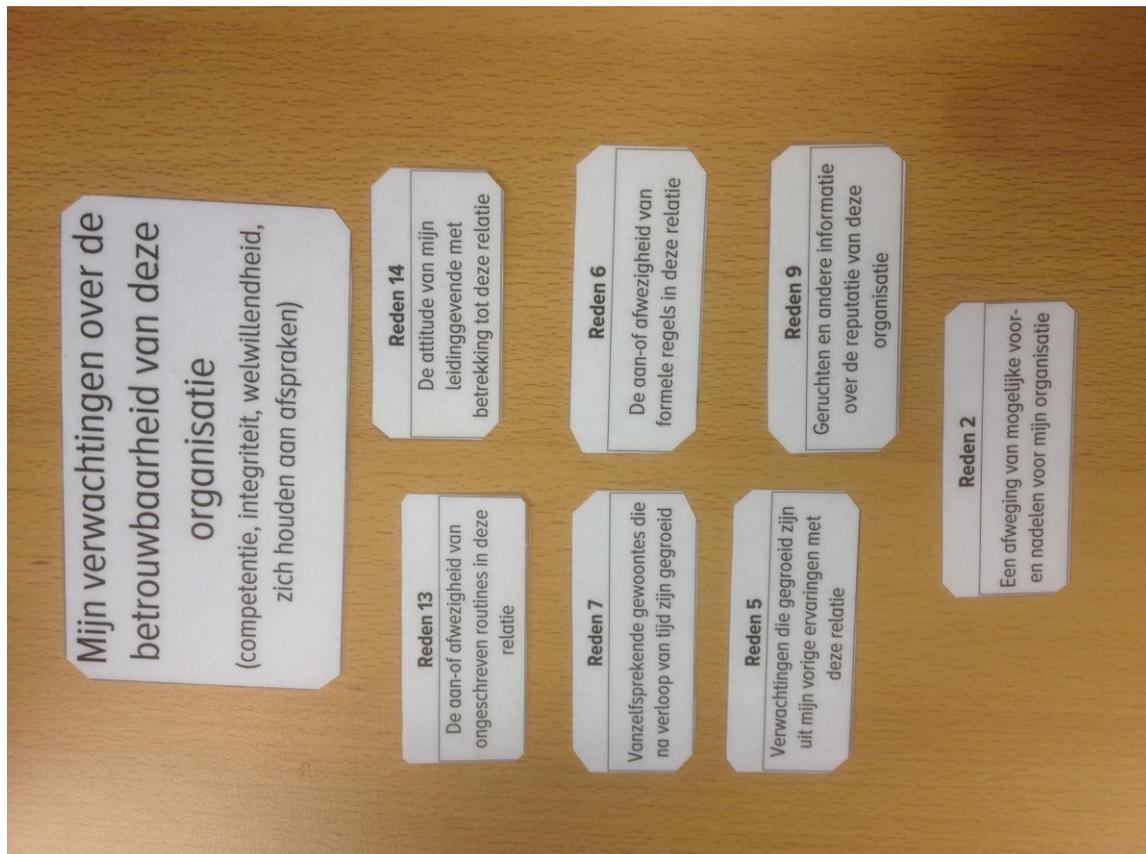
Annex to chapters 7 - 8: Sample characteristics

Numerical descriptives of samples in qualitative and quantitative data collection phases

Variable	RI of trust						RI of distrust					
	N		Mean		Sd		N		Mean		Sd	
	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S3	S4	S3	S4	S3	S4
Age	158	8	50,58	50,88	8,89	4,32	145	8	50,21	48,63	8,87	11,70
Boundary spanning	158	8	3,15	3,25	1,75	1,28	145	8	3,09	3,13	1,74	1,46
Generalised trust	158	8	5,59	5,84	0,90	0,65	145	8	5,61	5,75	0,91	0,68

Categorical descriptives of samples in qualitative and quantitative data collection phases

Variable	Category	RI of trust				RI of distrust			
		N		Percent		N		Percent	
		S1	S2	S1	S2	S3	S4	S3	S4
Sex	Male	104	6	65,82%	75%	94	6	64,83%	75%
	Female	54	2	34,18%	25%	51	2	35,17%	25%
Education level	Higher Secondary	5	0	3,16%	0%	5	0	3,45%	0%
	Bachelor or equal	8	0	5,06%	0%	6	1	4,14%	12,5%
	Master or equal	137	8	86,71%	100%	127	7	87,59%	87,5%
	Ph.D	8	0	5,06%	0%	7	0	4,83%	0%
Years employed in Flemish adm.	<=10 years	25	1	15,82%	12,5%	25	2	17,24%	25%
	10-20 years	48	1	30,38%	12,5%	44	3	30,34%	37,5%
	20-30 years	55	6	34,81%	75%	49	1	33,79%	12,5%
	Over 30 years	30	0	18,99%	0%	27	2	18,62%	25%
Level	A-level	51	3	32,28%	37,5%	49	3	33,79%	37,5%
	Lower mgmt	9	0	5,70%	0%	8	1	5,52%	12,5%
	Middle mgmt	71	4	44,94%	50%	64	3	44,14%	37,5%
	Top mgmt	27	1	17,09%	12,5%	24	1	16,55%	12,5%
Mobility	No	72	5	45,86%	62,5%	69	6	47,92%	75%
	Yes	85	3	54,14%	37,5%	75	2	52,08%	25%
Ever employed in hor. dep.	No	133	6	84,18%	75%	124	8	85,52%	100%
	Yes	25	2	15,82%	25%	21	0	14,48%	0%
Organisational type	DEP	49	2	31,01%	25%	43	2	29,66%	25%
	IVAZRP	40	3	25,32%	37,5%	37	1	25,52%	12,5%
	IVARP	22	1	13,92%	12,5%	20	1	13,79%	12,5%
	EVAPRP	45	2	28,48%	25%	43	4	29,66%	50%
	Other	2	0	1,27%	0%	2	0	1,38%	0%
Organisational task nature	Horizontal	16	0	10,19%	0%	11	0	7,64%	0%
	Non-tangible vertical	81	4	51,59%	50%	74	3	51,39%	37,5%
	Tangible	60	4	38,22%	50%	59	5	40,97%	62,5%
	Total	158	8	100	100	145	8	100	100

Annex to chapters 7 - 8: Reference Interaction interviews - respondents

Respondent.	Area	Org. type	Level	Interaction frequency	RI mapping
T2	MOW	DEP	A-level	Multiple times per month	QI: high trust, low distrust
T4	LNE	EVAPRP	Middle mgmt	At least every month	QI: high trust, low distrust
T5	OV	DEP	A-level	At least every six months	QI: high trust, low distrust
T6	WSE	EVAPRP	Middle mgmt	At least every six months	QI: high trust, low distrust
T7	LNE	IVARP	A-level	At least every month	QI: high trust, low distrust
T8	OV	IVAZRP	Middle mgmt	Less than every six months	Not attributable
T9	EWI	IVAZRP	Middle mgmt	At least every month	QI: high trust, low distrust
T10	RWO	IVAZRP	Top mgmt	Multiple times per month	QI: high trust, low distrust
DT1	RWO	IVAZRP	A-level	At least every month	QI: high trust, low distrust
DT2	MOW	EVAPRP	A-level	At least every month	QII: high trust, high distrust
DT4	CJSM	DEP	A-level	At least every month	QI: high trust, low distrust
DT5	WVG	IVARP	Middle mgmt	At least every six months	QIV: low trust, high distrust
DT6	RWO	EVAPRP	Middle mgmt	Unknown (replacement)	Unknown (replacement)
DT7	LNE	DEP	Lower mgmt	At least every six months	QIV: low trust, high distrust
DT8	LNE	EVAPRP	Top mgmt	At least every six months	QII: high trust, high distrust
DT9	OV	EVAPRP	Middle mgmt	At least every six months	Not attributable

Annex to chapter 7: Reference Interaction interviews - quotes

7.1
- *T4: I think that colleagues we have worked with, they are certainly competent. They are also benevolent and have integrity, and also regarding compliance to arrangements we've never had any problems with them. So actually, that's a quadruple positive regarding the expectations we had, you could have about another organisation to cooperate, and they turned out to be true in all those aspects.*

7.2
- *T10: If information is given, you notice first and for all that they dare to ask critical questions about it, in order to correctly represent the context, which I find very good because we always tend to assume that they know what those numbers mean exactly, but they do ask some context question and give some context information with that... and they give feedback about the way in which they process the data. They explicitly ask like "did I understand that correctly like this" and it is transformed into the correct formulas in that way.*

- *T4: We got the feeling there that we could work with them professionally, and we had the feeling that those data were given to us in a good, but critical way, in the sense that they also gave yeah, context, conditions of those specific data. So that was very transparent, in which fashion those data were also given or presented.*

7.3
- *T5: This is what I call the basic level. But that is in fact a reasonably high level. But that you can count on that. That indeed, you're dealing with competent people. Making mistakes is a part of that, right, that's got nothing to do with that, everybody makes mistakes. Every organisation makes a mistake now and then.*

- *T7: Competence, if I look at sustainable development, that's certainly there in that team. They've developed that in a five to six year period, and they've done it through trial and error because sustainable development is such a broad concept that it is sometimes difficult.*

- *I: Yes. And have you ever seen the opposite of that, that they were perhaps less competent than you expected?*
  T9: Yes. But that isn't general then. (...) of course, when there are new informers who are just getting started, yeah, of course it might happen that something goes wrong, but yeah, we can talk about that, they also insist that if something like that happens, that we transmit the info to them with the front and last name (of the informer in question) and which time it happened, so that they can find out who that was, not in order to sanction that person but to see like, where does that person need extra training?

7.4
- *T10: I think that they still need to develop that competence. It is already partly there in that cell (...) but I think that it is not there to sufficient extent because they work on an abstract level there. You really need to have had a taste of some substantive processes I think to be able to unite the different interests in the future. That means a very good analysis of processes and so on. Making inspection services cooperate for instance is not something you can strictly consider from a regulatory perspective. You can compare legislation without knowing which processes are behind it.*

7.5
- *DT9: I think that they're very competent. Absolutely. I'm certain of that. That they're very competent....*

- *DT8: I assume that an organisation that is completing a certain task, that it's also competent to do so. If that wouldn't be the case, well, we would have a major problem. That is not only relevant for that organisation, but then I think it is a big problem for the overall organisation of the Flemish administration, if there is one organisation like that. So I assume that the competence is there, that they are working to keep it and to improve it. That is a prime assumption.*

- *DT4: (...) that has to do with the amount of data as well, it's a very difficult sector, there are very many differences, and those people really try hard I think, right, and there are also meetings on different levels, where things are decided, of which you really think like "technically, that's impossible, you really can't do that"... (...)*

  I: So it is actually a pretty big challenge, also for them, to get it right and do that...
  DT4: Yeah, yeah definitely. They're certainly not blocking it on purpose, right.

- *DT4: Competence, I think on the whole, good, although I think that it could be better for like one or two people.*

7.6
- *DT2: Yeah, competence... the biggest problem there is that they don't have the business-knowledge. Our business is rather specific, and [department A] doesn't have any sort of competences in it. So they are always*

focusing on generic knowledge, or the generic possibilities of their systems, so no, you won't get far with those competences.

- **DT5**: *I think that the horizontal people need to be competent in implementing things that others don't want. And that they're technically highly competent, but that doesn't mean that they're equally competent in checking how someone else, yeah, how you can do that, bring sufficient added value.*

- **DT7**: *Yeah for the competence, I expect them to... have the insight that not everything can be classified in simple categories, and that not every policy areas is the same. So I think that's a competence of which I expect them to have it.*
  I: Yes... and do you think that they have it right now?
  DT7: *(thinks for a moment) They do not show it. But I don't know if they have it. It might be that there are people there who have it , but it might also be possible that they, that it is political... (...) but I don't think that they take it into account very much, our specific situation.*
  I: They don't do it, but you say, they could do it, they could have the competence to do it, but they don't do it today.
  DT7: *Yes, or they are not allowed to do it.*

- **DT4**: *It takes a long time. It's not evident to make an estimation of that, but they could let us know in advance like (...) it's going to take that long and then it will be there.*

- **DT4**: *I think they have to dare to request expertise faster, if there is a problem, that they open up faster, or throw it in the group like look, we really have this problem, we're not succeding in solvingit, are there any people who could support us, and if so, would your chief allow you to do so? (...) and that is possible, isn't it, you can't know everything, sometimes there are problems that simply aren't all that clear, but just say like okay, that's the probem and we are working on it but we can't immediately find the solution or.... It's no fun, right, to admit that you can't solve it yourself, but yeah... but that's my opinion, I don't want to point the finger at anyone in specific, because it migt just be more difficult than it seems to us. That's possible, but we don't have that feedback either.*

7.7
- **I: Are they open to criticism on that, or to feedback?**
  T10: *yes, that's no problem at all I think, that they would... it also happened already in the past that we gave feedback like "be careful, you need to understand that differently", and then that was adapted.*

- **I: And do they take your concerns and interests into account in that cooperation?**
  T2: *Yeah in fact they do. Also in that (specific interaction discussed with the respondent), when I write another message again, they will find a solution. And then we do some ping pong, are we going to do that, are they going to do that, are we going to do that... (...) But we'll muddle through. We'll muddle through, but it costs me a lot of energy.*

- **I: Do you think [department B] (...) distinguishes itself from the two other horizontal departments we asked about in the survey? Do they handle things in a different way, is your trust embedded in some sort of distinction?**
  T4: *Yeah... it has a lot to do with, (...) that the cooperation does not start from a certain position. While when you compare it to, I have had many opportunities in the past to discuss with [department C], (...) they look at it more from certain predeterminations. And I you come with more questions or needs it is mostly "no, njet, it's impossible, and it has to be compensated". So that isn't, from my perspective, a department that is helpful in realisering the objectives of the organisation. (...)*
  I: It sounds to me like your interaction with [department C] starts more from faits accomplits with which you are confronted, and with [department B] it is more...
  T4: *Yes, yeah yeah. It probably has to do with the nature of the matter, what [department C] is doing compared with what [department B] is doing.*
  I: Yeah. And is it the same story when you compare it with [department A] or is that a different question?
  T4: *Well, [department A] is a bit in the middle of both, I think.*

- **T4**: *So there is a great openness and willingness to learn and attempt to understand, on their part, like what are the data that are available in the other organisations that might be interesting from our functioning on the Flemish level, or for those indicators. So there is a certain interaction and a, you can call it a win-win situation, in the best case, although it doesn't always have to go so far.*

- **T7**: *For us, [department B] is an organisation (...) where we have the expectations (...)that they will pick up our interests and the interests of (name of the respondent's organisation) in the framework of the waste policy and the materials policy, and also ensure the proper place for those concerns, and even more than that, that they*

take it sufficiently into account in one or the other way. That expectation is there, and the confirmation after has also been there (…).

7.8

- **T10**: *… What I really like is, at the moment in which we gave our data directly from our agency to [department B], and there is the opportunity for (our own department) to reflect about those data (…) that they communicate that very openly toward us. Because there is a difference in attitude. (…) the department has another vision on that, also communicates that to [department B], but we communicate in turn to [department B] to give our context. (…) So it's a very different way of perceiving certain facts. And that tension, you can effectively discuss that with [department B]. And there is a willingness to hear that context. (…)*
  I: So, they aren't only willing to listen, but they also try to stimulate a sort of discussion between different actors?
  T10: *Yes… I think that they do try to reconcile a number of perspectives. (…) they transgress the strict interests of the agency (name of the agency), but also those of the department and they try to present it in such a way so that everybody can find themselves or read themselves in it.*

7.9

- **T9**: *For instance, we had a celebration for five years (the respondents' organisation), and they are also invited of course, because it is also thanks to them that we can offer those services to our customers actually, yeah.*
  I: Do you consider it important that those people effectively come and show up?
  T9: *Yes, I think so. It kind of shows their involvement with your business I think. You know, it's an evening thing; you need to give up something for that (laughs).*

7.10

- **DT1**: *They do listen to (our concerns), but if they change something for one entity, they have to do it for all entities, so there again you have the generalisation that becomes the norm, and I do understand that, because otherwise you open the box of arbitrariness.*
  I: So, if you allow me to reformulate… the benevolence to see the pro's and cons for every organisation, it's not that they don't have it, but it is almost impossible to do it due to the horizontal task nature …
  DT1: *It is difficult, right, it is difficult.*

- **DT2**: *It might be the fault of our own policy area in part, but I also think that it is a lack of willingness to really dive into that business. That's relationship management, that is management of complaints. They're too much focused on the negative approach to maintaining the relationship, namely by taking away all the rough edges… (…) whereas if they would get the chance to really think along with our business… that would be far more useful.*

- **DT7**: *Those meetings with [department C], (…) there you have interaction, there you have opportunities to share your story. While I have the impression that for [department A], it's far more… directive. So that they request information, conduct their own analyses on that information without giving feedback, and all of a sudden they arrive with the perfect solution to all problems … without many possibilities for interaction.*

- **DT7**: *I am going to try to make it a bit more concrete (…) they want to go towards target percentages for the number of managerial support service staff as a ratio of the total staff number (…) in (our organisation), we always say we are a bit special. We manage a lot of additional funds outside of the general budget, which means that we have more overheid because we need to manage more funds that other organisations… but if they also tell us like "yeah it is linearly the same percentage as in [department A]", where they only need to manage a few legal articles… well then you're comparing apples and oranges. And I think that [department A] makes that sin a bit too often…*
  I: Yes… while for instance in your reporting activities toward [department C] there is more leeway to address those issues…
  DT7: *They have more insight in the specific nature of our policy area there.*

- **DT8**: *What I miss, that is the insight into what happens with that information, the possibility to bring forward our accent in the process, and also afterwards seeing that something actually happens with those things. Even if they discard it, but then at least you'd know about it.*

- **DT9**: *No, as far as I'm concerned, what they say over there is "it is like that", and then it is like that (…) and then it's like "no". So we're like "why"? And then they are like "yeah, budget reductions". But we have the feeling that they're holding the pen and that they just don't even consider what is behind all that, that there are people behind it. And all that from the top… with good reason of course… but (…) but they mean well, but I think that they forget like, there are actual people there. There are actual people, not just work stations and functions and desk islands. Not just chairs and one square meter per desk. There are people in there.*

7.11

- *DT1: ... so it would be good if you could make some adaptations as an entity. I do understand that there is a method of calculation, and that it needs to be followed by everybody, but sometimes the reality is different than the (indicator)...*
  I: And did they listen then?
  DT1: No, I asked like "look, that's not right, can we change that" and the answer was "no, we can't". So... (laughs)

- *DT5: We prepared a huge file over here for the minister of [department A] to clearly explain that the switch of our (old information-management system to the new system) would cost us over a million euros. And with the question of whether it wouldn't be more opportune, do (the new system) where the organisations have their own little systems that aren't integrated, but we have a fully integrated ERP system, isn't it opportune to just leave it like that? (...) We never even got a reply to that... no, simply, BAM, all at once, everyone under the new system. And then I say like yeah... I don't trust that policy area [department A], again, I'm not talking about the colleagues, but I don't trust the policy area [department A]. Because that is simply a dumb decision.*

- **I: Alright, so you indicate certain problems to them which might be related to their competence, but you only receive little feedback to that?**
  DT4: Yes and (...) you don't get an email like why is (the complaint) put on hold, is it being pushed back or has it been transferred to somebody else or...
  I: And do you give them a call then to hear what's up or...
  DT4: Yeah sometimes I call, and then they say, okay, we'll have a look at it...
  I: So that's still not a very clear answer?
  DT4: No it isn't a clear answer (...) maybe it's because they don't really dare to react enough, or too much work I think too, it may have to do with that, that they have difficulties coordinating it all (...) so I think it has to do with that because if they do have time it's often done very quickly. Sometimes it happens that I call in a problem, and that it's fixed the next day. (...)
  I: So it is a bit unclear to you what you can expect from that organisation, you don't know how long it will take to get feedback, you don't know if you will get any feedback in the first place...
  DT4: No. Especially not in the system they use right now.

7.12
- *DT2: So that benevolence is there for the persons. But for the organisation as such... you stop noticing it in fact...*

- **I: And do they listen then, if you say like that doesn't work, we have a different kind of need here...**
  DT5: No. (...) not the people personally, but the framework I think, because the discussion is very logical, but of course, Flanders is addicted to numbers. And the result of an audit is "you have a score of three, or you only have a score of two... and if you only have a score of two... be careful!"

- *DT7: We concluded earlier, that its because of the instructions they get, that's not necessarily the political instructions, but it's the step in between, the translation from political targets to the effective implementation, where they are working to linearly, so that could also be the senior civil servant (...)*
  I: Yes, yes yes. And you also indicated that those previous experiences, that those weren't your personal experiences with your counterpart, but rather with how [department A] is directed and framed by the leadership, and possibly also the political leadership.
  DT7: Euhm, yeah. Yes. And also how they will interpret and use certain data on a higher level, without taking into account the context and the conditionalities that have been proposed.

7.13
- *DT5: They could say, "listen, from your context, what can we do for you"? That could bring a lot of benefit, but it just doesn't happen. I've been asking for years to start working on common data centres because that would bring me benefit, they would réally help us with that. It just doesn't happen because it is too difficult and the service provider can't and bla bla bla... (...)*

- *DT6: Benevolence, that where I've got, that where both of us have, (name colleague) and I, we have some problems. I mean, the willingness to think along with their clients... because actually, no matter how you put it, (...) we are the clients of the supporting services. And that is not at all how they see it. (...) their risk analyses, organisational structure, organisational building, (...) that's all nice and fine, (...) but the realisation that all this leads to us not being able to perform our operational tasks as an organisation,... then I think like okay, benevolence, not really.*

- **I: Yeah... did you ever try to give [department A] that contextual information, or giving them input about how they should be interpreting that information?**
  DT7: Euhm, yeah, we always send that along, but I can also understand it from their side, they're getting

information from 13 policy areas, and everyone will always say like "you have to be careful", and add an additional note, but in the end they just put it all in that template (laughs), those thirteen rows and those thirteen columns in which the have to input their data, and they probably don't have any room to include all those "yeah buts" in it, so they just put it in their template and then the game is started of course, because that number will start to live a life of its own. And that's also the difficulty of their... I'm not saying that it's easy, but that is, that isn't okay over there.

7.14

- *T10: I think [department B] tries to approach that in an objective, neutral way. Knowing full well that they work in a political context, but I think that that is the only correct attitude in order to present those data in a neutral and objective manner. (...) I know that, considering values, that they try to give a neutral and objective presentation of the Flemish administration., very often without being judgemental about it (...)*

- *T2: If you don't have integrity, you are screwing everybody over, then you're just a fraud (...) integrity is both for yourself as regarding the organisation, you shouldn't (...) try to stab somebody in the back, you have to work according to the norms and values, so that's all integrity, if you don't have that, you can't work with each other. (...) the people with whom I work, they have integrity, I've never... [department B] has integrity. More integrity that our own policy area, because they are really close to that, and the last thing I would think is that [department B] would not have integrity. No, they really use the values, they are really, in a manner of speaking, the source of everything which is 'Flemish administration'.*

- *T4: It is to some extent, I think, the attitude of the people at [department B], whether it is only those two people or whether that is a general attitude in that department, but that is a, yeah... they have a certain neutrality, you could also call it integrity... they don't have any interest to protect certain things or to be intransparent...*

- *T7: There is of course always a risk (...) you know that when you exchange certain information, that it's possible that (...), you run the risk that others are going to take the credit, to put it like that, but I have to say that the expectation is not, we do not consider that risk to be particularly high regarding [department B] (...)*
  I: Yes, so [department B] or at least the administrative component, your expectation is that they have sufficient integrity to not take the credit of your work...
  T7: Yes, exactly, that's it!

7.15

- *T9: I make a distinction between being customer-oriented and being customer-friendly. Customer-oriented means that the client knows what he's facing, even when it is negative information, or a negative message. While customer-friendly sometimes means too much that you go along with the client, without being able to draw the line...*
  I: A bit like honesty?
  T9: Yeah, yeah, you cannot totally take the place of the client when you are there (...)
  I: Yeah. So you expect them to be empathic, but also correct in applying all the regulatory provisions.
  T9: Yeah, yeah.
  (...)
  T9: Integrity, that's actually related to trustworthiness, and compliance to the arrangement that have been made. I think they are inherent, and can't be considered as separate themes.

7.16

- *DT2: Integrity, uhm, I can hardly make any comments about that. I assume that the integrity is okay over there, but I can't confirm or deny that...*

- *DT6: Integrity will be okay. I have no doubts that that will be okay.*

- *DT8: I consider the first two (competence and integrity) important, I think those are a given for every organisation in the Flemish administration, I don't think that's more or less important, but I just assume it's there.*

7.17

- *DT2: You just know that if you give them the unfiltered numbers, it will always be used in the most negative way possible in order to say "we told you so, If you would have been working in our outsourcing-contract, it would have been way cheaper".*

7.18

- *DT2: And in the meanwhile they are trying to convince you like, you have 2/3 of your environment with us already, (...) just make that last step and you'll be far more cost-efficient. Well, if you make the calculation yourself, because you obviously do that (...) and you see like yeah... this is not right... this is simply not more efficient at all, and especially, the quality is lower... well, then you just stop considering at all.*

- **DT5**: *(discussing a new information management system in the organisation) They walk in here, the horizontals, saying "this is illegal". So I asked them, okay, this is illegal... then show me the law! (imitates other voice) "yeah, well, yeah, yeah... we cannot just show you because that is how we deduced it, but it is illegal". (Switches voices again) ah but no, if it is a deduction, we might want to first talk this through. (Switches voices again) "yeah but it is illegal". (Switches voices again) yeah no if it is illegal then I need to see something where it says: "illegal". Right, so now they say, it is "unwanted". I think that's a major difference. (...) so when you say, the trustworthiness, no I don't think that is trustworthy, no that's not trustworthy. If I tell you, "listen buddy, this is illegal", and I can't tell you why, then that is not trustworthy.*

7.19
- **T9**: *And they stick to the agreements, yes. They stick to the agreements.*

- **T2**: *They are correct in their agreements... they're sometimes (...) a bit sloppy, a bit slow, a bit sluggish, and then you think like come on, they were going to give that but they're still not giving it... but that isn't a question of bad will, that's just (blows) too much, too much, and then I don't mind to simply ask it once more... because I'm from MOW, but there are 13 others that are also waving to them, of course.*

7.20
- **DT2**: *The expectation you have about every partners, both client, supplier as real partner, is that you make arrangements and that you know what's coming. [Department A] has infringed that trust multiple times. (...) a nice example is a recent letter in which they were casually mention that [department A] expects 84.000€ from (the respondent's organisation, many that was actually spent by them for storage systems, in support of us, in the years 2005 until 2011. And then I think: I didn't know about that. (...) compliance with arrangements, that... no. That really is a failure with [department A].*

- **DT7**: *They collect certain data and then use it in a different context... and that is... that really is on the edge, isn't it? They ask info about (...) and you have to give it because we need it for that or that survey... and half a year later a table pops up like, yeah, on the basis of you data we made an analysis and you have to reduce 4% in... yeah... and then you might say yeah, was that info used in a correct way back then? Hmmm... gray zone....*

- **DT8**: *I'm assuming that there are arrangements, there is horizontal deliberation in the Flemish administration, but also there I hear, between the lines, that people are unhappy about things that happen there. That things in that deliberation are not really executed, and the other way around, that things that were executed were not in line with the arrangements made about it.*

- **DT9**: *They're sticking to arrangements, but... there is a but in there. They comply with arrangements, but... (laughs)... they don't comply strictly to the arrangements. They always want to the most they can get. And why do they want the most they can get? In order to save more money, to be more efficient.*

7.21
- **DT4**: *In general they stick to the arrangements (...) to the extent that that is possible, but it is that feedback, there is so little feedback, and if you don't give feedback like we are going to do this before then, well, then it is difficult to check those arrangements...*

7.22
- **I: Vulnerability is very important in understanding trust and distrust, so I would like to get back to [department A] and [department C]... do you see that element of vulnerability there to be bigger, or stronger than in your interaction with [department B]?**
T4: Yes, we will definitely not take the same... in function of certain data and numbers... assume a rather strategic position and not have the same openness in terms of background of certain numbers, finances and so on... (...) we will look at it more strategically and in some cases the background... yeah we won't lie, but we also won't tell them more than what we want to tell them. (...) so there is a certain difference with [department B].

7.23
- **T6**: *I think that it is a statement (...) Not starting from distrust but from trust, and then, also taking enough caution in order to know, like what are you going to do with that information, which information can I get, because I also find that when information enters our organisation externally, that you have to check from which perspective it is written. (...) that has nothing to do with suspicion, but I'm convinced that organisations, ours included, sometimes try to present numbers in a different way. Not to present them incorrectly, but taking into account the way in which they are best communicated towards the society. (...) they do try, and what's wrong with that, to phrase a negative message in more positive words.*

- **T9**: *I have to say, with the people of [department B], you are going to block them somewhere in order to protect your own shop (...) but that is openly discussed, right, it's not as if that is not openly discussed (...) within our relation, I can say that we are relatively open. But there are certain things that you're not going to tell them. You can't be naively open, that's what I mean.*

7.24

- **T10**: *Open and vulnerable, I don't have a single problem in assuming that position. Dependent is a different story. (…) so if your question is, are you willing to provide all kinds of information in an open fashion, in a vulnerable way, yes. That doesn't occur to me to be any kind of problem. But where I do have a problem is if those data are then used in a new kind of dependency-relation. That I'll be dependent upon those data.*

- **T2**: *Dependent sounds to me like such a dirty word… I'm not dependent from them, right, if they don't do it, no harm done, I'll just go somewhere else. No, it is cooperating and making (…) optimal use of the services they provide (…) That's like, if they're not there you are frozen. And that's wrong. I don't freeze when I don't have [department B].*

- **T9**: *But yes, vulnerable and dependent, but I think dependent is a different thing. Right, that's almost that they know something they could use against you if you don't do what they ask… and I don't really see that in that interaction so… well yeah, taking a dependent position, uhm… somehow you are dependent upon that service delivery, right, if [department B], would suddenly say like our contract is void, yeah then you have a huge problem.*

7.25
- **T7**: *Two, is the way in which (…) they deal with the content of waste – and material policy, whether or not they do that according to a vision which we share and support and which we would want to present externally, that's a form of risk, right…*
  I: Yes… so that there isn't any visible competition between perspectives…
  T7: *Yes exactly, that's it, that you can be clear in that (…) that there isn't a conflict in how you take that to your stakeholders, that's also a form of vulnerability, you have to see that you speak to society, as public administration, with one single voice.*

7.26
- **T9**: *Yeah because that's very important for our service delivery too. That's a service in fact, for which we don't have the staff and which we are outsourcing in fact. So externally (…) okay, that has an impact on your policy, and it stands or falls with the quality of the answer, which is given there.*

7.27
- **T6**: *Imagine for instance that certain success rate percentages of certain training programs would be very low, right, that is relatively very sensitive information for a public agency that works on the basis of subsidies and so on, and then I think that we have to make that information available (…) if we come up with numbers which aren't the numbers that you might expect in that field, (…) so assuming a vulnerable position, absolutely, that has to be possible, because we have those data so why wouldn't we, but framing it like how it should be considered in that context.*

7.28
- **T7**: *I'm thinking about opening the data which they could bring in the press in a way which we don't like, or that they could interpret in a way that we don't like, which is why I immediately wanted to give the counter-example that we don't have any bad experiences with that, on the contrary, that's really okay over there.*

- **I: Yes… so you trust them, but you are not, you are not blind in it, you will always…**
  T6: *no, because it also has to do with, and that's not related to [department B], but we've often seen that, and that may be in the journalistic sphere or in a sphere of legislation or regulation or whatever, … everything is so specific in its own specific context, and it is possible that they write something with the best intentions, but still completely miss the point…*

- **T10**: *I know that I almost always take a very vulnerable position when I provide information about enforcement. (…) Because the data I provide show that we try to enforce in the most efficient and maximal way possible. And like I mentioned earlier, that hasn't brought us much gratitude. (…) not a single minister wants to be associated with tearing down houses, for instance. So when you do provide information about the number of reports or court orders, about severe infractions, yeah, you know that you are starting to take a vulnerable position.*

7.29
- **DT1**: *I don't have a problem in itself to position me or the organisation in a vulnerable way (…) no matter whether you agree or not, you have to provide certain things because the question will arrive at the senior civil servant through the senior civil servants, so you'll have to do it anyway.*

- **DT4**: *Yeah, I would take a less vulnerable position towards them (compared to what they organisation actually does) (…) we would work more on our own, be less dependent from their servers, their capacity, their way of working (…) but that isn't feasible, I also know that it isn't financially feasible, also in terms of time investment, you have to invest a lot of time in that, that isn't feasible.*

7.30
- **DT2**: *My organisation, when your organisation is concerned, you are a bit more conservative, because you realise there that of course you don't, you don't have the right to just drag you entire organisation along in the story.*

But that you go to a conversation with an open mind (…) that is very self-evident for me. (…) it is only when you notice that it's the same old song all over again, that you close down. (…) and if you notice then that they are trying to do all kinds of weird stuff and that they are dragging you along in some kind of adventure, yeah, then you start going for the brake.

7.31

- **I: Does that mean that you are less willing to take that vulnerable position today?**
  DT5: Euhm, I only do what I have to do (…)
  I: So out of your own initiative you wouldn't often take a vulnerable position towards...
  DT5: No, because you never know what they might do with it.
  I: Yeah. Okay.
  DT5: Let them just find out on their own what they want to know. I don't have to present that to them on a silver platter…

- *DT7: distrust is maybe a bit too strong of an expression, but where I'm careful, I think that's the more applicable term, where I'm careful is in giving information to [department A].*

- *DT9: I'll always give them the full menu. But if you then consider my organisation, they'll only give away a few of the ingredients. But that's strategy, and I'm not so strategically inclined.*

7.32

- *DT4: (…) being less dependent upon their servers, their way of working, (…) because then you'd know what's happening. That black box we have now wouldn't be there anymore (…) but ideally, if that would be something like that then I would choose for that, together with my colleagues. Everything in our own hands and do that. And then eventually working with people and like look, everyone can count on that, but it'll be on our rules then.*

7.33

- *DT6: I became head of division two and a half years ago, and I immediately said to the people, also when applying for the job: "the organisation comes first, then the division, then the services, and then the person." (…) yeah, I had to stop doing that. Because I always ended up with the short straw. You can only do that in an organisation where they all think like that. (…) And I do think that, if I look at everything with all the entities and [department A], (…) the perception is that the policymakers won't believe us anyway, so if we say 30, then they will say okay, you can do more than that, we'll go for 35. So in order to arrive at 30, we will indicate 25. And I think that that is the case for many entities. And that is, are you willing to make yourself vulnerable? Ah, yeah, but not in an environment where that isn't the norm. and I think that the climate is not right for it right now. I don't think so.*

7.34

- *DT1: Well you give them an insight into your internal organisation. And I know a lot of entities which rather wouldn't do that. But we don't really have a problem with that ourselves. And that's also the vision of the senior civil servant. Well, we don't have to open ourselves up completely, but we can perfectly cooperate, that's not a problem for sure.*

- *DT7: If you provide information, I do have the feeling that we assume a vulnerable position toward [department A], because we know yeah, that will be used to decide upon affairs that will impact us. And in this context, that is a negative impact: that is reducing expenditure, that is reducing functions, so… I think that vulnerability is an element of the relationship.*

7.35

- *DT2: If you are going to compare certain similar categories of KPI's in the reporting template that they provide. And maybe introduce all kinds of weird relationships, which could lead to them making interpretations that could put us in a very strange light. (…) Those numbers can be interpreted in so many ways that everyone who has every worked with such aggregated numbers knows that statistically, you can go every which way with them.*

- *DT7: If everything goes correct, and you know that, then I have no problem with giving correct information, but then they do need to take into account the contextual information that you give and the peripheral remarks you make. And if that feeling is not there, you won't go as far in that.*
  I: Yes. So you say personally I don't mind to assume a vulnerable position, as long as all the peripheral information is present.
  DT7: Yes, if the info is used correctly.

7.36

- *T10: (…) open and vulnerable is, I think, something else than dependent. Open and vulnerable, I don't have any problem to position myself in that like that. Dependent is a different thing (…) What I do have a problem with, is if those data are then used in a new sort of relationship of dependency. That I'll become dependent once more upon those data. I think the data can be processed, that it can come back to the organisation, that we can reflect upon it, that we can take something up in it and that we can start doing something with it, but not if that's understood in the sense of "and now we're going to design a centralised policy and we'll impose it on the*

administrative entities". If that's the meaning of dependent, then I'm effectively far more reluctant in it.
(…)
Now, regarding [department B] that's a different story I think, because I never had the feeling that they collected data with which they breached the autonomisation of an entity. (…)
I: Yes. So you indicate, open and vulnerable, no problem, dependent is another issue, and right now with [department B], we're not…
T10: *Dependent in the sense that there is first a feedback about the conclusions they draw from data collection.*
I: Yes. And is there a difference with the other horizontal departments, in that component of dependency?
T10: *Euhm, yeah. In the case of [department C], you're completely dependent on what is decided, mainly on the political level, that process is far more political I find… (…) in the case of [department A], a lot of those request come from a (parliamentary) question, but the objective of those questions is not (always) clear to me… and yeah,… that might not really be an issue of dependency, and more a question of sensibility, I find.*

7.37
- **I: Yes… so open and vulnerable…**
  T10: *That doesn't seem to be a problem to me. Everything is in information systems anyway nowadays, everything is digital, right to even the tiniest file… so everyone can, if they would want to, get access to it (…)*
  I: Yes, and where is that component of vulnerability in that interaction?
  T10: *Ah, you open up some data that you might not, well somebody could take abuse of it. (…) then you have to know that it's a very sensitive thing, enforcement, because they're looking at it through a magnifying glass. Politics, parliament is not a big supporter of good enforcement. I dare to say it as it is (…) so at the moment you start to provide data and it's taken advantage of, and you know that that will happen (…) and then you get a policy cycle in which parliamentarians start to submit legislative proposals to make the work of the inspection-organisations more difficult. And that has definitely happened in the past 15 years.*
  I: Yes. Okay. But then I'm hearing here like yeah, the vulnerability might be more in everything that's happening around [department B], the parliament, journalism perhaps, but not really [department B], itself directly.
  T10: *Yes. I think that [department B] tries to approach this in an objective neutral way. Knowing fully well that they are working in a political context, but I think that that is the only correct positioning in order to deliver those data in a neutral, objective fashion. They're not responsible for what happens to those data afterwards, in terms of interpretation and so on.*

- **T9**: *But at a certain moment there was a discussion about [the specific cooperative action with department B], we're not going to do that anymore. And then I, there was a moment in which I seriously lobbied my leader like "don't just give that up". (…) regarding other people in the agency that said like "we have to get out of it, we should give that away if we can do it ourselves". (…) I had to like, well, fight is a big word but I had to go at it with a lot of argumentation in order to say like "we are going to extend that contract". Yes, they could have pushed me back at that moment. They could have said "no, you're not signing that contract, it's the senior civil servant and they see it differently". So they could have pushed me back at that moment but they didn't. I mean, I was able to convince them that it was the best way of working.*

7.38
- **I: Can you indicate in what sense your organisation effectively takes a vulnerable position today in its relations with [department A]?**
  DT4: *Well, rather vulnerable, because you depend on them. It's a big system too so you have to depend on it, also because we cannot take up all those things technically. So we don't have the people for it, the budget for it, so you're dependent upon it. (…) changing one thing over here could mean a night of work or two days of work over there, and you really depend on it (…) they have to deliver it and so on, but if they don't, yeah, then they don't and your system is blocked.*
  (…)
  I: Okay, so you say, we are positioning ourselves vulnerably with regards to [department A]… but do you have any kind of choice in whether or not to do that, or is it simply a given?
  DT4: *That's a given. Period. Its always been like that and it's not even put into question anymore, it's just like that. [The specific interaction with department A] is a system, and it's everywhere. That way of working is necessary, but that's a given.*
  I: So there's no getting out of it, so to say?
  DT4: *Difficult, difficult, because you would have to really do everything yourself. We could do it, but then you'd have to say that you can deliver exactly the same service they are delivering. And you can't say that in one two three, it's not so evident, so in reality, there's no getting away from it. (…) in this case, we're with a few technical people here, and we think that's a problem, but it's possible that the people don't consider it to be a problem because they just ask their question sometimes, and if there's an answer, after a month, and they think "okay, I've got my answer". If you think that's okay, well they just adapt their work to it. But since I have more of a technical profile, I think that's cumbersome, but I don't think they're (the people in the boundary spanners' own organisation) always aware of that.*

7.39

- *DT8: (...) I called it flexibility a bit earlier, and that's about the relationship between people and tasks for instance, but you can also, in the husbandry of your organisation, you can also have flexibility in the area of resources, of people, of allocation, of reserves, and so on... there we are very limited with a flexibility of zero, while I hear from colleagues (in other organisations) that they do have flexibility, and if I would translate that word to distrust or not really knowing what's going on... then it could be that flexibility is being used to steer certain things in a certain direction. But now I'm really assuming, and not speaking about observations I have made.*
  I: Then do you think that all information shared with [department B], that's maybe difficult to answer, but that it's always correct, a correct representation of reality?
  DT8: Yes but it can... what is correct, huh? It could be coloured in a certain sense... and I'm not the one who can say like "yeah but there it's a bit too red and there it's a bit too... so I don't know about that. But I can surmise it when I see, that there is leeway in bigger organisations that's not there for us... if they're sitting there with the same feeling of "they're doing things of which I'm not sure what they're doing.... Then it is likely that the temptations large to steer things in a certain direction. But now I'm really guessing, actually.

7.40

- *DT7: Where I'm careful is in giving information to [department A]. (...) in any case we will never give wrong information or manipulated information, I think, you always have to keep in mind that [department A] works for a government that has been democratically elected, and that we are all civil servants in service of, right, so we will never give incorrect information, right, but we will sometimes be selective in giving information. Right, not putting all our cards upon the table, that could happen in reality today. (...) So you give them what they want to have but we will consolidate it to ensure that if they want to do something with those numbers, that they'll have to come back to ask them so that we can give them the contextual conditions in which they can use them.*
  I: Yes, so in fact you are trying to protect yourself against those faulty interpretations that might be made...
  DT7: Yeah, and of course that is protective, right...

7.41

- *DT9: And like I said just now, if I know somebody, I would just send an email, but the coordinator, he coordinates so well that he goes like "what did you just write"... he wants to read everything, so then I say yeah but then I won't do it. Because I want to create an opening, it has to move forward, when the formal email has to leave from the attitude of the Management Committee, he first has to read it because he fears, is afraid, fear is a bit the word that floats around over here, he is afraid that I won't understand. And then the email is thoroughly checked to see that there's not in there that can hurt [the respondents' organisation] before it is sent away. So...*
  I: So the organisation is more careful than you are personally...
  DT9: The organisation is far more careful, the word 'slight anxiety' comes up in this, but yes, careful. Careful anxiety.

- *DT5: ... and two, it is sometimes better to remain on board to try and influence it. If it wouldn't be okay. Those are the two motives. (...) Considering the entire [specific interaction with department A]-story, I'm in the reflection group on how it should be implemented, because I'd rather be there. And that works pretty well, because they don't have any technicians there and I'm technically pretty... (laughs) but then it's just better to attempt to be very close to it.*
  I: Alright, so you contribute and cooperate with that group, not because you have a lot of faith that they will do a good job, but exactly because you're afraid that they...
  DT5: Yes, yeah yeah. Which they confirm, by the way, because when they call me it's always like "are you going to be there because we won't have anyone who knows what it's about regarding technical matters". Well, that's not really trust-invoking of course.

7.42

- *T6: ... I think that if you cooperate within the Flemish administration, that you have to assume that trust is the foundation. Right until it... without being naïve. That doesn't mean that you should just add it all up and make everything available, because context is extremely important, but I am convinced that they will have the integrity and the deontology to handle that in a decent way.*
  I: Yes, so you trust them, but you are not... you aren't blind in that, you'll always...
  T6: No, because it's also got to do with, and that's unrelated to [department B], but it has happened before that, and that may be in the journalistic sphere but also in a sphere of legislation or regulation or whatever, euhm... everything is so specific in a certain context and it is possible that they write something in good faith, but that they drop the ball anyway.

- *T7: There is, of course, always a risk, isn't there? (...) you know anyway that when you release certain information, that it is possible (...) there is a chance that other will steal your credit, to put it that way. But I have to say, in this case I have to say that our expectation is not that... we do not judge that risk to be very high*

regarding [department B], or regarding [department A], even in the new structure... I think that there... well, of course there's also the political side of things... (...)

I: Yes. But regarding [department B], or in any case the administrative component of [department B], you do expect them to have the integrity not to steal your credit regarding...

T7: Yes, there you go, that's it.

7.43

- *DT4: So, I am willing to supend my vulnerability, no problem, but it has to grow from the bottom and not a system that is imposed by the top. (...) now they are working on another system, and that's different. It is supported more, first they listened like "which systems already exist, can we turn it into a central system, who is potentially willing to join it, who isn't..." eventually 11 policy areas joined in on it, and now it is being implemented everywhere and now there is a lot of support (...) so it resulted from an entire bunch of other applications, which were replaced by one thing that has to catch as many things as possible, and that has been a good approach.*

  I: Yes, so it was more bottom-up, while the previous one was more top-down?

  DT4: Yes!

- *DT7: Personally, like I just said, I don't have a big problem with it as long as I know that all information is handled in a correct way and according to the content of the coalition agreement. Then, I don't have a big problem in assuming an open and vulnerable position. (...) They have to take into account the contextual info you give, and the side notes that you make. And if that feeling is not there, you want go as far in it.*

7.44

- **I: Okay, it is interesting that you say that you would personally want to take a less vulnerable position in that relationship.**

  DT4: yes, but that is not connected to their competences and all, but yes, I would say that, yes.

  I: Okay, you say that it is not connected to their competences, so it's not like you assess your own competences to be that much stronger than theirs...

  DT4: No, certainly not. We also need to appeal to expertise if we don't know it, because we are smaller, have a smaller scale, your scope is more clear to say like we now need that, our expertise is specific, and so that scope is easier to determine (...). If the scope is that big, it is not easy to say like we need that kind of profile to come and help us.

7.45

- **I: Yes,... so even in the framework of what we have just discussed, that you have certain negative expectations regarding [department A], you are still willing to assume an open, vulnerable position?**

  DT2: Yes, of course. Because it is only when you notice that it is the same old song again, that you close down. When you go to the presentation of (a new initiative taken by department A) you think like okay, who know what it might bring for us. If they are going to make large efforts for that project, we might benefit from it, why not. But if you then notice that they don't have any kind of focus and don't know what you're actually going to do, that's when I think, I am wasting my time again. So you give, you give everyone a chance.

  I: Yes. So in the first instance you are actually optimistic about what will happen?

  DT2: Yes. You remain optimistic, yes.

7.46

- **I: Okay, so largely, you argue: what I do, is largely the same as what I want to do...**

  T9: Yes! It is what I'm willing to do. Yes.

  I: Do you think we then need to consider other reasons that define your behaviour or...

  T9: I don't think so. They are the same... especially regarding the willingness. Maybe not regarding that other one (the respondent refers to the dimension of perceived trustworthiness) but regarding the willingness to assume an open position that is the same. Yes.

- **I: Yes, so now it is about how you effectively behave, not about how you would want to behave or about your intentions, but about your actual behaviour. So the first question then is, do you think that this diverges to any extent from your personal intentions?**

  T2: (laughs) What you see is what you get. Yes. I am pretty straightforward in that... Between what I want to do and what I do. (...) If I'm personally willing to do that, then I'll do that. (...) there is no difference between what I'm willing to do, in my function and my job, taking everything into account; the framework, [department B],... what I'm willing to do and what I effectively do and the extent to which I do it. I do what I do. I do what I have to do. Because I have to do it, because I want to do it, because I have the insight, because I see it, and then I do it. So that is exactly the same thing. (...). The extent to which, I am willing, and so, the personal willingness and the extent, so that is a consequence. Imagine that there would be a significant difference, that there would be a significant difference between the extent to which I do, and the personal willingness, well, then I'd have a problem with myself, then I'm not being straightforward. Oh yes. Because what you do, the extent to which you assume openness depends on your willingness.

7.47

- **T4**: *I think my organisation has exactly the same opinion about this. Of course you will have the reflex, in the framework of information security, "can we transfer this information", so we have person who is responsible for information security, so that is something we take into accont, because information security (…) is something that needs to resonate in the entire organisation.*

- **T5**: *I think that, what I would personally want, that this is subjugated, because the question is posed and in principle the information is then delivered, and if possible, within the time that is available (…)*
  I: Alright, so in principle, there might be a difference between how you personally feel about that…
  T5: *There could be, there could be.*
  I: But it doesn't make a difference for how you then behave in practice…
  T5: *No…*
  I: I do what is asked of me.
  T5: *Yes.*

- **I: is there a gap between what you intention is and what you effectively do, or are forced to do?**
  T6: *Of course. Of course. Because you check everything in function of your organisation. You can, because first, you check it in your organisation in the framework with your senior civil servant or with your board of directors wants, or possibly your own department or your minister, (…) and that may mean that the context or the extent to which you make yourself vulnerable as an organisation, that this is more limited, that it is different, more reserved, than what you would personally do. (…) Regarding [department B] I really don't know, I'm not really aware that that has ever occurred, but it did occur for instance regarding external communication. (…)*

  I: Thank you. Can I deduce from this all that the trust you have in [department B] can indeed play a role…
  T6: *Of course!*
  I: But that it may also be overruled by…
  T6: *Ah yes, of course, that is pure logic. That overruling does not mean that the trust is affected, but it does mean that within the context of the Flemish administration, also within your own policy area, you have to take into account a cabinet and a minister. That is again that framework, but from a different perspective.*

- **T7**: *Yeah, I didn't select it before, but if you look at the full picture, especially for that last (dimension of the trust process), when you're effectively going to do it… (…) but there is a difference with willingness, and what you're effectively going to do (…)*

7.48
- **DT8**: *For me, what I personally want to do and what my organisation… that is a one-on-one relationship. I don't see that I would want to do something that is different from my organisation. Also because (…) the organisation is not that large, and the people who work on this, that it is a very short chain. I don't think my personal willingness plays a big role in that. (…), I think it is normal that corporate information is centralised and puzzled together in the Flemish administration as a whole, so I think it is very normal that I will provide the correct information, and won't play any games… (…) So I assume a vulnerable position. (…) I don't see why I shouldn't. (…) I think it is rather logical that all elements of a company report correctly. (…) but what is correct? It may be coloured in a certain way. (…) and I can presume, when I look at it, that there is some latitude in large organisations that we do not have. If they have a similar feeling there like "they are doing things and I don't know what they are doing"… the temptation is probably high to colour the information in a certain way. But now I'm really speculating, actually. (…) I think that it is only important, if you are in big organisations, that there can be a deviation between the willingness of the senior civil servant and the people who implement tasks or have contact …*

7.49
- **DT4**: *Well, I would like to take a less vulnerable position regarding them, because you have less control (…) but we would work more on our own then, be less dependent on (…) their capacity, their way of working (…) because then you know what happens. The black box wouldn't be there, which is there right now. (…) but that is not feasible, I do know financially, that it is not feasible, also regarding investment of time, you need to invest a lot of time in that, it is not feasible, but ideally if it would be the case, that would be my choice, together with my colleagues. Everything in our own hands and do that. And possibly cooperate with people (…) but according to our rules.*

- **DT5**: *So I think okay, in a democracy I, as a civil servant, can think like "I am rather distrustful of that, yes". Which doesn't mean that I will not do what they say, that is something else entirely. But I am rather distrustful of that. And I don't think anyone can blame me.*

7.50
- **DT6**: *I would personally want to go a bit further in that info… ehm, I would personally once, do it once for a subpart, but then I want to see that they take those contextual conditions into account. When I see they don't, then we are in the scenario as is, I'd say, if I would be the senior civil servant in this scenario (…).*

I: Yes, so you would personally give them a bit more credit than your organisation does today...
DT6: Yes.

- *DT9: yes, that deviates. This is different (indicating the willingness to suspend vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour (…)*
I: (…) can you explain this a bit further? Are there other things that, well, explain this?
DT9: Yes, what can I say… for instance (…) I'm in charge of (…), and like I just said, I would simply send an email, but the coordinator, he coordinates so well that he will say like "what did you write exactly"… he wants to read everything, so I say "yes but okay, in that case I won't do it". Because I want to make an opening, I want things to go ahead, when the formal email is initiated from the attitude of the MC (Management Committee), he first needs to read it because he is afraid, has fear, fear is a bit the word that lives here, has the fear that I don't understand it. And then that email is inspected closely before it is sent out. So…
I: So the organisation is more careful that you would personally…
DT9: The organisation is far more careful; the word "slight fear" is present there. But yes, careful, careful fear. I already said that about my boss, right?

7.51

- *I: My first question here would be, do you think there is a difference between your personal willingness and what your organisation effectively does?*
DT1: (immediately) Yes. Yes (laughs). There is. You will always look at the interest of your own entity and the consequences of transferring certain information. Especially in recent times, now that we are caught up in one information collection round after the other, this causes a certain carefulness in the sharing of specific information because there may be consequences for… well for your functioning. So that is the difference between the personal willingness and the effective… the effective behaviour very much depends upon the context in which you are, and right now, it is cutbacks, so I presume that many entities are more reluctant regarding information-sharing. I am convinced of that.

- *DT6: No, I don't always do what I want to do, and I don't always do what I would want to mean for the customer… Because if that is what you want, you should be completely on the top. And I am not completely on the top, so I know that there are some things that I have to follow that might not completely be my own conviction, and I just have to do that. I don't have a problem with that. Because for the largest part I can do what I want. Because otherwise… we have a large degree of freedom. And you know, everything depends upon the "carcan" you are in. (…) if they ensure that you do not have the resources to do what you want, well, then you can't do it. Even if they say like yes, you are free… so that framework is of primordial importance and there [department A] (…) remains important to shape the framework to do your thing. (…) so freedom, yes… when the framework allows it.*

Annex to chapter 8: Cell analysis

In this annex, we present the cell-by-cell analysis of the data collected in samples 1, 2, 3 and 4 within the analytical framework presented in table 45 of paragraph 8.4. All quantitative models for samples 1 and 3 as well as all qualitative interview quotes for samples 2 and 4 used for these cell analyses are also included in the annex to this dissertation.

Table 48 can thus be used as a 'reading companion' to these annex cell analyses, and is therefore repeated here for the readers' convenience.

		Macro		Meso	
		Formal	**Informal**	**Calculus**	**Relations**
RI of trust vs RI of distrust	**Perceived trustworthiness**	Cell 1: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 2: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 3: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 4: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4
	Willingness to suspend vulnerability	Cell 5: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 6: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 7: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 8: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4
	Risk-taking behaviour	Cell 9: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 10: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 11: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4	Cell 12: analysis of samples 1,2,3,4

In what follows, we will present the results of the quantitative analysis of the data in samples 1 and 3, and the results of the qualitative analysis of the data collected in samples 2 and 4.

Cell 1: macro-level formal aspects and perceived trustworthiness

Interaction aspect	Perceived TW in RI of trust		Perceived TW in RI of distrust	
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
1. Formal rule framework	0,281 * * *	Formal frameworks considered important. Formal frameworks considered unambiguously and latently present in background of information exchange with horizontal department B, establishing a framework of correctness' (integrity) in the interaction. This framework of correctness involves clear specifications of positive and negative formal norms, allowing boundary spanners to make mutual credible commitments (ability) and to establish boundaries that they are supposed to respect in the interaction (compliance). These formal frameworks were considered to be unambiguous but sufficiently broad to allow discretion, flexibility and empathy within clear boundaries (benevolence)	0,439 * * *	Formal frameworks considered important and problematic. On the one hand, formal frameworks were considered to be ambiguous about obligations of A regarding the collection, interpretation and use of organisational information, increasing the perceived dependence of administrative entities upon the benevolence of A. On the other hand, formal frameworks were overly rigid about obligations of the administrative entities towards A, not allowing discretion, flexibility and empathy by A in information collection process.
2. Formal role framework	0,141 ns		0,172 *	
Explanatory power	Adj. R^2=0,135 P>F = * * *		Adj. R^2=0,366 P>F = * * *	

Survey findings – samples 1 and 3

The survey data show a significant positive relationship between the presence of clear formal rules and perceived trustworthiness in both sample 1 and 3. Formal macro-level interaction aspects explain about 13,5% of the variance in perceived trustworthiness in sample 1, and about 36,6% in sample 3. In sample 1, the presence of clear formal rules was positively related to perceived trustworthiness (p<.01). In sample 3, a positive relationship between clear formal rules and perceived trustworthiness was also present (p<.01), in

addition to a positive but comparatively weaker positive relation between the presence of clear formal roles and perceived trustworthiness (p<.1). Concerning control variables, micro-level predispositions to trust were positively and significantly related to perceived trustworthiness in both samples 1 and 3 (p<.01). The models are relatively reliable, although post-estimation suggested potential nonlinear heteroscedasticity in the OLS model for sample 3 (White's test p<.05).

Interview findings – samples 2 and 4

Formal framework: formal rules and roles

Clear formal macro-level aspects were considered important explanatory factors for boundary spanners' perceptions of trustworthiness in both samples. Boundary spanners did not make a clear distinction between rules and roles as formal macro-level aspects in interorganisational information-sharing interactions, arguing that both rules and roles were considered as part of the 'formal framework' of their interorganisational interaction. In sample 2, boundary spanners argued that unambiguous and latent formal frameworks provided a clear description of formal norms of behaviour with which the trustor could agree. The formal framework was therefore argued to constitute a 'framework of correctness' in which the behaviour of the trustee was considered to be just and fair, thus acting as a necessary reference point for boundary spanners' perceptions about the horizontal department's perceived integrity (see quote 8.24 in annex). Furthermore, respondents in sample 2 argued that clear specifications of positive and negative formal norms act as a reference point for the perceived compliance of department B, and allow them to form realistic expectations about their counterparts' ability to make credible commitments on behalf of department B in information exchange interactions (see quote 8.25 in annex). Finally, boundary spanners in sample 2 argued that formal frameworks of their info-exchange interaction were unambiguous on the one hand, but sufficiently broad to allow discretion, flexibility and empathy and thus, perceived benevolence within those clear boundaries on the other hand (see quote 8.26 in annex). In sample 4, respondents made the argument that the formal framework (again, respondents did not distinguish formal rules from formal roles) was too rigid toward their own rights and obligations on the one hand and too loose toward the obligations of horizontal department A on the other hand. Boundary spanners argued on the one hand that formal frameworks were overly rigid about their obligations towards department A in info-exchange interactions, and that there was no room for discretion, flexibility, empathy and thus, benevolence, by the counterpart in department A in these interorganisational information exchange-interactions (see quote 8.27 in annex). Boundary spanners in sample 4 argued on the other hand that the formal framework for info-exchange with department A was too ambiguous about the obligations of department A toward their own entities in interorganisational info-exchange interactions, and that they were therefore highly dependent upon A's limited benevolence to address their concerns regarding the interaction (see quote 8.28 in annex).

Cell 2: macro-level informal aspects and perceived trustworthiness

Interaction aspect	Perceived TW in RI of trust		Perceived TW in RI of distrust	
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
3. Informal routine framework	0,206 * *	Stable routines considered important. Both latent and explicit routines argued to constitute organisational myths of self-evident counterpart trustworthiness according to a neo-institutional structuration logic.	0,490 * * *	Not considered important
4. Admin. leader confirmatory norms	0,372 * * *	Not considered important	-0,202 *	Negative salient norms expressed by administrative leaders argued important, due to negative influence on boundary spanners' perceptions of trustworthiness. Lack of administrative leaders' interest in horizontal department argued to cause stagnation of low levels of perceived trustworthiness due to lack of impetus for relational improvement.
5. Pol. principal confirmatory norms	0,212 * *	Not considered important	-0,234 * *	Not considered important
Explanatory power	Adj. R²=0,469 P>F = * * *		Adj. R²=0,467 P>F = * * *	

Survey findings – samples 1 and 3

The survey data support a significant relationship between all informal macro-level interaction aspects and perceptions of trustworthiness in samples 1 and 3. The macro-level informal aspect model explains about 47% of the variance of perceived trustworthiness in both samples. All observed relationships are in line with our hypotheses. The survey data suggest that boundary spanners consider their counterparts more trustworthy when the interaction is characterised by clear and predictable routines that shape mutual functions, rights and obligations in both sample 1 (p<.05) and sample 3 (p<.01). The expected positive relationships between perceived trustworthiness and the trusting norms expressed by political (p<.05) and administrative (p<.01) principals are found in sample 1, and the expected negative relationship between perceived trustworthiness and norms of distrust expressed by political (p<.05) and administrative (p<.1) principals are found in sample 3. Concerning control variables, micro-level predispositions to trust were positively and significantly related to perceived trustworthiness sample 1 (p<.01) and sample 3 (p<.05), and respondent age was negatively related to perceived trustworthiness in sample 1. The models are reliable, although post-estimation suggested potential nonlinear heteroscedasticity in the OLS model for sample 3 (White's test p<.1).

Interview findings – samples 2 and 4

Informal sailent norms

In sample 2 interviews boundary spanners did not consider that the salient norms expressed by their administrative leaders or political principals impacted their own perceptions of department B's trustworthiness (see quote 8.29 in annex). In sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners emphasised the importance of negative salient norms expressed by their administrative leaders in relation to perceived

trustworthiness. While some boundary spanners argued that their senior civil servants' expressions of distrust in department A had negatively affected their own perceptions of department A's trustworthiness (see quote 8.30 in annex), others argued that their senior civil servants mainly showed disinterest in horizontal matters, providing little impetus for relational exchange that might improve existing perceptions of A's limited trustworthiness (see quote 8.31 in annex).

Informal routines

Regarding the presence of stable routines in the interorganisational interaction, boundary spanners in sample 2 argued that stable routines were important determinants for the perceived trustworthiness of horizontal department B. Routines, both latent and explicit, were argued to support the organisational myths of self-evident counterpart trustworthiness, in which individual boundary spanners were socialised and helped perpetuate (see quote 8.32 in annex). In sample 4 on the other hand, boundary spanners did not consistently consider any particular relationship between routines and the perceived trustworthiness of department A.

An additional aspect: the sense of belonging to one single 'administrative community'

Finally, the informal institutional aspect of a sense of belonging to one single 'administrative community' was argued to affect perceived trustworthiness in both interview groups. In sample 2, this sense of belonging to one single 'administrative community' was associated with perspectives of partnership and unity in the face of common challenges. As such, the existence of this informal institutional 'culture' supported the perceived benevolence and integrity of department B with respect to information exchange interactions. Furthermore, boundary spanners considered that any organisation that is part the 'Flemish administration' should be assumed to be trustworthy (see quote 8.33 in annex). Boundary spanners in sample 4 interviews on the other hand stressed diverging organisational cultures, needs and competition between entities, or the absence of a shared culture, causing alienation between front and back-office entities as well as lower perceptions of department A's benevolence (department A did not want to 'see things their way', was unable to understand priorities and needs of their entity) (see quote 8.34 in annex) and ability (perceived lack of benevolence to learn from entities severely inhibited department A's ability to improve its skills and competences) in information exchange interactions (see quote 8.35 in annex).

Cell 3: meso-level calculative aspects and perceived trustworthiness

| Interaction aspect | Perceived TW in RI of trust | | Perceived TW in RI of distrust | |
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
6. No information of opp. motivations	0,337***	Knowledge of opportunistic motivations considered important, but difficult to discuss because boundary spanners argued that B's self-interest was aligned with their own organisational interest and the administrations' collective interest. Boundary spanners therefore considered that opportunistic behaviour by B was a contradiction in terms due to the relational interdependency and the collective	0,366***	Knowledge of opportunistic motivations considered important. Boundary spanners argued that their knowledge of opportunistic motivations of A, in terms of administrative bureau maximisation, affected its perceived benevolence and integrity. Furthermore, boundary spanners argued that they had knowledge of opportunistic behaviour in terms of political interest maximisation, which was considered to additionally affect

		institutional culture in the RI of trust, as such supporting perceptions of B's benevolence and integrity.		A's neutrality and objectiveness (perceived integrity.
7. Asset specificity (-)	0,165**	No additional qualitative evidence	-0,030	Asset specificity regarded as element of cost considerations, and thus considered important.
8. Risk nature (-)	-0,189**	No additional qualitative evidence	-0,226**	No additional qualitative evidence
9(c). Personal cost-benefit analysis	0,036	Personal cost-benefit considerations not important, and considered subsidiary to organisational cost-benefit considerations	0,064	Personal cost-benefit considerations not important, and considered subsidiary to organisational cost-benefit considerations
10(c). Org. cost-benefit analysis	0,089	Organisational benefits considered mainly as consequence of perceived trustworthiness..	-0,174**	Organisational cost-benefit considerations considered antecedent of trustworthiness: Boundary spanners argued that costs of interaction outweigh benefits, which *caused them to be wary about A's…* - Benevolence: because A was considered to push for an agenda that violated the respondents' organisational interests. - Integrity; because horizontal department A was considered to be dishonest about the true costs and benefits of information exchange.
Explanatory power	Adj. R²=0,177 P>F = * * *		Adj. R²=0,438 P>F = * * *	

Survey findings – samples 1 and 3

The survey data support the hypothesis that some calculative meso-level interaction aspects are significantly related to perceived trustworthiness in interorganisational interactions in public administration. The extent of variance explained for perceived trustworthiness on the basis of these calculative meso-level aspects is smaller for sample 1 (about 18%) than sample 3 (about 43%). In both samples 1 and 3, we find that knowledge of opportunistic motivations (negative interpretation) ($p<.01$) and risk nature ($p<.05$) are negatively related to perceived trustworthiness. Furthermore, we find that in sample 1, asset specificity is positively related to perceptions of trustworthiness ($p<.05$), which contradicts our hypothesis. Regarding control variables, perceived trustworthiness was negatively related to organisational cost-benefit considerations in sample 3 ($p<.05$) and to micro-level predispositions to trust others in sample 1 ($p<.1$) and in sample 3 ($p<.05$). Although post-estimation indicated no problems regarding the reliability of the OLS model in sample 1, post-estimations for sample 3 showed potential problems with the normal distribution of residuals for the OLS model (Shapiro-Wilk $p<.1$; Shapiro-Francia $p<.05$) and possible non-linear heteroscedasticity (White's test $<.05$).

Interview findings – samples 2 and 4

Information about counterparts' opportunistic motivations

In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that they did have any information to consider department B to be opportunistically motivated, and even argued in some cases that department B's self-interest was aligned with their own organisational interest and the administrations' collective interest. In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that relational interdependency between organisations and the presence of a shared institutional culture therefore rendered opportunistic behaviour by

department B almost unthinkable and a contradictio in terminis, which was associated with positive perceptions of B's benevolence and integrity (see quote 8.38 in annex). In sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners argued to have particular information and knowledge about A's opportunistic motivations and that this negatively affected department A's perceived trustworthiness. On the one hand, department A's desire for administrative bureau maximisation at the cost of other organisations was argued to negatively affect its perceived benevolence and integrity. On the other hand, boundary spanners argued that department A's political principal was using department A to push an agenda of administrative budget austerity, and that this had damaged the perceived neutrality and objectiveness (perceived integrity) of department A (see quote 8.39 in annex). In sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners particularly argued that information collected through rumours played an important role in forming these perceptions, particularly during periods of institutional ambiguity and the absence of other sources of information on the basis of which perceptions of counterpart trustworthiness could be formed (see quote 8.40 in annex).

Asset specificity

No qualitative evidence was found in support of the positive quantitative relationship between asset specificity and perceived trustworthiness sample 2 interviews. In the sample 4 interviews, asset specificity was mainly discussed as a cost aspect of cost-benefit considerations (infra), but no particular reference was made to explicitly relate asset specificity to perceived trustworthiness was made.

Perceived risk

The qualitative data did not suggest any relationship between perceived risk and perceived trustworthiness in sample 2 and sample 4.

Organisational cost-benefit considerations

In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that cost-benefit considerations were consequences, rather than antecedents, of perceived trustworthiness. Boundary spanners argued that information exchange with department B was beneficial for their own organisation, because department B was considered to be benevolent and trustworthy, and was considered to use the exchanged information to benefit the boundary spanners' own organisation. Boundary spanners therefore saw benefits to helping department B because department B was considered to be trustworthy, rather than the other way around (see quote 8.36 in annex). In sample 4 interviews however, organisational cost-benefit considerations were considered as determinants of perceived trustworthiness. As boundary spanners considered that information exchange had little benefits for their own organisation, they became highly critical about department A's benevolence, as department A was considered not to care about the interests of the boundary spanners' organisation. Furthermore, boundary spanners doubted department A's integrity because they considered that it did not reveal the true costs and benefits of information exchange. As such, horizontal department A was considered to offer a 'bad deal' to the boundary spanners'

organisation, which affected the perceptions about the benevolence and integrity of department A in information exchange interactions (see quote 8.37 in annex).

Personal cost-benefit considerations

The qualitative data did not suggest any relationship between personal-cost benefit considerations and perceived trustworthiness in sample 2 and sample 4.

Cell 4: meso-level relational meso-level aspects and perceived trustworthiness

Interaction aspect	Perceived TW in RI of trust		Perceived TW in RI of distrust	
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
11. Signalled trust	0,106	Trust reciprocity considered important because expression of trust was seen as expression of benevolence.	0,331***	Trust reciprocity considered important. Boundary spanners who considered that A expressed lack of trust questioned benevolence of A to greater extent.
12. Value identification	0,303***	Value identification considered important due to association with perceived integrity. Value identification argued to be both institutional and relational, as it requires agreement with institutional 'shared' values, and agreement with specific operationalisation of those values in the interaction.	0,475***	Value identification considered important due to association with perceived integrity. Boundary spanners indicated alienation from horizontal department A's values due to disagreement with 'shared' values (wrong focus or politicisation of horizontal values) or disagreement with specific operationalisation of values in interaction.
13. Good personal relationship	0,195**	Friendly interpersonal relations between boundary spanners considered important. All boundary spanners argued their friendly professional interpersonal relations enabled discussion of ideas and concerns 'off the record', increasing perceived benevolence of the counterpart. Friendly interpersonal relationship furthermore argued to smoothen informal communication and reduce information asymmetry	-0,004	Friendly interpersonal relations between boundary spanners considered important. However, boundary spanners argued that interpersonal relationships were friendly, but that these relations were not sufficiently activated to support perceived trustworthiness of A because: - A's reliance on formal, one-way communication rather than interactive interpersonal communication. - Low perceived ability of counterpart in A to make credible commitments that A would take feedback into account.
14. Signalled distrust (-)	0,037	Signals of distrust were not considered to exist in the RI of trust.	-0,145**	Signals of distrust not emphasised by most boundary spanners.
15. Power equality	0,211***	Accessible and open two-way approach to communication used by department B supported perceived benevolence and power equality.	0,075	Lack of opportunity for feedback and one-way communication approach by department A was detrimental to perceived benevolence and power equality
16(c). Experience-based expectations	0,256***	Past experiences very prominent (most densely coded explanatory category for this dimension in RI of trust). Boundary spanners argued that confirmation of initial positive expectations about B in interaction experiences strengthen perceived trustworthiness of B.	-0,023	Past experiences very prominent (most densely coded explanatory category for this dimension in RI of distrust). Negative experiences regarding ability, benevolence, integrity and compliance in interactions with A were argued to expectations of A's future trustworthiness. However, horizontal departments' perceived control argued to moderate effect of negative experiences on future trustworthiness.
17(c). Interaction age	0,129*	Interpersonal familiarity between boundary spanners argued by few respondents to be a precondition for other relational aspects to develop, and to bring relational knowledge that adds to predictability of counterpart	-0,037	Interpersonal familiarity between boundary spanners argued by one respondent to bring relational knowledge that adds to predictability of counterpart, which was argued to make them more trustworthy regardless of their competence, ability, benevolence or compliance.
18(c). Interaction frequency	-0,123*		0,004	
Explanatory power	Adj. R²=0,543 P>F = ***		Adj. R²=0,733 P>F = ***	

Survey findings – samples 1 and 3

The survey data support the hypothesis that meso-level relational interaction aspects are significantly related to perceived trustworthiness in interorganisational interactions in public administration. The relational meso-level aspects model explains about 54% of the variance in perceived trustworthiness in sample 1, and about 73% of the variance in perceived trustworthiness in sample 3. In both samples 1 and 3, we find that value identification is positively related to perceived trustworthiness ($p<.01$). Furthermore, we find in sample 1 that perceived trustworthiness is positively related to good personal relations between boundary spanners ($p<.05$), and to power equality ($p<.01$). In sample 3, we find that perceived trustworthiness is positively related to expressed trust ($p<.01$) and negatively related to expressed distrust ($p<.05$). Considering control variables, perceived trustworthiness in sample 1 was positively related to the familiarity aspects 'experience-based expectations' ($p<.01$), and interaction age ($p<.1$), but negatively related to interaction frequently ($p<.1$), albeit barely significant. Perceived trustworthiness in sample 1 was also negatively related to 'respondent age' ($p<.1$). In sample 3, perceived trustworthiness was positively related to 'respondent seniority' ($p<.05$) and to micro-level predispositions to trust ($p<.05$). Post-estimation indicates no problems with the OLS models in either of the samples, suggesting that the models are reliable.

Interview findings – samples 2 and 4

Signalled trust

In sample 2 interviews, signalled trust was considered to be an important determinant of perceived trustworthiness. Boundary spanners argued that expressions of trust by department B occurred regularly, and regarded this as an expression of benevolence from department B toward the boundary spanners' organisation (see quote 8.41 in annex). In the sample 4 interviews, a minority of boundary spanners considered department A's requests for information exchange as a supply-driven desire for control, inspection and regulation, rather than a demand-driven approach to horizontal coordination intended to empower and support administrative organisations in the Flemish administration. Such perceived desires for control, inspection and regulation were interpreted as signals of a lack of expressed trust by department A, which was argued to negatively affect perceptions of department A's benevolence and concern for the needs of the boundary spanners' organisation (see quote 8.42 in annex).

Value identification

In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners associated value identification closely with the perceived integrity of department B. Values of neutrality, objectiveness, cooperation, openness and efficiency were emphasised as shared values and were considered to contribute to department B's perceived integrity. Boundary spanners argued that these values were implicitly present in most of their interactions with horizontal department B. Value identification was argued to affect perceived trustworthiness through direct experience with the operationalisation and prioritisation of values in interorganisational interactions

(meso-level). However, value identification was also embedded in the (macro-level) informal institutional 'collective culture of belonging to the Flemish administration' as shared values are more likely to exist in interorganisational interactions that are characterised by a common culture that promotes shared values (see quote 8.43 in annex). In sample 4 interviews, value identification was also associated with perceived integrity in the interorganisational interaction. Boundary spanners emphasised their alienation from horizontal department A's values, and argued that this had led them to question the perceived integrity and benevolence of department A. Some boundary spanners argued that they did not identify with the values of department A due to their rejection of a 'collective culture of belonging to the Flemish administration' of universal value scheme in the Flemish public administration on the macro-level (see quote 8.44 in annex). Other boundary spanners argued that they did believe in the existence of common values on the macro-level of the Flemish administration, but that they could not identify with the way in which department A operationalised these values in info-exchange interactions (meso-level) (see quote 8.45 in annex). Such disagreement with the presence or the implementation of shared values was argued to negatively impact A's perceived trustworthiness.

Interpersonal relations

In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that friendly interpersonal relations between boundary spanners strengthened their perceptions of department B's trustworthiness in information exchange interactions, since good interpersonal relations enabled informal discussion and communication 'off the record', allowing more flexibility and perceived benevolence in the interorganisational relationship. The smooth and informal communication associated with friendly interpersonal relationships was also argued to reduce information asymmetry, and to provide information on the basis of which calculus-based trust could be built (see quote 8.51 in annex). In sample 4 interviews on the other hand, boundary spanners argued that their interpersonal relations were friendly and professional, but that these good interpersonal relations had no impact on their perceptions of department A (see quote 8.52 in annex). The lack of a relation between good personal relations with individual boundary spanners of department A and the perceived trustworthiness of department A was explained to be due to department A's reliance upon a formal, hierarchical, one-way communication style, in which the boundary spanners of department A were considered to have little ability to change this approach and make credible commitments on behalf of department A. As such, the positive appreciation of the individual counterpart did not lead to a more positive appreciation of department A (see quote 8.53 in annex).

Signals of distrust

In sample 2 interviews, signals of distrust were not suggested to play a role of any significance. In sample 4 interviews, a negative relationship between signals of trust and perceived trustworthiness is suggested: although most sample 4 boundary spanners argued that department A did not explicitly express distrust, one boundary spanner emphasised that department A showed fear of opportunistic deception by the boundary spanners' organisation during information exchange interactions by attempting to regulate

managerial discretion in the boundary spanners' entity. The boundary spanner perceived this as an expression of distrust by department A, and argued that this was detrimental to its perceived benevolence (see quote 8.54 in annex).

Power equality

Although power equality was not explicitly raised during our interviews, boundary spanners in sample 2 interviews suggested that the accessible and open two-way approach to communication used by department B supported perceived benevolence and power equality (see quote 8.56 in annex). Boundary spanners in sample 4 interviews on the other hand, argued that the lack of opportunity for feedback and the one-way communication approach by department A was detrimental to perceived benevolence and power equality (see quote 8.57 in annex).

Familiarity

interviews suggest that pervious experiences are important determinants for perceived trustworthiness in samples 2 and 4. In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners gave a myriad of examples of positive previous experiences relating to the ability, benevolence and integrity of horizontal department B, arguing that their positive expectations about department B were based on positive previous experiences (see quote 8.46 in annex). Our sample 4 interviews showed the same mechanism: most boundary spanners argued that negative past experiences made them more negative about department A's trustworthiness while giving examples of negative experiences regarding the ability, benevolence, integrity and compliance of A (see quote 8.47 in annex). Boundary spanners who argued that they had had some positive experiences with department A were also more positive about the perceived trustworthiness of department A (see quote 8.48 in annex). Finally, one of the sample 4 respondents argued that their negative experiences did not necessarily affect the perceived trustworthiness of department A if the negative experience was considered to be beyond department A's control (see quote 8.49 in annex). Interestingly, the effect of previous experiences on perceived trustworthiness was also argued to depend upon institutional stability. Boundary spanners argued that positive past experiences require stable institutional frameworks in order to strengthen perceived trustworthiness. Changing institutional or contextual environments might render past experiences inaccurate predictors of future trustworthiness (see quote 8.50 in annex). The self-reinforcing cycle of perceived trustworthiness and positive relational experience was therefore argued to exist optimally under stable institutions and contexts, but might be strained during (temporary) episodes of institutional instability or change.

Finally, sample 2 and sample 4 interview data suggest that interpersonal is a precondition for other meso-level interaction aspects to develop and to generate relational experience that adds to predictability in the interorganisational interaction (see quote 8.55 in annex).

Cell 5: macro-level formal aspects and the willingness to suspend vulnerability

Interaction aspect	Willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of trust		Willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of distrust	
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
1. Formal rule framework	0,105 ns	Formal frameworks were argued to restrict and allow clear estimation of vulnerability in interaction by establishing non-ambiguous and universal rules and boundaries for interaction whilst allowing some flexibility. Argued to act latently and constitute 'good reasons' for boundary spanners to take a 'leap of faith' in the interorganisational interaction	0,370 * * *	Formal frameworks were argued to be ambiguous about boundaries and boundary spanner roles and discretion. Furthermore, they were considered not to apply universally and not to be checked reliably. As such, boundary spanners argued that formal arrangements did not succeed in constituting 'good reasons' to take a 'leap of faith'.
2. Formal role framework	-0,143 ns		0,066 ns	
Explanatory power	Adj. R^2=- 0,058 P>F = *		Adj. R^2=0,178 P>F = * * *	

Survey findings – samples 1 and 3

The survey data show that formal macro-level aspects do not provide any significant explanation of the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 1, but do provide a significant explanation for sample 3. The macro-level model explains about 6% of the variance in the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 1 (p<.1) and about 18% of the variance in the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 3 (p<.01). In sample 3, clear formal rules are significantly and positively related to the willingness to suspend vulnerability (p<.01) Concerning control variables, micro-level predispositions to trust were positively related to the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 1 (p<.01) and sample 3 (p<.1). The models are relatively reliable, although the sample 1 model was characterised by a low probability of non-linear heteroscedasticity (White's test p<.1) and the sample 3 model was characterised by a low probability of linear heteroscedasiticity (Breush-Pagan test p<.1).

Interview findings – samples 2 and 4

Formal framework: formal rules and roles

In our interviews boundary spanners did not make a clear distinction between rules and roles, and referred mainly to 'the formal framework' in more general terms (see quote 8.58 in annex). In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that clear formal frameworks supported the willingness to suspend vulnerability by establishing non-ambiguous rules and definitions for info-exchange interaction with department B. Furthermore, it was argued that the formal framework applied universally to other organisations for which information was requested, and as such, established a 'level playing field' for information exchange in the Flemish administration, which reduced organisational vulnerability associated with the behaviour of other organisations and with combining and interpreting data from different organisations. The formal framework thus enabled boundary spanners to make an adequate estimation of what was expected of them precisely, and to assess the extent of their vulnerability in the information exchange interaction (see quote 8.59 in annex). However, sample 2 boundary spanners also argued that some extent of flexibility of the formal framework was important for their willingness to suspend vulnerability (see quote 8.60 in annex). Finally, sample 2 boundary spanners argued that these formal

arrangements were not used excessively in information exchange interactions with department B. Instead, they were argued to be latently present in the background of the information exchange interactions, where they constituted 'good reasons' to take a 'leap of faith' and exchange the requested information with department B (see quote 8.61 in annex). In sample 4 interviews on the other hand, boundary spanners argued that formal frameworks were ambiguous or opaque about boundaries, roles and decision discretion (see quote 8.62 in annex). Furthermore, boundary spanners doubted whether existing formal arrangements were universally and reliably applied in information exchanges involving multiple stakeholders. One respondent argued that decisions by department A's political principal would trump any formal arrangement made about the use of their organisations' information (see quote 8.63 in annex). As such, boundary spanners in sample 4 interviews considered that clear formal arrangements for their info-exchange interactions with department A were either absent, or lacked the credibility to constitute good and credible reasons to take a 'leap of faith'.

Cell 6: macro-level informal aspects and the willingness to suspend vulnerability

Interaction aspect	Willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of trust		Willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of distrust	
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
3. Informal routine framework	-0,001 ns	Routines considered important. Willingness to suspend vulnerability partly considered as self–evident unquestioned attitude in interactions with B. Informal routines argued to perpetuate themselves and thus support the willingness the suspend vulnerability through social control mechanisms, mimetic isomorphism and path-dependency.	0,329 * * *	Routines considered important. Some boundary spanners emphasised absence of informal routines, due to which 'good reasons' to take a leap of faith were absent. Other boundary spanners argued that presence of informal routine in interaction with A socialised the boundary spanners' willingness to be vulnerable through mimetic isomorphism and path-dependency, even though the boundary spanner considered A to be untrustworthy
4. Admin. leader confirmatory norms	0,124 ns	Administrative leaders' salient norms considered to latently support boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability.	-0,159 ns	No additional qualitative evidence
5. Pol. principal confirmatory norms	0,305 * * *	Not considered important, although argued that political principals' salient norms could, in theory, latently support willingness to suspend vulnerability	-0,307 * *	Not considered important. Boundary spanners argued that political principals were unlikely to risk any political capital by expressing norms of distrust.
Explanatory power	Adj. R²=0,153 P>F = * * *		Adj. R²=0,254 P>F = * * *	

<u>Survey findings – samples 1 and 3</u>

The survey data shows some evidence supporting a significant relationship between informal macro-level aspects and the willingness to suspend vulnerability. The informal macro-level models explain a significant extent of variance in boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability in both sample 1 (about 15%) and sample 3 (about 25%). In sample 1, we find the expected positive relationship between salient political principals' trusting norms and boundary spanners' willingness to be vulnerable ($p<.01$), but not for salient trusting norms expressed by senior civil servants or for the presence of clear routines. In sample 3, the presence of clear routines is positively related to boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions ($p<.01$). We also find the expected negative relationship between the willingness to suspend vulnerability and salient distrusting norms expressed by political principals ($p<.05$).

We did not find any quantitative evidence for a significant relationship between salient administrative leaders' distrusting norms and boundary spanners' willingness to be vulnerable in sample 1. Concerning control variables, micro-level predispositions to trust others were found to be significantly related to the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 1 (p<.1). The OLS analyses are reliable in both samples, although there was a weak indication of possible nonlinear heteroscedasticity in the OLS model for sample 1 (White's test p<.1).

Interview findings – samples 2 and 4

Informal sailent norms

Regarding the salient norms of administrative leaders, the qualitative data are inconsistent. In the sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued the senior civil servant was usually supportive of boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability, but did not explicitly express trust in department B (see quote 8.64 in annex). In sample 4 interviews on the other hand, boundary spanners had widely varying opinions regarding the impact of their administrative leaders' norms upon their own willingness to suspend vulnerability in the interaction. The qualitative evidence regarding this normative mechanism in sample 4 interviews is therefore inconclusive.

Regarding the salient norms of political principals, boundary spanners did not consider salient norms of political principals to affect their willingness to suspend vulnerability in qualitative interviews. In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that in theory, their political principals' latent support could empower their own willingness to suspend vulnerability in the information exchange interaction with department B, but that this did not occur in practice. In the sample 4 interviews boundary spanners argued that political principals did not express distrust in department A, as they were unlikely to spend attention to matters outside their area of competence, and therefore did not influence boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability in information exchange interactions with department A.

Informal routines

Informal routines were considered to affect boundary spanners' willingness to be vulnerable in both samples 2 and 4. In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that their willingness to suspend vulnerability in information exchange interactions with department B was a self–evident and rather unquestioned attitude. In other words, the willingness to suspend vulnerability toward department B was considered as a self-evident reality in the interorganisational interaction, rather than the result of a formal instruction, conscious decision calculus or a 'personal favour' between boundary spanners. As routines perpetuate themselves, bring stability and predictability, and become self-evident and unquestioned, they provide 'good reasons' to 'take a leap of faith' in interorganisational interactions that involve a certain extent of risk (see quote 8.65 in annex). In sample 4 interviews, informal routines were argued to play a similar role of socialising boundary spanners into the willingness to suspend vulnerability. Some sample 4 respondents argued that the presence of informal routines in interactions with department A exerted an

informal pressure to ignore vulnerability, even though department A was considered to be untrustworthy (see quote 8.66 in annex). Other boundary spanners argued that informal routines were absent in the interorganisational interaction, or that the normal routine was to disregard formal arrangements, thereby introducing more ambiguity in the interorganisational interaction. Faced with more ambiguity, boundary spanners felt unsure about the extent of their vulnerability, and found fewer 'good reasons' to suspend vulnerability in the interorganisational interaction with department A (see quote 8.67 in annex).

An additional aspect: the sense of belonging to one single 'administrative community'

Finally, boundary spanners in both sample 2 and sample 4 interviews emphasised the importance of belonging to a collective 'administrative community for their willingness to suspend vulnerability. In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that their willingness to suspend vulnerability was partly motivated by a sense of belonging to a large public, tax-funded organisation, which implied an ethical responsibility to be transparent about the use of public resources and thus to be accountable towards systems of audit and control, and to provide information when doing so was required by the principles of good governance and the 'common interest' of the Flemish administration (see quote 8.68 in annex). In sample 4 interviews on the other hand, boundary spanners rejected the notion of a sense of a 'common interest' and a collective institutional culture when discussing information exchange interactions with department A. Instead, their description of the informal culture encompassing the interaction was one of alienation between front- and back-office entities, of competition and self-interest seeking, on the basis of which they perceived 'good reasons' to suspect abuse of vulnerability by other organisations in the Flemish administration, and thus refrain from taking 'a leap of faith' in the interorganisational interaction (see quote 8.69 in annex).

Cell 7: meso-level calculative aspects and the willingness to suspend vulnerability

Interaction aspect	Willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of trust		Willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of distrust	
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
6. No information of opp. motivations	0,284***	No evidence for direct effect on willingness to suspend vulnerabilty. Knowledge about opportunistic motivations considered important due to impact on perceived trustworthiness.	0,332***	No evidence for direct effect on willingness to suspend vulnerabilty. Knowledge about opportunistic motivations considered important due to impact on perceived trustworthiness. Extraneous factors were argued to aggravate the perceived probability of untrustworthy behaivour (for instance: political pressures, the austerity context, and the opportunistic behaviour of other stakeholders).
7. Asset specificity (-)	-0,117*	Asset specificity argued to be somewhat important, as part of implicit cost consideration	-0,057	Asset specificity considered somewhat important. As part of explicit cost consideration.
8. Risk nature (-)	-0,271***	Perceived risk considered important. Boundary spanners perceived risks of info-exchange, but B's perceived trustworthiness was argued to constitute 'good reasons' to suspend these risks. Perceived risk can therefore be considered to be implicitly weighed against perceived trustworthiness in interorganisational interactions, establishing an important calculative mechanisms of the willingness	-0,260***	Perceived risk considered important. Boundary spanners perceived risks of info-exchange, but due to A's perceived lack of trustworthiness, they saw no 'good reasons' to suspend these risks. Perceived risk can therefore be considered to be implicitly weighed against perceived trustworthiness in interorganisational interactions, establishing an important calculative mechanisms of the willingness to suspend vulnerability.

		to suspend vulnerability.		
9(c). Personal cost-benefit analysis	-0,140*	Not considered important	-0,124*	Not considered important
10(c). Org. cost-benefit analysis	-0,179**	Organisational costs and benefits argued to be somewhat important, but rather implicit. Boundary spanners argued that they did not explicitly weigh cost and benefits for every single request for information by B, as implicit and evident 'good reasons' were argued to be more important.	-0,219***	Organisational costs and benefits argued to be very important and explicit. Lack of benefits was emphasised more strongly than the presence of costs of info-exchange with A. Boundary spanners argued that their willingness to suspend vulnerability was more explicitly rational, well-considered and specific (less heuristic and 'automatic').
Explanatory power	Adj. R²=0,343 P>F = * * *		Adj. R²=0,515 P>F = * * *	

Survey findings – samples 1 and 3

The quantitative findings shows strong evidence for the existence of significant relationships between calculative meso-level interaction aspects and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in both samples 1 and 3. In sample 1, the calculative meso-level model explains about 34% of the variance in boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability, and it explains about 51% of the variance in sample 3. We find that the willingness to suspend vulnerability is negatively related to knowledge of opportunistic motivations (negative interpretation) in sample 1 ($p < .01$) and sample 3 ($p < .01$), and to risk nature in sample 1 ($p < .01$) and sample 3 ($p < .01$). Furthermore, in sample 1, willingness to suspend vulnerability is also negatively related to asset specificity ($p < .1$). The negative relationship between asset specificity and the willingness to suspend vulnerability is surprising considering the positive relationship we found between asset specificity and perceived trustworthiness in the previous section. While the direction of causality cannot be established on the basis of these cross-sectional findings alone, these results suggest that the more calculative boundary spanners are, the less they are willing to suspend their vulnerability. Considering control variables, the willingness to suspend vulnerability is negatively related to organisational cost-benefit considerations in sample 1 ($p < .05$) and sample 3 ($p < .01$), to personal cost-benefit considerations in sample 1 ($p < .1$), and is positively related to micro-level predisposition to trust other in sample 1 ($p < .05$). These models are relatively reliable, although post-estimation in sample 1 revealed limited problems of nonlinear heteroscedasticity (White's test $p < .1$), and normality (Shapiro-Francia $p < .1$)

Interview findings – samples 2 and 4

Information about counterparts' opportunistic motivations

In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that the lack of information about any opportunistic motivations of department B was an important reason for their higher willingness to suspend vulnerability in information exchanges with department B. Boundary spanners argued that department B showed a limited and normal extent of organisational interest-seeking, and would not seek self-interest by hurting other organisations due to its interdependency with other entities (see quote 8.74 in annex). This interdependency, together with the sense that department B acted in the collective interest of the Flemish administration, acted as counterweights to suspicions of 'unhealthy' opportunistic motivations, and established perceptions of horizontal department B's trustworthiness, which provided good reasons to

boundary spanners to suspend their vulnerability in the interaction. In sample 4 interviews on the other hand, boundary spanners argued that their knowledge about opportunistic motivations of department A affected their perceptions of the department A's trustworthiness, which limited their willingness to suspend vulnerability in information exchange interactions with department A. For instance, boundary spanners in the most frequently selected RI of distrust argued that horizontal department A selectively used and interpreted information in order to favour its own purposes and agenda, even at the cost of other entities. Boundary spanners reacted by taking a 'strategic' attitude towards department A in order to protect their organisational interests, by holding on to the control over their information, and thus by refusing to take a leap of faith in info-exchange interactions with department A (see quote 8.75 in annex).

Asset specificity

In sample 2 interviews boundary spanners considered asset specificity as part of the organisational cost-benefit consideration of info-exchange, and argued that asset specifity would lower their willingness to suspend vulnerability, but that they would remain willing to suspend their vulnerability in the interorganisational interaction as long as asset specificity was tolerable (see quote 8.71 in annex). In sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners argued that the asset specificity of information exchange with department A was relatively high, and that they were less likely to willingly suspend vulnerability if asset specificity would continue to rise (see quote 8.73 in annex).

Perceived risk

In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that they were aware of the risks involved with openly exchanging information with department B, but that they had no reason to expect that their vulnerability would be abused by horizontal department B (see quote 8.78 in annex). In other words, the perceived trustworthiness of horizontal department B, together with other macro and meso-level aspects described in this section, provided 'good reasons' to suspend the risk perceived and take a 'leap of faith' when exchanging information with department B. In sample 4 interviews, the same argument was made. However, faced with a higher extent of perceived risk, these boundary spanners saw fewer 'good reasons' to counterbalance the risk and to take a leap of faith, as the perceived trustworthiness of department A was lower and macro-and meso-level aspects, were perceived to support the willingness to suspend vulnerability to a lesser extent, as discussed earlier (see quote 8.79 in annex).

Organisational cost-benefit considerations

In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that organisational costs and benefit considerations had only limited importance for their willingness to suspend vulnerability, and that they would be willing to suspend vulnerability even in face of costs and the absence of benefits. Sample 2 boundary spanners argued that considerations of the persence of organisational benefits to info-exchange with department B were implicit and automatic (see quote 8.70 in annex), while organisational costs were mainly related to the asset specificity of the requested information (see quote 8.71 in annex). In sample 4 interviews,

boundary spanners attributed far more importance to considerations of organisational costs and benefits for their willingness to be vulnerable, and often referred to such considerations to explain the absence of their willingness to suspend vulnerability toward department A. The lack of perceived benefits in particular was emphasised, and argued to cause a lack of motivation to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions with department A. Sample 4 boundary spanners also argued that organisational cost-benefit considerations were made very explicitly and specifically for new information requests by department A (see quote 8.72 in annex).

Personal cost-benefit considerations

Fourth, boundary spanners in the most frequently selected RI of both trust and distrust argued that their personal cost-benefit considerations were inconsequential for their willingness to suspend vulnerability in the interorganisational interactions.

Cell 8: meso-level relational aspects and the willingness to suspend vulnerability

Interaction aspect	Perceived TW in RI of trust		Perceived TW in RI of distrust	
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
11. Signalled trust	0,022	Signals of trust considered important due to impact of perceived trustworthiness and due to direct 'mirroring' of trust signals.	0,070	Signals of trust considered important due to impact on perceived trustworthiness and direct 'stimulus' to reciprocate trust signals .
12. Value identification	0,159	Value identification considered important due to impact on perceived trustworthiness.	0,342***	Value identification considered important due to impact on perceived trustworthiness.
13. Good personal relationship	-0,053	Friendly interpersonal relations considered important due to impact on perceived trustworthiness.	-0,042	Friendly interpersonal relations considered important due to impact on perceived trustworthiness.
14. Signalled distrust (-)	-0,080	Signals of distrust not argued to occur	-0,161*	Signals of distrust considered important due to impact on perceived trustworthiness.
15. Power equality	0,202**	Power equality argued by one boundary spanner to be important. Power equality argued to reduce trustee-dependent vulnerability, making boundary spanners more willing to suspend vulnerability. Organisation of feedback and two-way communication argued to support power equality on the meso-level.	0,309***	No additional qualitative evidence
16(c). Experience-based expectations	0,295***	Past experiences considered important. due to impact on perceived trustworthiness. Furthermore, past experiences argued to affect perceptions about the ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent vulnerability, and thus the interdimensional relationship between perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability.	-0,022	Past experiences considered important due to impact on perceived trustworthiness. Furthermore, past experiences argued to affect perceptions about the ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent vulnerability, and thus the interdimensional relationship between perceived trustworthiness and willingness to suspend vulnerability.
17(c). Interaction age	-0,056	Interpersonal familiarity argued to be important as precondition for other relational aspects to develop.	0,007	Interpersonal familiarity argued to be important as precondition for other relational aspects to develop.
18(c). Interaction frequency	0,046		0,070	
Explanatory power	Adj. R²=0,312 P>F = * * *		Adj. R²=0,466 P>F = * * *	

Survey findings – samples 1 and 3

The quantitative findings show strong evidence for the existence of a significant relationship between relational meso-level interaction aspects and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 1 and sample 3. In sample 1, the relational meso-level aspect model explains about 31% of the variance in boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability. In sample 3 the relational meso-aspect model explains about 47% of the variance in the willingness to suspend vulnerability. The willingness to suspend vulnerability is positively related to power equality in sample 1 ($p<.05$) and sample 3 ($p<.01$).). In sample 3, the willingness to suspend vulnerability was also positively related to value identification ($p<.01$) and negatively related to the distrust expressed by the counterpart ($p<.1$). Considering control variables, we find that the willingness to suspend vulnerability is positively related to experience-based expectations in sample 1 ($p<.01$) and to micro-level predispositions to trust others in sample 1 ($p<.05$). In sample 3, the willingness to suspend vulnerability was positively related to the 'seniority' control variable ($p<.1$) and the 'formal autonomy' control variable ($p<.05$). Post-estimation indicates no problems of reliability for either of the OLS models.

Interview findings – samples 2 and 4

Signalled trust

In sample 2 interviews, most boundary spanners argued that department B, by stimulating interdependency and thus suspending its vulnerability in the interorganisational interaction, inspired the boundary spanners to do the same with respect to information exchange with department B. One of the respondents described this reciprocity of trust as 'mirroring' in the interaction (see quote 8.80 in annex). In sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners made a similar argument, but their experience with horizontal department A was very mixed, as some respondents argued that department A showed some trust in their organisation, while others argued that department A distinguished itself from other horizontal organisations in the lack of trust it showed in the administrative entities of the Flemish administration. Boundary spanners described such expressions of trust by department A as a stimulus and a motivator for them to do the same (see quote 8.81 in annex).

Value identification

In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that their agreement with existing institutional 'shared' values, with the specific operationalisation of those values in the specific information exchange interaction and with the counterparts' reaction to occasional value conflict, rendered them more willing to be open and vulnerable towards horizontal department B in the interorganisational info-exchange interaction. One boundary spanner made the hypothetic argument that they would be less willing to exchange information if department B would have competing values, because this might put their own organisational values at risk of being crowded out in the Flemish administration (see quote 8.82 in annex). However these arguments mainly involved references to the perceived trustworthiness of the counterpart. In sample 4

interviews, boundary spanners argued that the value divergence due to excessive politicisation of department A and alienation between front- and back-office entities in the Flemish administration were important factors limiting their willingness to suspend vulnerability, although these arguments mainly involved references to the perceived trustworthiness of the counterpart (see quote 8.83 in annex).

Interpersonal relations

In sample 2 interviews, the quality of interpersonal relations between boundary spanners was the most frequently coded explanatory category for the willingness to suspend vulnerability. However, causal explanation of the relationship between good interpersonal relations and boundary spanners' willingness to suspend vulnerability suggesting that the mechanism works through the dimension of perceived trustworthiness in the interorganisational trust process. Sample 2 interviews had boundary spanners argued that organisations interact through individuals, and that the quality of interpersonal relations is therefore fundamental for interorganisational trust. Boundary spanners argued that their interpersonal relations with counterparts in department B were good, friendly and professional, and that they felt more at ease with counterparts with which they had better interpersonal relationships. Good interpersonal relations were argued to grow over time and stimulate familiarity, make interorganisational cooperation an enjoyable part of boundary spanners' daily work, and allow demonstrations of mutual trust in the interorganisational interaction (see quote 8.88). In sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners also emphasised the importance of good interpersonal relations for their willingness to suspend vulnerability in interorganisational interactions. Sample 4 boundary spanners stressed that the quality of their interpersonal relations were not the explanation of their distrust in A, since interpersonal relations were argued to be good and professional, much like in the sample 2 interviews (see quote 8.89 in annex). Boundary spanners thus argued that the explanation of their interorganisational distrust was to be sought on the structural, rather than the interpersonal level of the interorganisational interaction (see quote 8.90 in annex).

Signalled distrust

The qualitative data did not suggest any relationship between signals of distrust and the willingness to suspend vulnerability in sample 2 and sample 4.

Power equality

In sample 2 interviews, one boundary spanner argued that power equality was important because it limited their vulnerability to department B. The boundary spanner argued that in a less equal power distribution, their organisations' vulnerability and dependence toward department B would increase, and more 'good reasons' to suspend vulnerability would be needed for the boundary spanner to take 'a leap of faith' when being requested to exchange organisational information with department B (see quote 8.92 in annex). In other words, power equality was argued to reduce the trustee-dependent vulnerability in the interorganisational interaction, making boundary spanners more willing to suspend vulnerability. The

organisation of feedback on information exchange interactions and two-way communication approaches were argued to support interorganisational interdependency and power equality on the meso-level. In sample 4 interviews, no further evidence was uncovered regarding the aspect of power equality.

Familiarity

In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that positive past experiences were important for their willingness to suspend vulnerability. On the one hand, they were considered to be important because of their positive impact on department B's perceived trustworthiness, as such constituting a 'good reason' to make a 'leap of faith' in the interorganisational interaction (see quote 8.84 in annex). On the other hand, boundary spanners argued that department B never has full control over their vulnerability in information exchange interactions, due to department B's interdependency to other stakeholders, due to contextual contingency, due to macro-level dynamics or due to other external factors beyond B's control. Boundary spanners therefore argued that their willingness to suspend vulnerability did not only depend on their positive experiences with department B (which informs perceptions of B's perceived trustworthiness), but also on their positive experiences with vulnerability that cannot be attributed to department B (see quote 8.85 in annex). In the sample 4 interviews, the same argument was made. Boundary spanners argued that their 'mixed' experiences with department A had weakened department A's perceived trustworthiness on the one hand (see quote 8.86 in annex), while they had made the boundary spanner more aware of the vulnerability to aspects beyond the direct control of department A on the other hand (see quote 8.87 in annex). Examples of such trustee-independent vulnerability were given regarding the opportunistic behaviour of other stakeholders, regarding political decisions about information-use which would override any promises made by department A, regarding contextual contingency and the quality and stability of the macro-level rules and arrangements around interorganisational interaction. Therefore, boundary spanners' previous experiences with the counterpart affect their willingness to suspend vulnerability through two mechanisms: on the one hand, they inform perceptions about counterparts' trustworthiness, which affect the willingness to suspend vulnerability. On the other hand, past experiences affect boundary spanners' perceptions about the ratio between trustee-dependent and trustee-independent vulnerability, which moderates the relationship between perceived trustworthiness and the willingness to suspend vulnerability.

Furthermore, boundary spanners argued in both sample 2 and 4 that interpersonal familiarity is a precondition for other relational aspects to develop (see quote 8.91 in annex). While there is therefore no direct link between familiarity and the willingness to suspend vulnerability, an indirect relationship might be presumed to exist as familiarity enables other relational aspects to develop in the interorganisational interaction.

Cell 9: macro-level formal aspects and risk-taking behaviour

Interaction aspect	Risk-taking behaviour in RI of trust		Risk-taking behaviour in RI of distrust	
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
1. Formal rule framework	0,055 ns	Formal frameworks considered important as latent permissive or prohibitive norms of behaviour. Permissive: allowing willingness to suspend vulnerability in info-exchange exchange. Prohibitive: defining upper boundaries - of information boundary spanners are allowed to share.	0,260 **	Formal framework considered important. Argued to act as active obligatory norms of behaviour. Obligatory: defining the lower boundaries of information boundary spanners are obliged to share.
2. Formal role framework	-0,015 ns		0,132 ns	
Explanatory power	Adj. R²= -0,022 P>F = ns		Adj. R²=0,147 P>F = ***	

Survey findings – samples 1 and 3

The macro-level formal aspect model does not provide a significant explanation for risk-taking behaviour in sample 1, although it does explain about 14% of the variance of risk-taking behaviour in sample 3 (p<.01). Clear formal rules are found to be positively related to risk-taking behaviour in sample 3 (p<.05). Considering control variables, micro-level predispositons to trust others were positively related to risk-taking behaviour in sample 1 (p<.01) and sample 3 (p<.05). However, it is important to note that post-estimation analyses suggest that confidence levels for the sample 1 model may be unreliable due to problems with the normal distribution of residuals in sample 1 (Shapiro-Wilk p<.01; Shapiro-Francia p<.01; Skewness-Kurtosis test p>.05). For the sample 3 OLS model, the model was found to be relatively reliable, although there was some probability of linear heteroscedasticity (p<.1).

Interview findings – samples 2 and 4

Formal framework: formal rules and roles

We start again by noting that boundary spanners did not make a clear distinction between formal rules and roles and referred mainly to 'the formal framework' as such. In sample 2 interviews, macro-level formal frameworks were argued to latently shape risk-taking behaviour in the sense that they acted as latent permissive or prohibitive norms of behaviour in interorganisational interactions. On the one hand, boundary spanners argued that formal frameworks were 'permissive' of their willingness to suspend vulnerability. For instance, it was argued that administrative reform programmes or performance management systems in which cooperation and trust were presented as priorities in public administration could 'frame' the willingness to suspend vulnerability as a desirable attitude for boundary spanners, and were in that respect permissive toward behaviour that acted upon such attitudes (see quote 8.93 in annex). On the other hand, boundary spanners argued that formal frameworks could, at least in theory, 'prohibit' organisational information exchange, in spite of the boundary spanners' personal willingness to suspend vulnerability. For instance, sample 2 boundary spanners argued that thy might personally be willing to share particular organisational information, but be prohibited to do so in the framework of privacy legislation, data security legislation, or intellectual ownership legislation (see quote 8.94 in annex). However, sample 2 boundary spanners did emphasise argued that such formal prohibition shaped

behaviour latently, because department B was not expected to ever request information if such was not legally appropriate. In other words, the formal framework established clear upper boundaries to information exchange, which latently restricted risk-taking behaviour. In sample 4 interviews, macro-level formal frameworks were argued to be active obligatory norms of behaviour. As boundary spanners were less willing to suspend vulnerability in interactions with department A, the main role of formal frameworks was argued to lie in obliging them to share certain information through formal instruction or coercion of info-exchange with department A (see quote 8.95 in annex). In the sample 4 interviews the macro-level formal aspects were thus considered to affect risk-taking behaviour as obligatory norms of behaviour, which defined the minimum extent of information that had to be exchanged in the interaction.

Cell 10: macro-level informal aspects and risk-taking behaviour

| Interaction aspect | Willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of trust | | Willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of distrust | |
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
3. Informal routine framework	-0,008 ns	No additional qualitative evidence	0,360 * * *	Informal routines argued to be important. Boundary spanners argued that informal routines - socialised them to engage in risk-taking behaviour even though willingness to suspend vulnerability was low, due to mimetic isomorphism and path-dependency
4. Admin. leader confirmatory norms	0,220 *	Salient administrative leadership norms considered important. Salient norms of administrative leadership argued to latently support risk-taking behaviour as framework of strategic appropriateness.	-0,243 * *	Salient administrative leadership norms considered important. Salient norms of administrative leadership argued to latently support risk-taking behaviour as framework of strategic appropriateness.
5. Pol. principal confirmatory norms	0,186 ns	Salient political principal norms considered in theory, but not in practice. Salient norms of political principals argued to latently support risk-taking behaviour as framework of strategic appropriateness.	-0,312 * * *	Salient political principal norms considered in theory, but not in practice. Salient norms of political principals argued to latently support risk-taking behaviour as framework of strategic appropriateness.
Explanatory power	Adj. R²=0,109 P>F = * *		Adj. R²=0,352 P>F = * * *	

Survey findings – samples 1 and 3

The quantitative results suggest that the macro-level informal model provides a significant explanation of risk-taking behaviour in both RI of trust and distrust. The macro-level informal model explains about 10% of the variance in risk-taking behaviour sample 1 (p<.05), and about 35% of the variance in risk-taking behaviour in sample 3 (p<.01). In sample 1, the quantitative data suggest that risk-taking behaviour is positively related to the presence of salient trusting norms of administrative leaders (p<.1). In sample 3, the data suggest that risk-taking behaviour is positively related to the presence of clear routines (p<.01), and negatively related to the presence of salient distrusting norms of both administrative (p<.05) and political leaders (p<.01). Considering the control variables, micro-level predispositions to trust others were found to be positively related to risk-taking behaviour in the model for sample 1 (p<.1). Post-estimation suggests no problems, indicating that the OLS models for sample 1 and sample 3 are both reliable.

Informal sailent norms

In sample 2 interviews, boundary spanners argued that the salient norms of trust held by their administrative leaders constituted a framework of 'strategic appropriateness' of risk-taking behaviour in information exchange with department B, in which they interpreted and activated their willingness to suspend vulnerability if such was deemed to be appropriate. Boundary spanners who were willing to suspend their vulnerability in information exchange with department B argued that it was important for them that their administrative superior did not only agree, but also considered it strategically appropriate to share the requested information with the horizontal department. However, the sample 2 boundary spanners argued that they implicitly assumed that this was the case, and would only explicitly check their leaders' opinions when in doubt. Again, salient trusting norms of administrative leaders thus appear to latently support this dimension of the trust process (see quote 8.97 in annex). In the sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners made the same argument. Salient norms were argued to constitute a framework of 'strategic appropriateness' for information exchange behaviour with department A, in which boundary spanners asserted their own willingness to suspend vulnerability in the interorganisational interaction before engaging or disengaging in risk-taking behaviour. For instance, one boundary spanner argued they were unwilling to suspend vulnerability, but shared the information anyway if the administrative leader insisted that it is strategically important to do so (see quote 8.98 in annex).

Boundary spanners in both sample 2 and sample 4 interviews argued that the salient norms of political principals could play a similar role for risk-taking behaviour, but that this did not occur in practice. The boundary spanners therefore argued any relationship between salient norms of political principals and risk-taking behaviour was mainly hypothetical (see quote 8.99 and 8.100 in annex).

Interestingly, while boundary spanner's willingness to be vulnerable in interorganisational interactions can therefore be argued to be an important determinant of organisational behaviour in a logic of consequences of interorganisational interactions, a logic of formal and informal macro-level appropriateness emerges in the behavioural dimension of the interorganisational trust process, which may 'override' the logic of consequences that in the two previous dimensions of the interorganisational trust process (see quote 8.101 in annex).

Informal routines

In sample 2 interviews, informal routines were not argued to play a role in addition to what has been discussed under previous dimensions. In sample 4 interviews, a minority of boundary spanners argued that informal routines affected risk-taking behaviour directly, as they engaged in risk-taking behaviour in spite of their low willingness to suspend vulnerability because information exchange was considered the 'normal' state of affairs, which had grown over time, was self-evident and was not explicitly questioned in their day-to-day practices. Concerns of time, costs and a reluctance to challenge the status quo kept

boundary spanners from challenging these existing routines. Despite boundary spanners' limited willingness to be vulnerable, the existing routines therefore moved them to exchange the requested information with department A, thus engaging in risk-taking interorganisational behaviour (see quote 8.96 in annex).

Cell 11: meso-level calculative aspects and risk-taking behaviour

Interaction aspect	Willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of trust		Willingness to suspend vulnerability in RI of distrust	
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
6. No information of opp. motivations	0,281***	No evidence for direct effect on risk-taking behaviour. Knowledge about opportunistic motivations considered important due to impact on willingness to suspend vulnerability.	0,254***	No evidence for direct effect on risk-taking behaviour. Knowledge about opportunistic motivations considered important due to impact on willingness to suspend vulnerability.
7. Asset specificity (-)	-0,075	Asset specificity considered important due to impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process.	-0,109	Asset specificity considered important due to impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process.
8. Risk nature (-)	-0,348***	Perceived risk considered important due to impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process	-0,276***	Perceived risk considered important due to impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process.
9(c). Personal cost-benefit analysis	-0,184**	Personal cost-benefit considerations not considered important. One boundary spanner argued that risk-taking behaviour was not appreciated in existing performance evaluation systems, and did therefore not imply any personal costs or benefits for boundary spanners.	-0,071	Not considered important
10(c). Org. cost-benefit analysis	-0,140**	Organisational costs and benefit considerations considered important due to impact on other dimensions in the universal trust process.	-0,280***	Organisational costs and benefit considerations considered important due to impact on other dimensions in the universal trust process.
Explanatory power	Adj. R²=0,389 P>F = * * *		Adj. R²=0,528 P>F = * * *	

Survey findings – samples 1 and 3

The quantitative results suggest that the meso-level calculative model provides a significant explanation of risk-taking behaviour in both sample 1 and sample 3. The variance in risk taking-behaviour that is explained by the meso-level calculative model amounts to 39% in sample 1 (p<.01), and to 53% in sample 3 (p<.01). Risk-taking behaviour correlates negatively with knowledge of opportunistic motivations (negative interpretation) in sample 1 (p<.01) and in sample 3 (p<.01) and with risk nature in sample 1 (p<.01) and sample 3 (p<.01). Considering control variables, risk-taking behaviour is negatively related to organisational cost-benefit considerations in sample 1 (p<.05) and sample 3 (p<.01), and is positively related to micro-level predispostions to trust others in sample 1 (p<.1) and sample 3 (p<.05). Post-estimation analyses for sample 1 suggest that these findings must be carcully interpreted however, as they showed that the sample 1 models' error terms deviated from normality (Shapiro Wilk p<.05; Shapiro-Francia p<.05; Skewness-Kurtosis test p<.05) and linear heteroscedasticity (Breush-Pagan p< .1). The model for sample 3 was relatively reliable, despite some indications of linear heteroscedasticity (Breush-Pagan p<.05).

<u>Interview findings – samples 2 and 4</u>

Information about counterparts' opportunistic motivations

Although boundary spanners argued that their knowledge about the counterparts' opportunistic motivations affected information exchange behaviour, the qualitative data did not suggest any direct relationship between boundary spanners' knowledge about counterpart's opportunistic motivations and and risk-taking behaviour in sample 2 and sample 4.

Asset specificity

The qualitative data did not suggest any direct relationship between asset specificity and risk-taking behaviour in sample 2 (see quote 8.102 in annex) and sample 4 see quote 8.103 in annex). Although boundary spanners in both samples did argue that asset specifity affected their risk-taking behaviour in the interorganisational interaction, their arguments focused on the role of asset specificity for their own willingness to suspend vulnerability and on the willingness to suspend vulnerability of other organisational decision-makers. Thus, the boundary spanners' examples were illustrations of the indirect indirect effects of asset specificity upon risk-taking behaviour, and were mediated by their extent of discretion to engage in risk-taking behaviour.

Perceived risk

The qualitative data did not add any further evidence regarding the role of perceived risk for risk-taking behaviour in addition to the evidence gathered for the previous dimensions in sample 2 and sample 4.

Organisational cost-benefit considerations

The qualitative data did not suggest any direct relationship between the extent to which boundary spanners rely on organisation cost-benefit considerations and risk-taking behaviour.

Personal cost-benefit considerations

The qualitative data did not suggest any direct relationship between perceived risk and risk-taking behaviour in sample 2 and sample 4 (see quote 8.105 in annex).

Cell 12: meso-level relational aspects and risk-taking behaviour

Interaction aspect	Perceived TW in RI of trust		Perceived TW in RI of distrust	
	Sample 1: β and significance	Sample 2: Interview analysis	Sample 3: β and significance	Sample 4: Interview analysis
11. Signalled trust	0,052	Signalled trust considered important due to their impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process but no additional qualitative evidence	0,125	Signalled trust considered important due to their impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process but no additional qualitative evidence
12. Value identification	0,181	Value identification considered important due to its impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process but no additional qualitative evidence	0,235**	Value identification considered important due to its impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process but no additional qualitative evidence.
13. Good	0,242***	Past experiences considered important due	0,076	Past experiences considered important due to

personal relationship		to their impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process but no additional qualitative evidence		their impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process. One boundary spanner argued negative past experiences institutionalised over time, as such influencing collective decisions-making about organisational behaviour.
14. Signalled distrust (-)	-0,069	Friendly interpersonal relations between boundary spanners considered important due to their impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process but no additional qualitative evidence	0,007	Friendly interpersonal relations between boundary spanners considered important due to their impact on the other dimensions in the universal trust process but no additional qualitative evidence
15. Power equality	-0,104	No additional qualitative evidence	-0,234***	No additional qualitative evidence
16(c). Experience-based expectations	-0,103	No additional qualitative evidence	-0,020	No additional qualitative evidence
17(c). Interaction age	0,111		0,049	
18(c). Interaction frequency	0,147		0,288***	
Explanatory power	Adj. R²=0,296 P>F = * * *		Adj. R²=0,539 P>F = * * *	

<u>**Survey findings – samples 1 and 3**</u>

The table shows evidence for the existence of a significant relationship between relational meso-level interaction aspects and risk-taking behaviour in sample 1 and sample 3. In sample 1, about 30% of the variance in risk-taking behaviour is explained by the meso-level relational model (p<.01). In sample 3, about 54% of the variance in risk-taking behaviour is explained by the relational meso-level model (p<.01). Risk-taking behaviour is not related to any of the explanatory variables in sample 1. In sample 3, risk-taking behaviour is positively related to value identification (p<.05), power equality (p<.01) and negatively related to signals of distrust expressed by the counterpart (p<.01). Considering the control variables, in sample 1 risk-taking behaviour was positively related to previous interaction experience In sample 1 (p<.01), to respondent seniority (p<.1) and to micro-level predispositions to trust others (p<.05). In sample 3, risk-taking behaviour was positively related to formal autonomy (p<.05) and to micro-level predispositions to trust others (p<.05). The models are relatively reliable in sample 1 and sample 3, although post-estimation did suggest the possible presence of linear heteroscedasticity in sample 1 (Breush-Pagan p<.01).

<u>**Interview findings – samples 2 and 4**</u>

Signalled trust

The qualitative data did not add any further evidence regarding the role of signalled trust for risk-taking behaviour in addition to the evidence gathered for the previous dimensions in sample 2 and sample 4.

Value identification

The qualitative data did not add any further evidence regarding the role of value identification for risk-taking behaviour in addition to the evidence gathered for the previous dimensions in sample 2 and sample 4.

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Interpersonal relations

The qualitative data did not add any further evidence regarding the role of interpersonal relations for risk-taking behaviour in addition to the evidence gathered for the previous dimensions in sample 2 and sample 4.

Signaled distrust

The qualitative data did not add any further evidence regarding the role of signalled distrust for risk-taking behaviour in addition to the evidence gathered for the previous dimensions in sample 2 and sample 4.

Power equality

The qualitative data did not add any further evidence regarding the role of power equality for risk-taking behaviour in addition to the evidence gathered for the previous dimensions in sample 2 and sample 4.

Familiarity

Sample 2 interviews did not provide any evidence in addition to what was discussed under the previous dimensions. When boundary spanners discussed the previous experiences in relation to their risk-taking behaviour in the interorganisational interaction, they did so indirectly, by referring to perceived trustworthiness and their own willingness to suspend vulnerability in the interaction. Sample 4 interviews, boundary spanners' arguments concerning the impact of previous experiences on risk-taking behaviour also referred to indirect mechanisms. However, in anecdotal evidence that was only encountered in one interview, a sample 4 boundary spanner argued that their previous negative experiences with department A had spread within their own organisations, and became part of the body of evidence, institutional myths and the rumours, affecting other organisational decision-makers, and thus having an additional influence information exchange with department B when the decision whether or not to engage in interactions with department A were the subject of collective decisions (see quote 8.106 in annex).

Finally, no further evidence was found for a direct effect of relational familiarity on risk-taking behaviour in sample 2 and sample 4 interviews.

Annex to chapter 8: Quantitative component of cell analysis: OLS regression models

This annex provides OLS regression models for each cell of the analytical framework, conducted on the basis of quantitative data collected in modules III and IV of the boundary spanner survey. Results for RI of trust are displayed on the right, results for RI of distrust are displayed on the left. Post-estimations were conducted to assess the reliability of each model and conduct case-by-case deletion of distorting critical outliers and critical leverage points. The results of these post-estimations, as well as observations deleted from the analysis, are also reported. The post-estimations procedure for every OLS model consisted of:

- Outliers: visual inspection of
    - plot of standardised residuals per observation
    - residual values vs fitted values plot
- Leverage: visual inspection of
    - plot of Cook's Distance per observation
    - leverage vs squared residuals plot
- Homoscedasticity: test statistics for
    - Linear heteroscedasticity (Breush-Pagan test)
    - nonlinear heteroscedasticity (White's test)
- Multicollinearity: test statistics for multicollinearity (Variance Inflation Factor)
- Normal distribution of residuals:
    - visual inspection of
        - histogram of residuals and
        - Kernel density plot of residuals
    - test statistics for normal distribution of residuals
        - Shapiro-Francia test
        - Shapiro-Wilk test
        - Skewness-Kurtosis test

Trust						Distrust					
Perceived Trustworthiness			**Observations 553, 784 dropped from analysis**			**Perceived Trustworthiness**			**Observations 604, 40, 1120 dropped from analysis**		
Macro-level formal model						**Macro-level formal model**					
			Number of obs	=	136,000				Number of obs	=	116,000
			F(9, 126)	=	3,340				F(9, 106)	=	8,360
			Prob > F	=	0,001				Prob > F	=	0,000
			R-squared	=	0,193				R-squared	=	0,415
			Adj R-squared	=	0,135				Adj R-squared	=	0,366
			Root MSE	=	0,651				Root MSE	=	0,657
TW_index_A	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta	TW_index_B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
ru1_A	0,148	0,046	3,240	**0,002**	0,281	ru1_B	0,277	0,059	4,660	**0,000**	0,439
ro1_A	0,072	0,047	1,540	0,125	0,141	ro1_B	0,106	0,057	1,850	**0,067**	0,172
age	-0,009	0,009	-1,010	0,316	-0,117	age	-0,011	0,010	-1,090	0,278	-0,116
sex	0,015	0,128	0,120	0,907	0,010	sex	-0,003	0,137	-0,020	0,983	-0,002
emy	0,004	0,009	0,500	0,619	0,061	emy	0,014	0,009	1,530	0,129	0,164
edu_master	-0,243	0,226	-1,070	0,286	-0,099	edu_master	0,140	0,273	0,510	0,609	0,041
managerial	0,022	0,133	0,170	0,868	0,015	managerial	-0,095	0,150	-0,630	0,528	-0,053
RP	0,106	0,121	0,870	0,384	0,075	RP	-0,057	0,136	-0,420	0,676	-0,034
GTindex	0,213	0,068	3,150	**0,002**	0,266	GTindex	0,216	0,078	2,780	**0,006**	0,218
_cons	3,231	0,541	5,970	0,000	.	_cons	1,583	0,601	2,640	0,010	.
Post-estimation does not indicate any problems						Post-estimation indicates non-linear heteroscedasticity (White's test <.05)					
Macro-level informal model						**Macro-level informal model**					
			Number of obs	=	109,000				Number of obs	=	94,000
			F(10, 98)	=	10,540				F(10, 83)	=	9,150
			Prob > F	=	0,000				Prob > F	=	0,000
			R-squared	=	0,518				R-squared	=	0,524
			Adj R-squared	=	0,469				Adj R-squared	=	0,467
			Root MSE	=	0,484				Root MSE	=	0,592
TW_index_A	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta	TW_index_B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
rou1_A	0,118	0,045	2,630	**0,010**	0,206	rou1_B	0,369	0,060	6,150	**0,000**	0,490
adnorms_A	0,201	0,051	3,950	**0,000**	0,372	adnorms_B	-0,116	0,061	-1,900	**0,061**	-0,202
polnorms_A	0,117	0,049	2,370	**0,020**	0,212	polnorms_B	-0,140	0,060	-2,330	**0,022**	-0,234
Age	-0,014	0,008	-1,800	**0,076**	-0,189	Age	0,002	0,010	0,170	0,865	0,018
Sex (F)	0,068	0,108	0,630	0,529	0,048	Sex (F)	-0,009	0,143	-0,060	0,952	-0,005
Seniority	0,002	0,008	0,200	0,841	0,023	Seniority	0,009	0,010	0,930	0,357	0,101
Edu. (>=Ms)	-0,304	0,185	-1,640	0,103	-0,133	Edu. (>=Ms)	0,285	0,268	1,060	0,291	0,086
Mgmt. (yes)	0,004	0,106	0,040	0,970	0,003	Mgmt. (yes)	-0,189	0,147	-1,280	0,203	-0,106
Formal. aut.	-0,088	0,100	-0,890	0,378	-0,066	Formal. aut.	-0,198	0,141	-1,400	0,164	-0,117
Gen. trust	0,154	0,056	2,730	**0,008**	0,214	Gen. trust	0,189	0,087	2,170	**0,033**	0,181
_cons	2,844	0,434	6,560	0,000	.	_cons	2,246	0,696	3,230	0,002	.
Post-estimation does not indicate any problems						Post-estimation indicates non-linear heteroscedasticity (White's test <.1)					
Meso-level calculative model						**Meso-level calculative model**					
			Number of obs	=	145,000				Number of obs	=	119,000
			F(13, 128)	=	3,580				F(13, 100)	=	8,670
			Prob > F	=	0,000				Prob > F	=	0,000

TW_index_A

				R-squared	=	0,246
				Adj R-squared	=	0,177
				Root MSE	=	0,635

TW_index_A	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
ca1_A	0,047	0,042	1,130	0,262	0,089
ca2_A	0,201	0,050	4,000	**0,000**	0,337
ca4_A	0,017	0,039	0,440	0,661	0,036
assetspec_A	0,091	0,043	2,110	**0,037**	0,165
risknat_A	-0,101	0,043	-2,350	**0,020**	-0,189
Age	-0,009	0,009	-1,020	0,312	-0,114
Sex (F)	0,026	0,117	0,220	0,823	0,018
Seniority	0,006	0,008	0,670	0,503	0,077
Edu. (>=Ms)	-0,130	0,218	-0,600	0,553	-0,051
Mgmt. (yes)	0,035	0,125	0,280	0,782	0,023
Formal. aut.	0,038	0,114	0,330	0,743	0,027
Gen. trust	0,116	0,067	1,740	**0,085**	0,145
_cons	3,309	0,611	5,410	0,000	.

Post-estimation does not indicate any problems

TW_index_B

				R-squared	=	0,495
				Adj R-squared	=	0,438
				Root MSE	=	0,606

TW_index_B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
ca1_B	-0,109	0,055	-2,000	**0,048**	-0,174
ca2_B	0,207	0,052	4,000	**0,000**	0,366
ca4_B	0,037	0,045	0,820	0,411	0,064
assetspec_B	-0,020	0,049	-0,400	0,686	-0,030
risknat_B	-0,135	0,054	-2,500	**0,014**	-0,226
Age	-0,005	0,009	-0,520	0,603	-0,052
Sex (F)	-0,012	0,124	-0,100	0,922	-0,007
Seniority	0,013	0,008	1,560	0,123	0,157
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,053	0,261	0,200	0,840	0,015
Mgmt. (yes)	-0,223	0,135	-1,660	0,100	-0,128
Formal. aut.	-0,077	0,124	-0,620	0,534	-0,047
Gen. trust	0,187	0,071	2,610	**0,010**	0,192
_cons	3,436	0,707	4,860	0,000	.

Post-estimation indicates problem of normality (Shapiro wilk <.1 and Shapiro-Francia <.05)

Meso-level relational model

				Number of obs	=	128,000
				F(16, 109)	=	11,070
				Prob > F	=	0,000
				R-squared	=	0,597
				Adj R-squared	=	0,543
				Root MSE	=	0,464

TW_index_B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
re1_A	0,070	0,067	1,040	0,299	0,106
re2_A	0,214	0,063	3,380	**0,001**	0,303
re3_A	0,161	0,045	3,560	**0,001**	0,256
re5_A	0,098	0,040	2,450	**0,016**	0,195
re6_A	0,018	0,036	0,500	0,618	0,037
fam_A	0,049	0,028	1,760	**0,081**	0,129
fam2_A	-0,064	0,039	-1,660	**0,099**	-0,123
poweq_A	0,109	0,040	2,720	**0,008**	0,211
Age	-0,013	0,007	-1,950	**0,053**	-0,169
Sex (F)	0,106	0,096	1,100	0,272	0,073
Seniority	0,008	0,007	1,190	0,238	0,103
Edu. (>=Ms)	-0,268	0,189	-1,420	0,158	-0,095
Mgmt. (yes)	0,012	0,096	0,130	0,900	0,008
Formal. aut.	0,028	0,090	0,310	0,755	0,020
Gen. trust	0,062	0,054	1,140	0,256	0,074
_cons	1,918	0,546	3,510	0,001	.

Post-estimation does not indicate any problems

Meso-level relational model

				Number of obs	=	108,000
				F(16, 91)	=	20,600
				Prob > F	=	0,000
				R-squared	=	0,771
				Adj R-squared	=	0,733
				Root MSE	=	0,441

TW_index_B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
re1_B	0,223	0,049	4,530	**0,000**	0,331
re2_B	0,329	0,053	6,190	**0,000**	0,475
re3_B	-0,015	0,040	-0,370	0,714	-0,023
re5_B	-0,003	0,046	-0,060	0,950	-0,004
re6_B	-0,093	0,042	-2,220	**0,029**	-0,145
fam_B	-0,017	0,031	-0,550	0,583	-0,037
fam2_B	0,003	0,042	0,070	0,944	0,004
poweq_B	0,047	0,045	1,070	0,290	0,075
Age	-0,001	0,007	-0,160	0,873	-0,011
Sex (F)	0,004	0,101	0,040	0,971	0,002
Seniority	0,016	0,006	2,540	**0,013**	0,183
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,257	0,186	1,380	0,171	0,074
Mgmt. (yes)	0,087	0,114	0,760	0,448	0,047
Formal. aut.	0,043	0,093	0,460	0,645	0,025
Gen. trust	0,149	0,059	2,540	**0,013**	0,143
_cons	0,750	0,516	1,460	0,149	.

Post-estimation does not indicate any problems

Willingness to suspend vulnerability   Observations 553, 784, 658 dropped from analysis

Macro-level formal model

Willingness to suspend vulnerability   Observations 604, 280, 61 dropped from analysis

Macro-level formal model

	Number of obs	=	135,000
	F(9, 125)	=	1,920
	Prob > F	=	0,055
	R-squared	=	0,122
	Adj R-squared	=	0,058
	Root MSE	=	0,731

suspension~A	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
ru1_A	0,060	0,052	1,160	0,249	0,105
ro1_A	-0,080	0,053	-1,510	0,134	-0,143
Age	0,004	0,010	0,400	0,693	0,048
Sex (F)	-0,051	0,144	-0,360	0,723	-0,032
Seniority	-0,007	0,010	-0,710	0,478	-0,090
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,251	0,255	0,980	0,328	0,095
Mgmt. (yes)	0,086	0,149	0,580	0,566	0,054
Formal. aut.	-0,027	0,137	-0,190	0,846	-0,018
Gen. trust	0,234	0,077	3,060	**0,003**	0,272
_cons	2,880	0,611	4,710	0,000	.

Post-estimations indicate possible non-linear heteroscedasticity (White's test <.1)

	Number of obs	=	116,000
	F(9, 106)	=	3,760
	Prob > F	=	0,000
	R-squared	=	0,242
	Adj R-squared	=	0,178
	Root MSE	=	0,840

suspension~B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
ru1_B	0,256	0,075	3,430	**0,001**	0,370
ro1_B	0,045	0,072	0,620	0,537	0,066
Age	-0,003	0,013	-0,190	0,850	-0,023
Sex (F)	0,088	0,175	0,500	0,616	0,045
Seniority	0,008	0,012	0,670	0,504	0,082
Edu. (>=Ms)	-0,101	0,349	-0,290	0,774	-0,026
Mgmt. (yes)	0,105	0,187	0,560	0,573	0,052
Formal. aut.	0,143	0,173	0,830	0,410	0,076
Gen. trust	0,168	0,098	1,720	**0,088**	0,153
_cons	1,694	0,769	2,200	0,030	.

Post-estimations indicate possible linear heteroscedasticity (Breush-Pagan <.1)

Macro-level informal model

	Number of obs	=	109,000
	F(10, 98)	=	2,940
	Prob > F	=	0,003
	R-squared	=	0,231
	Adj R-squared	=	0,153
	Root MSE	=	0,707

suspension~A	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
rou1_A	-0,001	0,066	-0,010	0,991	-0,001
adnorms_A	0,078	0,074	1,050	0,298	0,124
polnorms_A	0,196	0,072	2,710	**0,008**	0,305
Age	0,002	0,011	0,190	0,851	0,025
Sex (F)	-0,073	0,158	-0,460	0,646	-0,044
Seniority	-0,002	0,011	-0,170	0,863	-0,025
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,102	0,271	0,380	0,708	0,038
Mgmt. (yes)	0,007	0,155	0,040	0,966	0,004
Formal. aut.	-0,098	0,146	-0,670	0,504	-0,063
Gen. trust	0,163	0,082	1,980	**0,050**	0,197
_cons	2,008	0,634	3,160	0,002	.

Post-estimations indicate possible non-linear heteroscedasticity (White's test <.1)

Macro-level informal model

	Number of obs	=	95,000
	F(10, 84)	=	4,200
	Prob > F	=	0,000
	R-squared	=	0,333
	Adj R-squared	=	0,254
	Root MSE	=	0,775

suspension~B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
rou1_B	0,263	0,074	3,580	**0,001**	0,329
adnorms_B	-0,101	0,079	-1,270	0,208	-0,159
polnorms_B	-0,204	0,079	-2,570	**0,012**	-0,307
Age	0,005	0,014	0,380	0,705	0,048
Sex (F)	0,043	0,186	0,230	0,819	0,022
Seniority	0,002	0,012	0,190	0,852	0,024
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,088	0,351	0,250	0,802	0,024
Mgmt. (yes)	0,100	0,188	0,530	0,599	0,051
Formal. aut.	0,086	0,182	0,470	0,637	0,046
Gen. trust	0,119	0,109	1,080	0,282	0,104
_cons	2,879	0,905	3,180	0,002	.

Post-estimation does not indicate any problems

Meso-level calculative model

	Number of obs	=	144,000
	F(13, 127)	=	7,220
	Prob > F	=	0,000
	R-squared	=	0,398
	Adj R-squared	=	0,343
	Root MSE	=	0,622

Meso-level calculative model

	Number of obs	=	119,000
	F(13, 100)	=	11,440
	Prob > F	=	0,000
	R-squared	=	0,564
	Adj R-squared	=	0,515
	Root MSE	=	0,648

suspension~A	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
ca1_A	-0,104	0,042	-2,500	**0,014**	-0,179
ca2_A	0,186	0,049	3,760	**0,000**	0,284
ca4_A	-0,073	0,039	-1,880	0,062	-0,140
assetspec_A	-0,071	0,043	-1,680	0,096	-0,117
risknat_A	-0,160	0,042	-3,780	**0,000**	-0,271
Age	-0,002	0,009	-0,190	0,852	-0,019
Sex (F)	-0,022	0,115	-0,200	0,845	-0,014
Seniority	-0,001	0,008	-0,060	0,950	-0,006
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,164	0,214	0,770	0,445	0,059
Mgmt. (yes)	0,081	0,122	0,660	0,508	0,050
Formal. aut.	-0,060	0,112	-0,540	0,593	-0,039
Gen. trust	0,142	0,066	2,160	**0,033**	0,163
_cons	4,115	0,599	6,870	0,000	.

Post-estimation indicates possible non-linear heteroscedasticity (White's test <.1)

suspension~B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
ca1_B	-0,154	0,055	-2,800	**0,006**	-0,219
ca2_B	0,214	0,053	4,020	**0,000**	0,332
ca4_B	-0,081	0,048	-1,690	0,093	-0,124
assetspec_B	-0,044	0,054	-0,820	0,413	-0,057
risknat_B	-0,177	0,057	-3,090	**0,003**	-0,260
Age	-0,003	0,010	-0,290	0,775	-0,026
Sex (F)	0,060	0,133	0,450	0,654	0,030
Seniority	0,015	0,009	1,640	0,103	0,154
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,002	0,279	0,010	0,993	0,001
Mgmt. (yes)	0,076	0,141	0,540	0,592	0,038
Formal. aut.	0,065	0,132	0,490	0,623	0,035
Gen. trust	0,096	0,076	1,260	0,209	0,087
_cons	4,218	0,749	5,630	0,000	.

Post-estimation does not indicate any problems

Meso-level relational model

Number of obs	=	127,000
F(16, 108)	=	4,820
Prob > F	=	0,000
R-squared	=	0,394
Adj R-squared	=	0,312
Root MSE	=	0,656

Meso-level relational model

Number of obs	=	109,000
F(16, 92)	=	7,290
Prob > F	=	0,000
R-squared	=	0,540
Adj R-squared	=	0,466
Root MSE	=	0,705

suspension~A	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
re1_A	0,017	0,095	0,180	0,859	0,022
re2_A	0,131	0,090	1,460	0,147	0,159
re3_A	0,216	0,064	3,380	**0,001**	0,295
re5_A	-0,031	0,056	-0,550	0,587	-0,053
re6_A	-0,045	0,051	-0,880	0,378	-0,080
fam_A	-0,025	0,039	-0,630	0,531	-0,056
fam2_A	0,027	0,055	0,500	0,617	0,046
poweq_A	0,121	0,057	2,120	**0,036**	0,202
Age	0,010	0,010	1,070	0,286	0,113
Sex (F)	0,009	0,136	0,070	0,946	0,006
Seniority	0,005	0,009	0,520	0,605	0,055
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,139	0,268	0,520	0,605	0,043
Mgmt. (yes)	0,040	0,136	0,290	0,771	0,024
Formal. aut.	0,005	0,128	0,040	0,968	0,003
Gen. trust	0,199	0,078	2,540	**0,012**	0,206
_cons	0,505	0,773	0,650	0,515	.

Post-estimation does not indicate any problems

suspension~B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
re1_B	0,052	0,078	0,670	0,503	0,070
re2_B	0,260	0,085	3,080	**0,003**	0,342
re3_B	-0,016	0,063	-0,250	0,802	-0,022
re5_B	-0,032	0,072	-0,440	0,660	-0,042
re6_B	-0,115	0,063	-1,820	0,072	-0,161
fam_B	0,004	0,049	0,080	0,940	0,007
fam2_B	0,054	0,068	0,790	0,430	0,070
poweq_B	0,218	0,071	3,070	**0,003**	0,309
Age	0,002	0,011	0,180	0,855	0,018
Sex (F)	0,079	0,159	0,490	0,623	0,038
Seniority	0,018	0,010	1,710	0,091	0,174
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,015	0,298	0,050	0,960	0,004
Mgmt. (yes)	0,109	0,182	0,600	0,550	0,053
Formal. aut.	0,312	0,148	2,110	**0,038**	0,158
Gen. trust	0,124	0,092	1,350	0,180	0,106
_cons	1,019	0,802	1,270	0,207	.

Post-estimation does not indicate any problems

Risk-taking behaviour	**Observations 553, 784, 280 dropped from analysis**

Macro-level formal model

Number of obs	=	136,000

Risk-taking behaviour	**Observations 604, 280, 61 dropped from analysis**

Macro-level formal model

Number of obs	=	116,000

(top model)

Left:

F(9, 126)	=	1,330
Prob > F	=	0,226
R-squared	=	0,087
Adj R-squared	=	0,022
Root MSE	=	0,784

behaviour_~A	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
ru1_A	0,033	0,055	0,600	0,550	0,055
ro1_A	-0,009	0,056	-0,150	0,879	-0,015
Age	-0,009	0,011	-0,780	0,439	-0,096
Sex (F)	-0,179	0,154	-1,160	0,248	-0,106
Seniority	0,009	0,011	0,870	0,386	0,112
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,236	0,273	0,870	0,388	0,085
Mgmt. (yes)	0,103	0,160	0,640	0,522	0,061
Formal. aut.	0,056	0,146	0,380	0,703	0,035
Gen. trust	0,221	0,082	2,710	**0,008**	0,244
_cons	3,076	0,652	4,720	0,000	.

Post-estimation indicates probable problem of normality
(Shapiro wilk <.01 Shapiro-Francia <.01 and Skewness-Kurtosis <.05)

Right:

F(9, 106)	=	3,210
Prob > F	=	0,002
R-squared	=	0,214
Adj R-squared	=	0,147
Root MSE	=	0,849

behaviour_~B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
ru1_B	0,179	0,076	2,370	**0,020**	0,260
ro1_B	0,089	0,073	1,210	0,228	0,132
Age	-0,002	0,013	-0,150	0,885	-0,018
Sex (F)	0,036	0,177	0,200	0,841	0,018
Seniority	0,009	0,012	0,730	0,468	0,091
Edu. (>=Ms)	-0,006	0,353	-0,020	0,987	-0,001
Mgmt. (yes)	0,064	0,189	0,340	0,736	0,032
Formal. aut.	0,187	0,175	1,070	0,287	0,100
Gen. trust	0,209	0,099	2,120	**0,037**	0,191
_cons	1,476	0,777	1,900	0,060	.

Post-estimation indicates possible linear heteroscedasticity (Breush-Pagan <.1)

Macro-level informal model

Left:

Number of obs	=	109,000
F(10, 98)	=	2,330
Prob > F	=	0,017
R-squared	=	0,192
Adj R-squared	=	0,109
Root MSE	=	0,718

behaviour_~A	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
rou1_A	-0,005	0,067	-0,070	0,941	-0,008
adnorms_A	0,136	0,076	1,800	**0,074**	0,220
polnorms_A	0,118	0,074	1,610	0,111	0,186
Age	-0,012	0,012	-1,000	0,319	-0,137
Sex (F)	-0,172	0,161	-1,070	0,286	-0,105
Seniority	0,010	0,011	0,890	0,377	0,130
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,057	0,275	0,210	0,836	0,022
Mgmt. (yes)	0,092	0,158	0,580	0,561	0,057
Formal. aut.	-0,051	0,148	-0,340	0,731	-0,033
Gen. trust	0,143	0,084	1,710	**0,090**	0,174
_cons	2,659	0,644	4,130	0,000	.

Post-estimation does not indicate any problems

Right: Macro-level informal model

Number of obs	=	95,000
F(10, 84)	=	6,240
Prob > F	=	0,000
R-squared	=	0,426
Adj R-squared	=	0,358
Root MSE	=	0,700

behaviour_~B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
rou1_B	0,281	0,066	4,220	**0,000**	0,360
adnorms_B	-0,150	0,072	-2,100	**0,039**	-0,243
polnorms_B	-0,201	0,072	-2,810	**0,006**	-0,312
Age	0,010	0,012	0,830	0,409	0,098
Sex (F)	-0,034	0,168	-0,200	0,841	-0,018
Seniority	-0,003	0,011	-0,270	0,784	-0,033
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,170	0,317	0,540	0,594	0,048
Mgmt. (yes)	-0,015	0,170	-0,090	0,931	-0,008
Formal. aut.	0,027	0,165	0,170	0,869	0,015
Gen. trust	0,129	0,099	1,310	0,195	0,116
_cons	2,837	0,818	3,470	0,001	.

Post-estimation does not indicate any problems

Meso-level calculative model

Left:

Number of obs	=	144,000
F(13, 127)	=	8,580
Prob > F	=	0,000
R-squared	=	0,440
Adj R-squared	=	0,389
Root MSE	=	0,622

Right: Meso-level calculative model

Number of obs	=	119,000
F(13, 100)	=	11,990
Prob > F	=	0,000
R-squared	=	0,576
Adj R-squared	=	0,528
Root MSE	=	0,644

behaviour_~A	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
ca1_A	-0,084	0,041	-2,050	**0,043**	-0,140
ca2_A	0,190	0,049	3,860	**0,000**	0,281
ca4_A	-0,099	0,038	-2,580	**0,011**	-0,184
assetspec_A	-0,048	0,043	-1,110	0,268	-0,075
risknat_A	-0,215	0,043	-5,000	**0,000**	-0,348
Age	-0,011	0,009	-1,220	0,224	-0,118
Sex (F)	-0,118	0,116	-1,020	0,310	-0,070
Seniority	0,007	0,008	0,910	0,362	0,091
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,090	0,214	0,420	0,675	0,031
Mgmt. (yes)	0,131	0,122	1,070	0,285	0,078
Formal. aut.	-0,009	0,112	-0,080	0,939	-0,005
Gen. trust	0,116	0,065	1,770	**0,079**	0,128
_cons	4,650	0,599	7,760	0,000	.

Post-estimation indicates possible problem of normality (Shapiro wilk <.05 Shapiro-Francia <.05 Skewness-Kurtosis <.05) and linear heteroscedasticity (Breush-Pagan <.1)

behaviour_~B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
ca1_B	-0,198	0,054	-3,630	**0,000**	-0,280
ca2_B	0,165	0,053	3,120	**0,002**	0,254
ca4_B	-0,047	0,048	-0,980	0,329	-0,071
assetspec_B	-0,085	0,053	-1,600	0,113	-0,109
risknat_B	-0,189	0,057	-3,320	**0,001**	-0,276
Age	0,005	0,010	0,490	0,629	0,044
Sex (F)	0,022	0,132	0,170	0,868	0,011
Seniority	0,012	0,009	1,330	0,186	0,123
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,156	0,277	0,560	0,575	0,039
Mgmt. (yes)	-0,048	0,140	-0,350	0,731	-0,024
Formal. aut.	0,108	0,131	0,820	0,414	0,057
Gen. trust	0,143	0,076	1,880	**0,063**	0,127
_cons	4,078	0,745	5,480	0,000	.

Post-estimation indicates possible linear heteroscedasticity (Breush-Pagan <.05)

Meso-level relational model

Number of obs	=	128,000
F(16, 109)	=	4,560
Prob > F	=	0,000
R-squared	=	0,379
Adj R-squared	=	0,296
Root MSE	=	0,684

Meso-level relational model

Number of obs	=	109,000
F(16, 92)	=	9,420
Prob > F	=	0,000
R-squared	=	0,603
Adj R-squared	=	0,539
Root MSE	=	0,648

behaviour_~A	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
re1_A	0,041	0,099	0,410	0,684	0,052
re2_A	0,152	0,094	1,630	0,107	0,181
re3_A	0,181	0,067	2,710	**0,008**	0,242
re5_A	-0,041	0,059	-0,700	0,484	-0,069
re6_A	-0,061	0,053	-1,140	0,257	-0,104
fam_A	-0,046	0,041	-1,130	0,261	-0,103
fam2_A	0,069	0,057	1,210	0,229	0,111
poweq_A	0,090	0,059	1,520	0,131	0,147
Age	0,001	0,010	0,120	0,908	0,012
Sex (F)	-0,075	0,142	-0,520	0,601	-0,043
Seniority	0,017	0,010	1,730	**0,086**	0,188
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,087	0,279	0,310	0,757	0,026
Mgmt. (yes)	0,097	0,142	0,680	0,495	0,056
Formal. aut.	0,067	0,132	0,510	0,614	0,041
Gen. trust	0,180	0,080	2,260	**0,026**	0,181
_cons	1,028	0,806	1,280	0,204	.

Post-estimations indicate probable linear heteroscedasticity (Breush-Pagan test <.01)

behaviour_~B	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	Beta
re1_B	0,091	0,071	1,280	0,205	0,125
re2_B	0,177	0,078	2,280	**0,025**	0,235
re3_B	0,053	0,058	0,910	0,363	0,076
re5_B	0,005	0,066	0,080	0,939	0,007
re6_B	-0,165	0,058	-2,850	**0,005**	-0,234
fam_B	-0,010	0,045	-0,230	0,820	-0,020
fam2_B	0,037	0,062	0,590	0,556	0,049
poweq_B	0,201	0,065	3,080	**0,003**	0,288
Age	0,009	0,010	0,930	0,354	0,086
Sex (F)	0,016	0,146	0,110	0,913	0,008
Seniority	0,012	0,010	1,240	0,220	0,117
Edu. (>=Ms)	0,047	0,274	0,170	0,865	0,012
Mgmt. (yes)	0,119	0,167	0,710	0,477	0,058
Formal. aut.	0,278	0,136	2,040	**0,044**	0,142
Gen. trust	0,179	0,085	2,110	**0,037**	0,154
_cons	0,509	0,737	0,690	0,492	.

Post-estimation does not indicate any problems

Annex to chapter 8: Qualitative component of cell analysis:

Reference Interaction interview quotes

8.1

- **T9:** *Formal rules have to be there… BUT… especially the healthy common sense is necessary and you have to be able to talk about it if a formal rule is not honoured. Now everything is talked over, and in the end that is… I mean, it's in the contract that the back-office has to provide an availability of a certain percentage. It isn't because that level of availability is not reached for one month, that they'll say like "ah, the contract has not been respected." It'll be discussed and then we'll see what happened, usually there's a plausible reason for it.*

8.2

- **T7:** *It's never good, I think, to frame everything too much in little rules and so on, but the big ideas, or the ambiguities, have to be sufficiently clarified, or where friction arises they need to be sufficiently clarified (…) then there is space for informal, informal contacts or executions of tasks, so you need that formal moment to give final approval to things and to actually confirm them.*

8.3

- **DT7:** *We're in that phase now, but that's temporary in fact, we're in the phase that the translation of the coalition agreement to the entities still has to happen (…) and then you're more careful in these things (laughs) (…) but that's temporary. Once everything is in formal frameworks, then that won't matter to me anymore. But this month it does.*

- **DT2:** *It's legally forbidden to write in your personnel administration that somebody has an immigrant background, but you do need to communicate to [department A] how many people you employ with an immigrant background… Ok… how am I going to manage that? You'll have to write it down somewhere… and if you ask such questions to [department A], you don't get a reply.*

8.4

- **DT5:** *So that horizontal structure is not organised in a subsidiary way, it's not like we are going to give the responsibility and then we are going to control what they are doing with the responsibility. (…) But stop saying ex ante like "we are going to first send you 87 directives to tell you how you have to do it" (…) and then they'll have something to audit again and voila. The entire basis is, do you trust your senior civil servants and do you know your agencies enough?*

- **DT2:** *You often notice that personally, people (in department A) do want to go further, but that the framework is their straightjacket. (…) they often feel bounded over there by many things, while they are willing to do more… so benevolence is there when you consider the persons, but when you consider the organisation as such… you don't notice any of that anymore. It's trying to create that framework.*

8.5

- **T2:** *Routines and customs, they are a bit the oil of it all huh… it runs, until the moment it is renewed for some reason or another, and then we'll go to a formal task description and then that will be a consequence of that. It's described how it should be and that then becomes a custom and that becomes a certain routine, because that's how it changes…*

8.6

- **T5**: *Well, they have the coordination function, alright, and so they work for the Flemish Government, so in other words, you have to assume that these people do the job they're paid for, like I do my job for which I'm paid, and I have to assume for a part that these people are competent.*

- **T6**: *You are an employee of the Flemish administration, it's usually also about that the studies and the information which is in our possession, that it has been created with government resources, those are subsidies that are granted by the Flemish administration, so in that sense I think it is only normal that you'll do that, because you're contributing to the policy of the Flemish administration.*

8.7

- **I: Yes, so the attitude of your senior civil…**
  DT7: *Yeah it's pretty distrustful… I don't completely take that over because in my case I don't really speak about distrust, but I do keep it in mind that I'm being admonished to be careful.*
  I: Yes, and do you think that it impacted the way in which not only yourself, but also other employees here in the department see [Data collection/use by A]
  DT7: *Yes, definitely. That's obvious.*
  I: Could you give an example of a moment in which your senior civil servant admonished you to be careful?

  DT7: *(laughs) Well in fact, with every single information request from [horizontal department A] there's that*

signal, so those examples are myriad. Yeah it's actually funny, because they used to work together in the past, so the two senior civil servants know each other from the past, I don't think that went very well…

8.8
- *DT1: Yes, yes, because in the end you are the Flemish administration, but every entity will look primarily at itself, and tries to do the best for itself or its policy area.*

- *DT5: And everything depends on the vision, which vision you support. I didn't choose to be a civil servant. I frankly don't give a damn about it, excuse me… I don't care at all about being a civil servant. But I did choose to be servient, or try to be servient to [the main target group of the respondent's organisation]. And for me, that makes a fundamental difference.*

8.9
- *T4: But I think that if they would ask something of us which has no advantage to us on that moment… but only a cost… even then it would still be possible. Of course, it depends upon the possibilities…*

8.10
- *T10: Those (advantages and disadvantages for my organisation), but I think that the last part is a bit to short, it should say "for the Flemish administration".*
  I: Yes. And you indicate that they could play a bigger role there in the future.
  T10: Yes, they will play a bigger role there in the future. There, my expectations toward [horizontal department B] are really large. (…) We need a helicopter-perspective there, and yes, that will bring some tensions along with it. And dealing with those tensions, that's where I expect much from [horizontal department B].

- *T6: We know that if the question comes, that it can contribute to the general government's policy, and that we can bring a positive input there. It's more from a reflection, it still has to be feasible because we don't have that many personnel available for that, so we have to see, what is the intensity, what are the equivalent that we need to mobilise for that, is this reasonable and executable within a foreseeable term.*

8.11
- *DT9: They forget that our work, the size of our work is pretty significant, and that we are already pushing our limits. And those things, like I said, it's actually a lawyer here, he has to do the coordination with all those [data collection/use by A], he is actually our legal service. But he doesn't have time for that anymore. So when we have to give a recommendation to [the main target group of the respondent's organisation], we sometimes need a lawyer, but then he's not available. (…) and then sometimes we make decisions in good faith that we think "it'll be alright". It used to be that the legal service checked that. But that person doesn't have the time anymore.*

- *DT8: It can happen, when you work with percentages and those things, that certain things are taken out of their normal context. (…) and then I have the feeling, but that's mainly due to the nature of our organisation, that some conclusions are connected to it which are not correct, and that they don't take into account what's behind the data. (…) That's simply how it works with numbers. So yeah, that's it, that can have big consequences, also financial consequences, because it's linked to the budget, and so on. Or to human resources…*

8.12
- *DT2: Those numbers are so poly-interpretable, everyone who has ever worked with such aggregated numbers knows that you can take them every which way, statistically.*
  I: Yes, and you indicated earlier that they have to tendency to always make the most negative interpretation…
  DT2: Yes, of course, they have a hidden agenda. They received the task from their minister to set up an outsourcing-contract that needs to be available for all entities, and answers to the needs of all the entities, and they're trying to make that work, so from their perspective it's very logical. It's just that the consequences are not as useful to the customers.

8.13
- *DT8: Like I said, I hear things from colleagues that worry me. (…) due to the fact that we don't have all those contacts ourselves, that we are not in those working groups, that's an important instrument for me to form an image about that organisation. Of course it's a dangerous thing to do, but okay, I make do with what I've got. (…) and I can't imagine that none of it is true, that those ghosts aren't there, if everyone rather unanimously agrees on these things. (…) in a context of austerity, of fusions, those ghosts arise, and that is, … it feeds a certain distrust.*

8.14
- *T6: because the idea grows, like we are all taking care of the same thing, and we are all contributing to the same positive effect. And that transcends this story a bit, but what it is about is that also within a Flemish administrative context the allocation of people and resources takes place (…) in a certain policy area, and that the results of that are often shown in another policy area. And that often makes it difficult to invest. (…) We know that when the request arrives, it may contribute to the general government policy, and that we can make a positive contribution there.*

- **T10**: *that's a difficult thing, and that will always be a difficult thing.*
  I: Politically or…
  T10: *Yes.*
  I: will that make you take up a less vulnerable position in the future then…
  T10: *No. I find, I had to play the democratic game honestly, and if the parliament votes the decree, the administration has to be there to provide its execution. (…) and if I then have to make data available, then I don't have a problem to communicate openly about it.*

- **T10**: *I've always said I'd have no problem if my agency would seize to exist, if that would result in a benefit for the Flemish administration. (…) and that kind of management of intersections, that will be part of [Department B]'s tasks in the future. (…)*
  I: Yes. And you are saying, you expect them to play a larger role in the future in that respect.
  T10: *Yes, the will play a larger role there. My expectations towards [Department B] are high in that respect. High, but at the same time realistic, because you know many interests are at stake there. (…) You know that you have to unite them, all of those entities, you know you have to reconcile them in one way or the other, and you will have to do that through a number of conflicts, in fact.*

- **T6**: *And I… I look at the Flemish administration with quite a lot of positivism, without being naïve. Because I told you, the element of cooperation across policy areas, and allowing other the opportunity of reaping the benefits of the efforts and work on other areas, that is still a difficult point. And there we could certainly, if we would work a bit more across boundaries, produce some efficiency gains. (…) and that is often very hard. In that respect, there is a lot of thinking regarding "my policy area".*
  I: Whereas reality…
  T6: *Yes, that is of course a bit more complex, its not like there you reach a signpost saying "this is the end of one policy area and you are now entering the next one…". A lot is holistic, and [Department B] can also contribute to that.*

8.15

- **DT5**: *but the second thing is of course, and for me, this is the main reason, a consideration of the possible advantages and disadvantages for my organisation.*
  I: the main reason you say?
  DT5: *for me that is the main reason, yes.*
  I: can you tell me some more about that?
  DT5: *If you can win something by it, you should never refuse it. I'm not here for myself, I'm here for [the respondent's organisation]. Perhaps that is a statement in itself, I'm not here for the Flemish civil service, I don't know what that is, the Flemish civil service. I don't feel connected with a bus driver (…) and he will probably not feel connected to an IT-responsible in [the respondent's organisation]. So I don't feel connected to the Flemish administration because I don't know what that is. So I mainly try to make sure that people in [the respondent's organisation] are being supported well, with good systems and so on, and if I can get a benefit in function of that from cooperation, without having to look over my shoulder to know what they are actually doing with it, then I'll think 'yes, that's a win'. And I'll now refer to the VLIMPERS-story, about which we still don't know where the big efficiency-gains are we were supposed to win. Well, it's simply not there. But it all depends of course on which perspective you take. Whether you speak from the perspective of thé big Flemish administration, or you speak from the perspective of [the respondent's organisation].*

- **DT2**: *but the question is of course, I can imagine that the senior civil servant at* for *[Department A] will think like, what'll that give? Because as long as it does not measurably increase the quality of all kinds of KPI, they will only be punished because of it. Because they will only have more personnel expenditure, and imagine that the benefits of it are found in* for *[the respondent's organisation], then our senior civil servant will be able to take the credit, so that… the win-win situation is not always there, or well, it is certainly not always predictable*

- **DT6**: *the framework of consideration is different, so the result is different as well. (…) I might found advantages and disadvantages in the system now, which* for *[Department A] considers very differently. And that just depends on where you want to go with it. (…)*
  I: Yes, and with that framework of consideration, do you mean the framework you employ as a customer-oriented versus the framework of the horizontals?
  DT6: *Yes, that differs. (…) they are considering like 'oh, the structures, and we have decided this', while my consideration is like 'okay, the customer is happy, and we achieved what we had to achieve'. So I think it is a disadvantage, and they think it is an advantage, or the other way around.*

8.16

- **T4**: *Yeah, the values in which they work, in the way in which they position themselves with respect to other entities, that openness, willingness, cooperation about… it is of course an horizontal organisation, but we also consider ourselves as a horizontal organisation; (…) but that's something that yeah, an undercurrent that is*

under the surface, that's how you should describe it, something that you can't immediately see black on white, but of which you do feel like, okay, it's good working together.

8.18

- **T2:** *Because somewhere I believe a bit in mirroring. If you position yourself open and vulnerable and with integrity, then the probability that the other will do it too will be larger. If you position yourself behind a wall to start with, yeah then it'll go… there is a lot of reciprocal interaction. If one of the two closes the door…*

- **T7:** *Yeah, maybe I should emphasise, that's one of the reasons why that trust is great, there has been a good cooperation in over the course of the years and yeah, we never really had a problem with that, on the contrary.*

8.19

- **DT5:** *It's sometimes said, jokingly, in the pub, with a pint. But jokingly the jester speaks his truth! In a pub with a pint and then they say "haha, those agencies, the only thing you are trying to do is to pull the wool over our eyes". And then you think, yeah, now I know enough.*

8.20

- **DT1:** *Lately I've only had positive experiences with [horizontal department A], but that's more about personal contacts, while those data requests, that's sent by mail, through senior civil servants, and that's more like we need to have it by then, and your contact is this… while in other projects and trajectories, a dossier manager from there comes to do an intake, who interacts with you, and that makes it easier to show trust of course.*

8.21

- **DT1:** *Because the more you'll be able to see yourself in a certain arrangement or in a certain trajectory, the quicker you'll respond to it…*
  I: Yes… and you also indicated, that is connected to the political colour and with…
  DT1: *Yes… it shouldn't, but it does play a very big role.*

- **DT9:** *(…) I think that too much administration is coming to the administrations (…). If we would have an entire week to work on our dossiers,… an entire week, that would be lovely! But it is like, we are going from management-agreement (beheersovereenkomst) to corporate plan (ondernemingsplan), to long-term corporate plan (langetermijn-ondernemeingsplan), to objectives, then to audits on the objectives, then reporting, intermediary reparting, man man man… we are doing it alright, but I think it can stop now. They don't have to go much further in that, because… the reason why we are doing this work, could suffer from it.*

8.22

- **DT7:** *And in the past it has happened already that we felt that those data were not well interpreted. And that does make you more careful in giving information because you are afraid that they will draw the wrong conclusions from it. So it is more a reaction from us I think, to things that have happened, not really that we as an entity are by definition distrustful toward organisations that request information. Sometimes I think that it's a consequence of some things that have happened of which we say: "oh yeah, we need to start paying attention".*

8.23

- **I: is there one of the things you spoke about earlier, do some of those things change regarding what the organisation effectively does? Does you explanation of these aspects change in that respect?**
  DT2: *Yes, here, those past experiences, they will of course, they get disseminated. So you start to build all kinds of experiences in you relationship, and you share those experiences with people in IT, with your business, so it begins to live in your organisation. And then your organisation will, with those reasons, those are rumours, for them that is second-hand information of course, but for them that is a given, that is context in fact, they will only support you even more to think in the line of those experiences, so that is a sort of self-reinforcing effect. Other than that… no… I can't explain it immediately.*

8.24

- **T6:** *(…) I think it needs to be combined with a framework of correctness in which information is handled in a confidential way. (…)*
  Imagine for instance that certain success rates of certain trainings are very low, that's reasonable sensitive information, for some public institutions that work on the basis of subsidies and so on, so then I think that we need to make that information available, (…) but it is important that you can frame it, why that is the case. That it can be contextualised, that it might be compared in time (…) that's what I call that framework.

8.25

- **T10:** *(…) while everything was rather informal so far, I think you will have to work more formal in the future. Also there has been a change in the content of the tasks of [Department B], which has as a consequence that you will have to formalise it to some extent. (…)*
  I: So again, because the role of [Department B] will change, the nature of the information they are tasked to collect will change, …
  T10: *That will be different…*
  I: And that necessitates a more formal framework, in order to allow that new kind of information…
  T10: *Yes. The goal of the information analysis will be different as well. While it is now a rather objective and*

neutral representation of what is going on in the different entities, there will be an entirely new objective like, we have to have those data in the framework of a certain (…)policy. And there will have to be some choices in that (…)policy, and they themselves will have to directly contribute to those choices. They will get a much more direct role in a number of vertical processes, I think.

- **I: Yes, and I assume that, since you are placing that card over here, you don't really feel the need for a formal framework in that cooperation?**
  T4: Ehm… no. No. (…) should it occur that they have certain requests towards us in the future, or certain expectations regarding providing them with data, which they need or for which we have to do additional work, it might be possible that there will be a contract drawn up for that, and that there are potential financial remunerations in order to complete that task, but that hasn't happened so far.
  I: so if new tasks have to be performed…
  T4: yes, which also, yeah, in the context of the budgetary reductions, which require so much efforts that we can't do it for free (…) anymore, yes it might be that it will require a remuneration (…) but that isn't an ex ante premise.

8.26

- *T9: (…) you can be creative within your legal framework, but there's still the legal framework with which you'll have to comply (…).*
  I: yes, so you expect the informers to assume an emphatic position, but still remain correct in applying the regulations.
  T9: Yes. Yes.

- *T7: (…) there was one counter-example, now that I'm thinking about it, but that wasn't really something I'd call a problem, but structurally, there was in fact… Let me put it this way: In [particular division of department B] they like to work informally. They address different partners, or contacts from everywhere, also within our own organisation. That has many advantages of course in order to get direct information, people will bring new things in their own name, and that can be very interesting. At a certain point it will have to become formal work. (…) and I have the impression that they were struggling a bit with that, that they really wanted to hang on to that informal way of working. At a certain point you have to be able to say look, this is where we stop, and we need to take the formal procedures into account, because that document also has to pass the Flemish Government, and so on.*

- *T9: (…) you can be creative within your legal framework, but there's still the legal framework with which you'll have to comply. (…)*
  I: yes, so you expect the informers to assume an emphatic position, but still remain correct in applying the regulations.
  T9: Yes. Yes.

8.27

- *DT1: I do understand that there is a method of calculation and that it needs to be followed by everyone, but sometimes reality is simply different than things… (…) I asked like look, that isn't right, can we change that, and then the answer was "no we can't". So… (laughs).*

- *DT2: benevolence, yeah you often notice that the people would like to go further personally, but that their framework is their straightjacket. The (…) contract is like this, our service provisions are like this, our investment programmes are what they are, and we cannot change anything about them. We would like to do this and that so that you guys could also do more… but no. so they do feel bound to all sorts of things, while they would like to do more themselves. So that benevolence is there on the personal level. But for the organisation as such… you barely notice anything about that anymore. It tries to create that framework to it.*

8.28

- *DT2: When you notice after five or six years like wow, here's an invoice all of a sudden for storage systems, of which we never knew we had to pay it, and for the record, to a party which is not the one actually supplying the services… then I think that's very untrustworthy.*
  I: Is that because the contract is incomplete or unclear or, because it is just implicitly…
  DT2: that is mainly due to the fact that we, as an external agency, are literally outside of it. So if you're in the buildings of the Flemish administration, everybody seems to be permeated by that knowledge, everybody just seems to know those things. It's very odd, like it's written on everyone's desktop…

- *DT7: I think they do insinuate what they're going to use in for, because I think many organisations ask like yeah, what is it for… (…) but I don't think they really say … but I don't know… I can't say if that's on purpose, right, it might be that they get another instruction a year later, another project in which those data happen to apply, so… I'm not saying that it's always easy for them, you won't hear me say that. But that's how it comes across for us sometimes. So it's perception.*

- *DT7: the problem is, you have a coalition agreement, you have targets, (…) and there are some vague targets in there, and yeah, if that part is not clear you'll get all kinds of weird rumours between senior civil servants about how they would like to do things and what they are planning, (…). And that isn't good actually. They should be faster in making it clearer.*

- *DT8: I assume that such a report is needed, that it is necessary, and what I miss, that is the perspective on what happens with that information, the opportunity to add nuance and accents in the process, and thay you see what will happen to it, to those things. Even if it is their rejection, but at least you'll know.*

- *DT8: I assume that there are arrangements, there is horizontal discussion in the Flemish administration, but also there I hear between the lines that they are unhappy about certain things that are going on over there. That things that we discussed are not really implemented, and the other way around, that things that are implemented are not aligned with the arrangements made about it.*

8.29

- *T2: the attitude of my senior civil servant regarding this organisation… he couldn't care less. (…) I can imagine that the senior civil servant, that he also wants that they are competent, have integrity, are benevolent and stick to arrangements so… this is not going to change my expectations, so I'm not going to add this.*
  I: so it's not like your senior civil servant has a very pronounced opinion on this…
  T2: no, not as far as I know.

- **I: Your own senior civil servant, what is their attitude?**
  T4: Well, he is very positive about that… but it is also, it is part of our values… Our senior civil servant is in the same… (…) in principle that is important but of course that's not specific toward [Department B], but in general…

- *T2: The attitude of the responsible minister regarding this relation… that has nothing to do with it.*

- **I: Okay! And if I ask for the attitude of your own responsible minister, does that play a role?**
  T4: No. That has not played any sort of role in the past. Neither in a positive sense or in a negative sense.
  I: The minister is not negative or positive about those…
  T4: No, no no. certainly not.

8.30

- *DT2: This is also important, very important. The attitude of my senior civil servant. And then I'm talking about one step above my direct superior, I'm talking about the delegated administrator (the leader of the organisation). The delegated administrator has a, what he would himself describe as a 'healthy distrust' toward [department A]. He has… [department A] is under another political minister then the one he is accountable to, so he tries to care about them as little as possible. Because everything he does for their minister, indirectly I mean, doesn't bring him anything. He has to serve his own minister. So that is very important (…). And he is… he is completely on the line of yes, let [department A] be [department A], so he is a senior civil servant who doesn't have a high opinion about that trustworthiness.*

- **I: Yes, so the attitude of your senior civil…**
  DT7: Yeah it's pretty distrustful… I don't completely take that over because in my case I don't really speak about distrust, but I do keep it in mind that I'm being admonished to be careful.
  I: Yes, and do you think that it impacted the way in which not only yourself, but also other employees here in the department see [Data collection/use by A]
  DT7: Yes, definitely. That's obvious.

8.31

- *DT4: I think, eventually, the attitude of the senior civil servant in general, (…) in certain working groups where those senior civil servants are, they could put more emphasis on look technically there are things going wrong or this is where things could improve (…) so I think that that have to bring that up faster in those groups, but that's not being done, so that's a bit of laxity by the senior civil servant as well. (…) And I think that is (important) also for the competence, in the end it will allow you to better adapt the system and follow it up.*

- *DT6: Alright, attitude of the senior civil servant regarding this relation, well my supervisor is the big boss over here, he is the delegated administrator. (…) In fact, we expected more of him. We are a bit disappointed over here, and we also told him, in going along in things we really don't consider to be that efficient. And we expected like yeah, he is going to be on the side of the customer so things are going to, I mean… But pfff… so far we didn't see much of that.*

8.32

- **T5**: *No. By the way, I'm not in the position to question that, I'm just the assistant of the director, so yeah, if those would be unrealistic requests, or absurd requests, then me or my supervisor would give feedback (...) but they always request the same data as last time, you see, it is in fact a rather standard question, yes... the question is always the same but the answer has to be fitted to the trends and tendencies (...)*

- **I: those routines you have put forward, what do you mean specifically with that?**
  T8: *(sigh, long pause) yes,... what do I mean with that... I don't know. I don't know. Here, I can only say that, without realising it, I can identify with their values, with ever really thinking about it (...) it just seems, it seems like it is good, what they're doing, I never really thought about it in fact. I just seems like it is all true what they are saying there, and yeah... that's it.*

- **I: and are these habits between you and the relationship manager or are these really routines existing for everyone here in the service and [the service in department B]? Are these personal habits or are they,... yeah... structural routines?**
  T9: *(thinking) ... both... yes I think that they are also structural things. (...) so that's also, you trust in the organisation that they will keep doing that, right.*

- **T2**: *Those are modus operandi which... well yeah... in the end, those formal rules, it has become a routine to fill in that form. It has become a habit.*
  I: It's not being questioned anymore?
  T2: *No. up to the point they say like, ah, there is a new form.*

8.33

- **T5**: *Well they have the coordination function, and they work for the Flemish Government, so in other words, you have to assume that those people do the job for which they are being paid, like I do my job for which I'm being paid, and I have to assume in part that those people are competent.*
  I: Yes. So they are part of the Flemish administration, and that kind of gives you a guarantee that they are competent?
  T5: *Yes. I have no right to doubt that. I have no right, I don't know those people that well, but okay, I have no right to doubt that, and I have no reason to doubt that.*

- **T6**: *Yes, I referred to that earlier, regarding [department B], but also regarding other, but especially regarding [department B], I assume that that trustworthiness is very high. A Flemish administration, among others through IAVA (the Internal Audit of the Flemish Administration), the internal audit, gives high priority to competence, integrity, keeping promises, deontology, trustworthiness, and such things, so you may assume that [department B], that they reflect the policy of the Flemish administration, and also hold those elements and competences in high esteem. And w e have never had a different indication, and I never heard of other contacts in the past that this would not be the case.*

8.34

- **DT2**: *(...) I think it is also, it is also the lack of will to really dive deep into the business (...) while they get the chance to think along more with your business, yes then it would bring you more. Then they could perhaps build up those competences, but I think it is an illusion because there are too many entities, because too much thinking is required in too many directions (...) that is, the expectation is also that this really will not change, exactly because [department A] can not have that focus on our business*

- **DT6**: *benevolence, I've got (...) problems with that. I mean, being willing to think along in with their clients, because in the end, no matter how you look at it, we have clients that are external, but in fact for the back-office service, their clients, that's us. And they don't look at it like that (...). The realisation that we cannot perform our operational tasks as well anymore because of that.... That makes me think, benevolence, well no. (...) the framework of reference is different, so the result is different as well (...).*
  I: Yes, and with that framework of reference, you mean the framework of you as customer-focused versus the framework of the horizontals?
  DT6: *Yes, that's different. (...) I say, we have achieved our results with the team, so that's good and there hasn't been any problem so far, so good! But for [department A], it is like 'ah no, that's not good, because you didn't make your reports'. So that is a very different framework of reference. Their consideration is like 'ah, the structures, and we decided this', while my consideration is like 'okay, the customer is happy, we achieved what we had to achieve'. So I think it's a disadvantage, they think it's an advantage, and vice versa.*

8.35

- **DT2**: *The essence of business-IT alignment is that the business has to get to know that IT. In contrast to the outsourcer who works at [department A], he doesn't know anything about the business of all those ministries, all those divisions. Because that is of course an gigantically broad business. (...) Yes, so competence, there the biggest problem is that they don't have the business-knowledge. Our business is quite specific, [department A]*

has no competence in that whatsoever. So they always focus on generic knowledge, or generic possibilities of their systems, so no, those competences won't get you far.

- **DT5**: *I'm going to give you a number of examples there. A first example is about the working groups they set up about the horizontal ICT-policy. They are setting up working groups, a bunch of people go there, every policy area blablabla, well, nothing happens there. Nothing. Yes, blablabla, but nothing. But they are setting up all kinds of unimaginable objectives like 'we are going to set standards for the entire Flemish administration'. Now, everything depends on how you look at things. If you say, the Flemish administration, well, I can think of standards for that. If I look at, you have bus drivers, care workers, people working with handicaps, people at youth welfare who work in institutions, and so on, then I think like okay, I'm not even going to begin working on it, because that doesn't make sense. And those two things do not match. So the big 'Flemish administration': 'I'm very sorry, ça n'existe pas'. I can imagine something about what a care worker needs, that might correspond to some extent with what somebody at youth welfare needs, although I'm not even so sure about that, but it will certainly be different from what a bus driver needs. Here, I need things to test the eyes of children. That bus driver needs a machine to distribute tickets. So the Flemish administration, in terms of operational needs, is not the same, and still we try, with working groups and standards and... (blows angrily).*

8.36

- **T10**: *I have a lot of people who... senior experts, who write a lot of policy texts and so on and decrees, who use that a lot and they are all very happy about the cooperation, I'm one hundred percent certain about that. (...) They provide data which are being processed there, but also to the extent my co-workers are involved in that, I think they will always, as soon as the report is out, they are very interested in how we are represented in it, how we are shown in there, and that is, I think that there is a lot of appreciation from my co-workers towards that service.*

- **T4**: *In the end, that data-collection (...) informed us in making important choices, to formulated important objectives and so on, which were then translated into actions (...) so there is in any case a large openness and curiosity to try and capture it, from their side, like what are the data which are available in other entities which may be important for our functioning on the Flemish level (...). So there is a certain exchange and a, you can call it a win-win situation, in the best case, although it does not necessary have to go that far.*

8.37

- **DT2**: *and meanwhile [department A] is still pulling like (...) 'if you take that last step, you'd be far more cost-efficient'. Now, if you make the calculation yourself, (...) and you see like well, this is not right... this is simply at all not more cost-efficient, and especially, the quality is lower, yeah, you won't even give it a second thought. But in the mean time, you have to resist that pressure.*

- **DT5**: *If they would say like 'look, from your context, what can we do for you'? That might bring so much, but that just doesn't happen. I've been asking for years to work on common data centres because that would bring me a benefit, and they could really help us there. It just doesn't happen because it is difficult and the service provider and blablabla.... I don't care.*

- **DT6**: *As such, the planning is necessary, the evaluating is necessary, but the planning burden involved in it, is one step to far for me (...) and that is a bit of a consideration, that planning burden, is that necessary? No, because we have other things to do. And we are receiving ever more planning burden concerning organisational aspects of [the respondents' own organisation], but also from the Flemish administration, so that we are working on those things rather than on our own jobs, and that's an important aspect towards [horizontal department A].*

- **DT2**: *And this, certainly this: the advantages and disadvantages for my organisation. If we would join that outsourcing-contract, and place our entire back-end infrastructure at the outsourcer, we would lose all flexibility, and we would no longer be able to make short-term arrangements with our own business and adapt according to necessity. So that is for us a no-go.*

- **DT5**: *A second story is about the costs. I can prove you today, black on white, that my IT is cheaper than the Flemish IT by three thousand euro's per person. And still they say like 'we have to go for the Flemish IT as much as we possibly can'. Well I think: 'crazy'. With all our working groups and standards we are not succeeding in making the Flemish access management match with the access management of e-health, both of which are Flemish decrees. 'Ah no that's impossible because e-health is [name of person responsible for e-health system] and the Flemish is [name of person responsible for Flemish system], and they don't speak to each other, too bad isn't it'. So we invest 50000 euro, but we have a big working group to talk about standards,... come on I mean, you just feel that it doesn't work. (...) I mean, I'll just figure it out for myself. And when they come along with a standard, it'll only cost me money, because there will be things there of which I have no idea what I'm supposed to do with them.*

8.38

- **T10**: *(thinking) I don't know what it really means, opportunistic behaviour regarding us... I don't think that they have to be opportunistic regarding us.*
  I: so they won't try to achieve their own objectives at the cost of your organisation, for instance?
  T10: *hmm, I will definitely not add it in that case, because I think they will have to do that to some extent. The expectations towards them will be different, that is the equilibrium I spoke about earlier.*

- **T2**: *My knowledge about their interest to behave opportunistically toward us in this relationship... But I have no knowledge about any such thing! Because as far as I know, they don't won't to behave opportunistically toward us. I think that's a very tendentious question (laughs).*

- **T4**: *it also have to do with the inter-relationship with a service which, like I said, has a certain neutrality, and is not a 'concullega' (competitive colleague), or has an agenda which defends or resists certain objectives, due to budgetary or other reasons.*

8.39

- **DT2**: *(...) if they ask about your investment costs and your operationalisation costs, you just know that if you are giving unfiltered numbers, they will always be used in the most negative way possible in order to say 'see, if you would have joined the outsourcing contract, it would have been far cheaper! (...) they have a hidden agenda, right. They received a task from their minister to make an outsourcing contract which has to be available for all entities, which has to cover all needs for all entities, and they try to make it work, so from their perspective it is perfectly logical. Only, the consequences are not useful for all clients.*

- **DT9**: *they are keeping to the arrangements but there is a but... they are keeping to arrangements, but.... (laughs). They are not keeping to arrangements in a strict sense. They always want to get the most they can have. And why do they want to get the most they can have? To save more money, to be even more efficient.*

- **DT5**: *it has to do with some credo's which are there... [department A] has become very political (...) in the political cabinet or in [department A] itself, I don't know, but these are simply credo's which are there, which are void of any logical argumentation, which is simply a certain vision on, I'll simply call it, the free market, saying that this will be better by definition. I don't think so. This is highly political.*

- **DT5**: *It's not,... it still does not mean that they use those findings to do all kinds of things with them on the cumulative level. And only those things which fit their story, because when we provide findings which do not fit their story, then they don't matter. It is not because you take a certain ideological direction, which is clear, that you don't have the obligation to think rationally anymore.*
  I: Now you are referring again to the motives of the...
  DT5: *Absolutely. I am absolutely referring to the motives of the efficiency gains in all systems. Absolutely (...) And there are quite many initiatives in the past years which are not rational, but ideological. And that's not okay.*

- **DT7**: *they received targets which they have to make on behalf of the Government toward austerity, towards the number of heads in the Managerial Support Services for instance, and you know that they are looking for ways to economise, and that admonishes us to be careful.*
  I: Yes, so their targets admonish towards austerity, and they need to achieve those objectives, which are at the cost of other administrations.
  DT7: *Yes. In which we fear (...) that they are unbalanced. Some policy areas are more complex than others, if you are simply implementing linear things, you will punish some entities, and we think we are among them, harder than others. And punish is of course a hard term to use.*
  I: But also there, that opportunism, is something they themselves control to lesser extent... yes...

- **DT8**: *also that there are reports sometimes of which you say like... pfff... where do they get this, or why are they doing this? In fact, some ambiguousness about, is this just looking for work for [department A], or are they really doing this because they have to, or is it something that is being used to achieve I don't know what... really like... ambiguousness*
  I: ambiguousness about the underlying motivations?
  DT8: *Yeah, yeah yeah. And then it is very difficult to say like (...) is it the minister who is behind this, around, not really the motivation, but what they are doing. Or is it just saying like ah, we are going to look for something in the frame of... they are looking for work, that is something I hear every now and then regarding those rumours and other information about their reputation. (...) and of course, in a context of austerity, of fusions and so on, those ghost appear, that is... it feeds a certain distrust, which [department A] can't do much about, but that is a context in which things, relations or the image of certain institutions are sensitive to. Or at least, it is a perspective to look at certain things. (...)*
  I: so, knowledge about their opportunistic behaviour, I think it may fit here, perhaps, close to the attitude of their minister...
  DT8: *yes, indeed, the attitude of their minister, that is completely connected to it I think.*

8.40

- **DT5**: *Yes and that certainly plays a role, it goes together. I'll be honest, they don't trust us much either. I'm pretty certain that there is, with a certain group the conviction that the agencies are only trying to sham the others.*

  I: And from which motivation do you say that?
  DT5: *Because it's what I've heard. It's sometimes said, jokingly, in the pub, with a pint. But jokingly the jester speaks his truth! In a pub with a pint and then they say "haha, those agencies, the only thing you are trying to do is to pull the wool over our eyes". And then you think, yeah, now I know enough. And 'hahahaha'... Don't leave it for me, but (laughs)... there's also much on that interpersonal level.*

- **I: In that respect perhaps also the rumours about [department A] and the system, the mistakes in it, are those important for how you see them?**
  DT4: *Not for me. But I think for many people, because many people say, not only the technicians, say like 'it is a slow system, and old system' and there are certainly rumours that they actually maintain all those things, perhaps also for me personally.*

- **DT8:** *I hear a lot of discussion about the numbers. And the fact that there is discussion about the numbers, must mean that something is wrong with the numbers, I find (...). But due to the fact that I hear this, discussion between colleagues, in t he managerial committee and so on, shows according to me that a lot of things happen behind those numbers, which can be manipulated. But now I'm speaking about ghosts I see, which might not be there (...). There has been horizontal dialogue in the Flemish administration, but also there I sometimes hear that they are unhappy about the things happening there (...) I'm thinking about the meetings of the managerial committee, in which these kind of things are discussed now and then, I often hear a lot of reluctance about things they do with numbers, things happening behind the numbers which are not behind it. But now I'm in the area of those ghosts... I can't imagine that if there is no truth to it, if those ghosts are not there, that everyone would freely, collectively agree about it. There are no debates like 'what are you saying now'? No, it is... yeah... it feeds this feeling, beyond the experiences we had in the beginning of our existence.*

8.41

- **T10**: *I think,... this is important no matter how you look at it. The mutual trust, but also the trust they have in us... you just have to trust, now, but also in the future, well they have to trust that the data we collect are correct, give a correct description of what is happening in reality. We need to trust that they process those data in a correct way. An showing that trust is important. And well, that happened in the past, and I don't see why that should be any different in the future.*

- **T2**: *With [specific boundary spanner in department B], I've got very good contacts (...) and [specific boundary spanner in department B] also says like yeah, [name of the respondent] does not always need to join those meetings, we know that he does a good job, so yeah, she also trusts me and she also knows that the case is in good hands with me. So she trusts me and I inform her now and then and sometimes she says like 'you don't have to send that email to me, I know it's okay'. (...) the trust they show in us of course (...) like I said earlier, [specific boundary spanner in department B] that she says like 'certain things you don't have to tell me, (...) the public money is in your good hands' so to say. So they trust us...*

- **T4**: *The trust they show in us in this relation, that is certainly also important here.*
  I: How do you mean? How do they show that?
  T4: *Euhm... by relatively, also informally making arrangements with us, and to trust that data or aspects which need to be exchanged, about cooperation, be it by attending steering committees or make data available from on to the other, that this can be done without official, formal communication between the senior civil servants, or that that should be a requirement. There are still some institutions in Flandres in which you have to make an official request toward the senior civil servant for everything before you can get anything. For certain things, that is certainly important, for other things it makes no sense to do something like that.*

8.42

- **DT5**: *The main question is, do you trust your senior civil servants? Do you (referring to department A) trust your senior civil servants enough so you can tell them 'dear senior civil servant', you know you have to do something about business continuity', or do you say 'well, those people may not be able to do this. So perhaps we need to make a guideline so that they know what that is. And what they should certainly do'. And that gives them something new to audit, and voila. The entire basis is, do you trust your senior civil servants and do you know your agencies enough, because there might be smaller agencies, and they can't do it, and they might be happy that you have all this, but perhaps you should say, 'this little agency can take some consultancy with us, ask us all kinds of things', but those who everything, in god's name, just let them work. Don't interfere. And if they (referring to department A) would come ask us 'how does your plan look', I think guys, I'll give you ALL information. But don't come here like 'yes but according to ISO 20019, your item 3.4 is not completely covered*

and you should cover that'. And when I say like, 'that's not relevant for us' … 'yes but you have to do it because that's what it says'… well, then I think that there are too many people over there with far to little work.

- **I: yes, that they leave you alone and give you room to do your own job and…**
  DT6: Yes. And that they have trust that … because you know, the entire system of evaluations… (…) it is a burden, a direct interference in the capacity you still have left to do your own job. And that has to do in part with the trust, or put differently, the distrust in the operational entities, now I'm talking about the Flemish level, but also internally here…
  I: Yes, and that might be reciprocal, since you indicate that it is important for the expectations you hold about them, that they trust in you.
  DT6: That is how it seems to me, yes. That is what this is about.

8.43
- **T10**: *I know that they, as far as values are concerned, are also trying to give a neutral, objective representation of the Flemish administration, very often without making any normative judgement, sometimes you cannot avoid it but (…)*
  I: the extent to which you identify with the values of [department B], you objectivity, neutrality are….
  T10: To me, those values are rather high. I know there are a number of values for the Flemish administration like customer-friendly and so on, but I think that plays less of a role in these relations… cooperation does. That's what I think is important, that there is good cooperation, but here it is mainly, yes, in part integrity, correctness, neutrality. Those are the values that matter here. (…) much relates to what I have called integrity earlier, but also making the Flemish administration work more efficiently.
  I: You identify with those values?
  T10: Yes, of course. Only, they are terms which may mean many things, working efficiently. If efficient means only 'we can save on a number of employees if we fuse different services', I think it is too limited of a perspective. It is not necessarily a wrong perspective, but it is too limited. (…)
  I: So you are saying, I can identify with the value of efficiency, but earlier, you said that sometimes it is just a word which masks other ambitions or reforms?
  T10: Yes, that is true. It may mean many things, that word.
  I: But not only regarding [department B], but…
  T10: That's globally, that's globally, I have not experienced that regarding [department B].

- **T2**: *The extent to which I can identify with their values, yes. If I can't identify with [department B], with their values, if I think they have the wrong idea, I'd have problems working with them.*
  I: Does that affect their trustworthiness, the way see it?
  T2: Yes, in fact, reason 3, it is almost, 'could I work there'? If I cannot identify with their way of working, if I would have little understanding for that, it is perhaps taking a step back, then it is not as nice to work with those people. Ah yes.

- **T4**: *The extent to which I can identify with their values, that might not be unimportant in a cooperation, but that is something, among the horizontals, something you feel or not, that is not formulated explicitly anywhere.*
  I: When you refer to those values, what do you mean exactly? Are those the political values of cabinets as well, or is it more about the…. General values of the Flemish administration?
  T4: Yeah, the values in which they work, in the way in which they position themselves with respect to other entities, that openness, willingness, cooperation about… it is of course an horizontal organisation, but we also consider ourselves as a horizontal organisation; (…) but that's something that yeah, an undercurrent that is under the surface, that's how you should describe it, something that you can't immediately see black on white, but of which you do feel like, okay, it's good working together.

- **T8**: *I think I can identify with that, with their values, but really without ever really thinking about it.*

8.44
- **DT1**: *the problem is sometimes that some perspectives in [department A] are not in line with perspectives which, for instance in our agency. And then we need to see how they can correspond. (…) now again, a new minister at [department A], that also means a new direction, and yeah, we've also read the newspapers lately, so we know which direction that is. But then, specifically for the people that work there, I have a good perspective on it and I think the competence is there, that the integrity is there, that the benevolence is there, that compliance is there, but de direction they take sometimes, that's another story.*

- **DT5**: *This a bit, the extent to which I can identify with their values, that is also part of it, in my story.*
  I: Yes,… because you are not doubting their competence, integrity, benevolence, but they have the wrong…
  DT5: Yes, I think they just have the wrong scope.

- **DT5**: *Now, everything depends on how you look at things. If you say, the Flemish administration, well, I can think of standards for that. If I look at, you have bus drivers, care workers, people working with handicaps, people at youth welfare who work in institutions, and so on, then I think like okay, I'm not even going to begin working on it, because that doesn't make sense. And those two things do not match. So the big 'Flemish administration': 'I'm very sorry, ça n'existe pas'*

8.45

- **DT6**: *so those values, okay, but it is about how you deal with them operationally. I agree with all values here in the Flemish administration, integrity and so on, that's all okay, I have no problem with any of those things, but yeah, the way in which you are going to realise that, and the structures, and the method, I can't always find myself in them, internally in our organisation. So yes to the values, but many times not to how they are executed.*

  I: Yes. Can you give a specific example of how those values are implemented, where they are not executed or operationalised well?
  DT6: Euhm, one of the values is quality leadership... My opinion on that differs fundamentally with... My hair turns grey and my toes curl up when I see our journal '13', that is such a navel gazing... It's incredible, and I think, guys... we are more preoccupied with looking at ourselves than at our core task... and that is, what I'm saying here I'm saying on behalf of the entire floor here.

- **DT2**: *Now, concretely, I can give you another element, the fact if they are goal-oriented or not. That is of another order, but It bothers me to death, in the Flemish administration, that they can do project after project, and everyone is there in a meeting looking at each other, and making literature reviews and visiting abroad to do all kinds of things, and in the end a business choice needs to be made, and everyone is looking at each other and... nothing happens.*

8.46

- **T2**: *Expectations that have grown from my previous experiences with this relations, yes that is connected to it of course.*
  I: It is interesting to see that you had various pervious experiences, both positive and negative.
  T2: Yes, voila, now that is a mix, before it was mainly positive, and it is also not all their fault, there are also partly dependent upon their supplier. They did choose for those people, but I also know that when you select a bureau, they are always presenting themselves as wonderful, and in reality it may be different.
  I: So now you are saying, sorry for interrupting you again, that your experiences in the past did play a role... can you tell me, which of the four components of trustworthiness listed here, may have been affected most by such experiences?
  T2: Oh yes, competence, I thought they were... I never had any problems with any of the four, competence, integrity, benevolence, compliance, so on the four components... I can say that my experiences from the past confirm all that.

- **T4**: *I think that the colleagues with which we have cooperated, they are certainly competent, also have integrity and benevolence, and also in terms of compliance we have never had problems. So in fact this has all been positive regarding the expectations we had, the expectations you can have about another organisation to cooperate, they have come true for those components.*
  I: So in the past, you never had problems with any of these elements?
  T4: no, no, not at all (...) yes if you have good relations or good experiences with the relation, there are of course expectations toward the future to continue in the same way, in a moment in which the questions arise, they can expect that from us if they need us.

- **I**: *Now may I ask about your previous experiences with [department B], have they always been unanimously positive, or did you ever have other experiences as well?*
  T5: Yes, yes yes, only perhaps the deadline, like 'wow, we have to do this as well now', that deadline, but okay in that case we just say it can't be done, (...) and in part they have to take that into account.

- **T7**: *Like I said earlier (...) the existing experience over the years, it proved that it can result in a nice outcome. (...) It is not an easy exercise in itself, but they do really try to look at the things we deliver in a critical way. They also use our, well, the ask for input, they are also open for extra guidance or for, ... how shall I put this... they don't just take things over, they ask, and that is good in itself, but they don't just take things over, they approach it critically and that's good. It is a form of competence as well I think, because you have to be able to ask the right questions and make the right analysis, I think that is a form of competence which is present there.*

- **T9**: *Yes, and then the expectations based on previous experiences, that plays a large role in that as well.*
  I: When you look at those four items, is there one with which you had less good experiences?
  T9: (thinking) No, not really... we had good arrangement from the beginning, the way of working may have been

adapted once but… as such, they never made mistakes,… well integrity I find like yeah, it's not because one person once says something wrong that the integrity of the entire organisation is compromised, right.

- **T7**: *For us, [department B] is an organisations which in a trustworthy fashion, or about which we have the expectation that it will happen in a trustworthy fashion, about the fact that they will for us, pick up our interests of [the respondent's organisation] and give it the appropriate place, and also more than that, that they take it into account in one way or the other. That expectation is there, and the confirmation afterwards has also been there.*

8.47

- **DT1**: *well, back then it was about the numbers concerning emancipation, so diversity, people with a handicap, (…) where the reality showed that the numbers were higher than what they had extracted, (…) and I asked like 'look, this isn't right, can we change that', and the answer was 'no, we can't'. So… (laughs).*

- **DT2**: *Yes the expectations about every partners, both clients, supplier as real partner, is that you make arrangements and you know what's going to come. [Department A] has violated that trust multiple times (…) a nice example is a recent letter in which they simple mention that [department A] expects 84.000€ from [the respondents' organisation], money in fact, which [department A] for storage systems on behalf of [the respondents' organisation] in the years 2005 until 2011. And then I think: 'I know nothing about this'.*

- **DT4**: *But sometimes it took a long time, that you had to wait for six months before they could solve your problem, also if they had to do other things first, so then they set priorities (…) and the ones who yelled loudest were the first ones to sell their things…*

- **DT5**: *We are preparing a heavy migration to the cloud, we will do that next week, in which we are going to run a number of things in our business in the cloud. Of course not any confidential things. They walk in here, the horizontals, with the message 'this is unlawful. So I asked like 'okay, this is unlawful… then show me the law'. (imitates different voice) 'oh, well, yes, well… we can't show that, this is our deduction, but it is unlawful'. 'Ah well no, if it is your deduction… perhaps we should talk about it some time (…). In the end, now they are writing 'it is undesirable'. I think that is a fundamental difference.*

- **DT5**: *Those expectations that grew from previous experiences (…) It is just a chatterbox. Those kind of things. Nothing good ever came out of it. I don't see why that would be any different now.*

- **DT6**: *Yes and so expectations which grew from previous experiences in the relation, that is also true. The nice word, the progressing insight, that might be law, but that could also be elements from a relationship you build and which indeed takes a certain direction, and yes, I also said to the senior civil servant during my evaluation: the reason why it will never get any better anymore is because I saw that some things just didn't happen fairly. I can differ of opinion with somebody, by I can't handle dishonesty, intentionally doing things, and that is very difficult to undo. Your expectations really changed completely, because the last two years and a half, the difference between the start and now, that's simply do to which experience you have had in this or other relations with colleagues, that is true. But that's human.*

- **DT8**: *so negative experiences in fact, which are the basis of what I'm now saying about that organisation.*
  I: Would it be possible to give an example of such a negative experience you have had?
  DT8: *Yes, for instance, I always refer to the same, the presentation of numbers and tables without nuance, on the basis of which conclusions are reached and policy comes forth. That's the general feeling I have, yeah.*
  I: And that makes you expect that they will do it again in the future?
  DT8: *Well yes, or correct it, simply say like 'look, in this way we did it and this is what we want to do with it', that you at least have the chance, or not just the chance to say something but that something happens to it. That they say just give your comments, but we're not going to look at them when we are doing something with the numbers.*

8.48

- **I: … and is this for you, does it matter to you, who you are in contact with?**
  DT1: *Well, no, not as such, but you know, expectations which grew from previous experiences, so if you have certain experiences with somebody who did good work or did not do good work, well, that has a consequence for the choice the next time, well, not the choice, but the cooperation the next time, right.*
  I: Yes, and there are a number of people with whom you have worked well in the past…
  DT1: *Yes, certainly, certainly.*
  I: Are there also, did you have negative experiences in the past with one of your contacts?
  DT1: *Euhm, no, some projects did not go through but that was also because some things came up, (…) the people who are there now, I have a good feeling about that. (…) a good example recently, (…) we asked the question to [department A] like 'okay, how should we approach this,*

that transformation, how should we do that, and they visited us a couple of times, very good contacts, very cooperative, so only with positive experiences in our last three months.

- **DT4**: *In general pretty positive, there is a lot of expertise there as well, there is a lot of data, they have a lot of experience internally, so they look at it a lot, also when we are looking at new tools, we always first check like [department A], what do they have, or how are you working or what did you try before, because they often did a lot already.*

- **DT9**: *For me, that was not difficult to work with. They are also architects, so for me personally, that was very smooth. That was very open, that was a highway. (…)*

8.49
- **DT1**: *That might also be possible, when it comes to decisions, imagine that on the first of January 2014 you make a decision, start up a trajectory with [department A], that certain steps are taken and in June there is a new Government, which places other emphasis, and which cuts back on certain projects, or just pushes them back... so that is important in the effectively being open and vulnerable in the relationship.*
  I: Yes, so again, a political component.
  DT1: Yes, also when you are in the beginning of the Governments' mandate, it is still searching, it is still looking, so yeah...

8.50
- **I: You also indicated, the expectations from previous experiences which have grown, and you indicated there that your own expectations have never been violated in the past.**
  T10: Yes, yes,... I don't know if there is much I can add to that... the presentation about the data I have provided to them, is always clear... I don't have much to add or deduct there... it happens often after previous dialogue in a correct fashion,... so you know more or less where you will land when you provide your data... never had the feeling that data were used outside of the context for which they were requested. (…) Expectations which have grown,... I think it is also important in the future that when you have certain expectations, that you want to see them fulfilled in the future (…). So far, with the tasks that [department B] had, I don't think there was any problem but because of the fact that those were tasks that did not really interfere in your particular substantive processes, but like I said earlier, that might be different in the future (…)
  I: So your historical experience with [department B] raises certain expectations, but the fact that the framework around [department B] will change...
  T10: has the consequence that my framework of expectations will also change.

8.51
- **T10**: *It is always good to know a number of people with which you can talk in a very open way. And with open, I also mean that you sketch those data in a political context. Even though you know that they won't take it into account, that they will try to present it in an open way (…) that is highly politically charged, and that is peripheral information you also give to those people, but about which you know that they have some sort of benefit in knowing that somehow.*

- **T2**: *Relations of me personally with my contacts, yes that is important. I have a good relationship with them, it is very pleasant to work with the people of [department B] (…) which als fits in my perspective on the world like 'you can't catch flies with vinegar', and a good personal relationship with contacts, if you have that, you already went three quarters of the way. (…)*
  I: You said, it is very pleasant to work with the people of [department B]... is that a feeling you have for the Flemish administration in general or is [department B] a bit above the rest in that respect?
  T2: Well the [department B], whether they are above the rest... the people with whom I work at [department B], I like to work with them. When I think like 'ah I have to do something with [respondent's contact in department B], or with the people with whom I have worked' then I think like 'ah that's nice, I'm looking forward to that, those are nice people. ' (…) and if I see [respondent's contact in department B] and she's alone and there is time, then I'd think like alright, we can sit together and talk a bit. 'Did anything happen lately, or is there something I don't know yet'... Yeah, off the record.

- **T4**: *Personal relations with the contacts, they did play a role. Not really that I had that personal relation to begin with, but by getting to know them in other contexts or by getting info, or bringing info from [department B] to us, gave us a certain trust, a certain, yeah... intuitively perhaps like look, with those people we can... with that service we can cooperate constructively and we could perhaps, through dialogue, realise the necessary cooperation, so that was certainly important.*
  I: Yes, those personal relations, are those, would you say that you have better personal relations with the people in [department B] than in other organisations you are in touch with, or it doesn't go that far?
  T4: Yes, there are in any case... I think it is in a certain sense that attitude of the people of the [department B] whether that is only those two people or whether that is a general characteristic of that service, but there is a, yeah, they have a certain neutrality, you can also call it integrity (…)

- **I: Can you tell me some more about your personal relationship with your contact in the [department B] then... is that always the same person?**
  T7: Euhm, when we are talking about the [example of cooperative project with department B], that is the coordinator there, that's always the same person yes, but then there's a team of people who are related to it, there are a few with whom I have some better, some more contact... yes... in part those are all people who have, over the years, that group of people with whom I had most contact has remained virtually unchanged, so.

  I: So over the years, more or less the same...
  T7: Yes, between my own contacts, beyond that I have less of an insight...
  I: Yes... And do you only work in [example of cooperative project with department B] with those people or do you meet them on conferences or other social...
  T7: Perhaps important to know, one of those people, the coordinator was in our policy area before, and perhaps that contributes to us having a good bond over the years, that creates a form of trust in fact,... you know why and where, yes...
  I: Yes. And you have a good personal relation with those people.
  T7: Yes, certainly, especially with the coordinator, I know him best in that group of people.

- *T9: The personal relation with the contact person. That is not unimportant. Because perhaps the next relationship manager is somebody who wants everything on paper, and only communicates via email, that's possible. That's again something personal of course.*
  I: Are you in touch with the relationship manager beyond [example of cooperative project with department B]? Another project, or project groups where you run into each other or...
  T9: Yes in the framework of [example of another cooperative project with department B], because he is relationship manager there as well now... where else do I meet him... yes for instance, we had a celebration about our five years [the respondents' organisation] and those are people who are also invited then, of course. (...)
  I: And do you consider it important that they come there and show up?
  T9: Yes, I think so. It shows their involvement with your cause I think. Well it is an evening session, you have to give something up for it (laughs). No I think, it is also the task of a relationship manager if something like that happens, to go there, but one will be more inclined to do so than the other, I don't know.

8.52
- *DT1: [Counterpart in example of cooperative project with department A] was willing to listen to that and that contributed to us figuring out a number of things, so that was a good example (...) but there aren't really any contacts for each organisation... You ask a question, they look at it internally and then somebody is allocated. So it's not so that you always have the same person. They did it at the agency for Facility Management now, allocating account managers for each policy area or entity, and for me, that works well.*

- *DT7: Look, for this I want to say explicitly that this isn't a problem.*
  I: Yes, so I'll say it out loud for the recording, so you personal relation with contacts in [department A].
  DT7: Yes, so I did say, some information is sent to them by me, and I think that that man, that he deals with it in a good and correct way, and I don't always get what I want but that's not what it's always about, I think that man does things correctly, so that's certainly not the reason why I am careful in how I deal with [department A].

8.53
- *DT2: Not those personal things,... the personal relationship, does that say anything about expectations,... as such, with many of those people there you have great contacts. They are also really embarrassed that they have to send something like that invoice to us...*
  I: And are those good contacts going to change your evaluation of [department A] in a certain sense?
  DT2: No, no, because from the moment that they... that is the strange thing... You've got personal contacts, but at the moment they are asking something about which you think like hmmm... this could be ammunition for [department A] to coerce us towards something in the long term, it always arrives anonymously. From the senior civil servant. By letter. So that becomes, the people with whom you have contacts, none of them know anything about it. So that is the feeling like, how does all of that work over there... you can't get to grips with that.

8.54
- *DT5: Yes, the distrust, that certainly plays here, I think that plays here certainly.*
  I: That is what you mentioned earlier...
  DT5: Voila, we are going to implement a rule because we are not completely sure that they are going to do it well down there (...) Yes and that plays along of course, it goes together, right. So I'll be honest, they don't really trust us. I'm pretty sure that with a certain group, there is the conviction that the agencies are simply trying to game the system. (...) It's sometimes said, jokingly, in the pub, with a pint. But jokingly the jester speaks his truth! In a pub with a pint and then they say "haha, those agencies, the only thing you are trying to do is to pull

the wool over our eyes". And then you think, yeah, now I know enough. And 'hahahaha'… Don't leave it for me, but (laughs)… there's also much on that interpersonal level.

8.55

- **T7**: *in part those are all people who have, over the years, that group of people with whom I had most contact has remained virtually unchanged, so. (…) Perhaps important to know, one of those people, the coordinator was in our policy area before, and perhaps that contributes to us having a good bond over the years, that creates a form of trust in fact,… you know why and where, yes…*

- **T9**: *regarding competence, I already mentioned that we went there to have a look on the floor (…) So you can see how those people generate the knowledge en also get the schooling and training to explain their policies in a good way.*

- **DT9**: *He, he always makes arrangements, but always with a but. But I know that by now, yes, my personal relationship with that contact, I know that when that email arrives like ah yes… yes of course, I should have known. But that is his way of working. (…) but also because there are people there which I have known for ten years, and then you meet each other again and yes…*

8.56

- **I: Do you think [department B] (…) distinguishes itself in that respect from the two other horizontal policy areas we have asked about? Are they to some extent approaching that in a different way, is your trust connected to a certain difference?**
  T4: *Yes, it has a lot to do with (…) that the cooperation starts less from a certain position. (…) They (the other departments) see it more from certain… predispositions. If you then bring additional questions or extra needs it is usually like no, njet, no way, and that has to be compensated. So that's not, from my point of view, a department which is helpful in realising the objectives of my organisation. (…) for us, that's not a supportive policy area.*

8.57

- **DT4**: *And I think that have to be quicker in asking expertise, if there is a problem, that they should open up quicker, or throw it in the group like look, we really have that problem, we can't figure it out, are there people who want to support us, (…) and that is possible, you can't know everything, there are also problems which just are not that clear, but just say like 'okay, that is the problem and we are now working on it but we can immediately find it or…' It's not fun to admit that you can't figure it out on your own, but… that's my opinion, I don't want to blame anyone, because perhaps it is more difficult than how we see it. That is possible, but they never gave us that feedback.*

- **I: Are there possibilities for you, when you are worried about those numbers, to express that to think [department A]?**
  DT8: *well I think so, but usually you are so far along in the trajectory that it is very difficult.*

- **DT4**: *It's not evident to judge that, but they could tell us in advance like 'voila, we added that field, and it will take this long and then it'll be there. (…) I think that they don't give that feedback because they don't really know where the problem lies. (…) it is that feedback, there is very little feedback (…).*
  I: So for you it is rather unclear what you can expect from that organisation, you don't know how long it will take before you get feedback, you don't know if you will get any feedback in the first place.
  DT4: *No. Certainly not in the system they use.*

- **DT8**: *I assume that such reporting is necessary, and what I miss, that is the perspective on what happens with the information, the possibility to bring some nuances in the process, and to see afterwards that something is happening with those things. Even when they ignore them, but at least I'll know.*
  I: You miss knowing what happens with the information.
  DT8: *Yes, I think that is the core of the issue. The longer we are talking about it, the more I think that is the core.*

- **I: and is that a two-way street, are you telling them your complaints or…**
  DT9: *No, as far as I'm concerned, what they say there is 'this is how it is', and that is how it is. (…) and yeah 'why', then the answer is 'budget cuts'. But we have the feeling that they are holding the pen and are not even looking at what is behind it (…) that there are people there.*

8.58

- **T7**: *Task and role descriptions… I think it is more like rules in general, it is not due to that, that it always happens… or yeah, it might be within a certain task but I think that those two, rules and roles are pretty close together.*
  I: They are close together indeed. (…)
  T7: *It is never good I think to try and put everything in too many rules, but the big lines, or the ambiguities have to be sufficiently clear, or where frictions exist things have to be clearer… I added that, but I see those two go*

together. When you look at BBB it may be important… when you see the tasks, who does what, the personal willingness to suspend vulnerability plays there, especially regarding the organisation, that link is certainly there.

8.59

- *T10: Everything is in information systems nowadays, everything is digital, even the smallest dossier… so everyone can, if they want to, look into it, on the condition that they provide a number of guarantees, that it won't be made public for instance, because it is about penal files, so scientifically and so on everything can be looked at, no problem, so I am open and vulnerable in that respect. (…) for instance everyone can look at all the funds and the judgements which are digitalised here, all legal judgements are in a database, they can be consulted as long as they sign a guarantee that they are not made public and so on.*

- *T4: Yes. When that is a big request, like I mentioned earlier, you can make an arrangement in which it happens, because neither they nor us have half a year time, I'm giving an extreme example, to prepare something they can use.*

- *T7: Yes that formal, in part it plays a role here,… if you know that afterwards, after the informal round you have the opportunity to do it formally, so that you have clarity, that gives you some opportunities to correct things.*

- *T6: Or that they use a certain terminology which is different from what we use, and so on… education for instance, uses a different terminology than employment, and in employment there is another terminology than that of economics and so on, so from that perspective that is important to put the right emphasis (…) because I think when information comes in externally, you also have to check from which perspective it is written, numbers are numbers, and I am convinced all the data is compiled correctly, but you can prove a lot with numbers. And it is often the method by which numbers are generated… I mean, unqualified outflow, one defines it as such and another defines it in a different way.*

8.60

- *T2: Procedures always slow down. I'm not a procedure person. It is a bit, 'the cause justifies the means', right. (…) I have been creative with formal rules because otherwise… I could never have direct contacts with a cabinet but I barged in there every day. I was the only one in the entire division to know the cabinet and who could get things done in there. But actually, it is not allowed.*

- *T9: Now everything is talked over. In the end, it is… I mean, it is in the arrangement that the backoffice must have an availability of x per cent. It's not because there is a month in which that x per cent is not achieved that they will say like ah, the arrangement is violated. We can talk it through and then we will find out what was wrong, usually there is a plausible reason for that. The other way around as well, (…) we can call and say look, there is someone over there who's not having his day or there is something wrong with the service towards us. (…) And they will do something about that, but we don't have to write any long letters or anything like 'considering article so and so you are in violation of …'*

8.61

- ***I: So the rules are there, they are not bothering you, but they are also not bringing any…***
  T2: No, they are not bringing any added value to me. Really not.

- ***I: Perhaps a useful question, formal rules and arrangements, are those important according to you to take up a certain extent of vulnerability?***
  T4: Not in this context I think. When it's about other organisations perhaps, but towards [department B] it doesn't seem necessary, doesn't seem desirable.

- *T6: Because you contribute to the policy of the Flemish Government, but that does mean that you have to respect a number of rules, because that is with everyone you… the more you are open and vulnerable, the more I think it needs to be connected to a framework of correctness in which the information is also treated in a trustworthy way.*

- *T6: Well, I don't know if it always has to be so formal, that it always has to be described like that and so on. That's also always a matter of trust in part, but some things should also be considered on the level of individual dossiers. One dossier is, there is little chance that vulnerable information is opened up, in another dossier it's a different case, and I think you have to be pragmatic about it from dossier to dossier.*

- *T9: Formal rules have to be there. BUT… especially the healthy common sense is necessary and you have to be able to talk about it when a formal rule is not being respected. (…)*
  I: And so those formal rules, are they present? You know formally what [department B] has to do?
  T9: Yes, yes. And also what we have to do. So they are there. And the presence of formal rules is important, but it is not the Bible I think. And that is also important.

I: Yes, there needs to be a flexible approach with them.
T9: Yes. Yes.

8.62

- *DT4: And perhaps also that you say, rules, the presence or absence of formal rules, in a relationship in which it is clear for everyone who does what. In that sense. Because now it is like, you know something, you know the last part, but you don't know when substantive or technical things happen, who what and where something has to be decided, that is not clear to me. (...)*
  I: On the meetings you have attended, were those things clear there, who and what and where implementation would have to take place, and what they could speak about?
  DT4: hmm, no not really... the technical aspect was clear. So there we know about reporting and the implementation of the package, that was all done there, when things went wrong it was also there, but decisions for instance about there is going to be a new release, that wasn't done there. That was decided in a different forum. (...) and they missed the context to know what the consequences would be. And when those things are good and clear for everyone, I think you'll have no problem in continuing to do that centrally. I think that perhaps that is where my distrust emanates from, from not knowing how it all works.

- *I: Those formal rules, is that something, is it important that is it formally clear what you have to do, and what is going to happen with it? (...) so for instance when they ask the question for information about personnel towards you, that it is formally clear what information they are asking for, what they are going to do with it.*

  DT9: That's not clear to me. To me.

8.63

- *DT1: Well, ... well yeah, they always give a template you have to complete, so regarding uniformity that is okay, and the way in which you complete it and the correctness of that... I sometimes ask myself some questions about it regarding other entities... and I don't know if there is enough quality control at [department A] to test that.*

- *I: Are you referring to the contracts here, or are they also other rules?*
  DT2: Hmm... also, what annoys me in dialogue with many ministerial divisions, is the fact that they like to have meetings without agenda. That annoys me greatly. (...) that is, to some extent, the absence of formal rules. I you first discuss internal rules, ... and I have seen it, that you have internal rules, they are approved, and there are monthly meetings, there is an agenda, the president does this, the members do that... and after two months you notice like yeah, the internal rules are there, but nobody is sticking to them, not even the president... Then you made an attempt to formulate those formal rules but you see that those unwritten routines sneak back into it. And that does a lot.

- *I: For instance, if [department A] would say like 'we guarantee you what we are going to do with the information we have collected from you'... as sort of a formal framework... then you say that won't make any...*
  DT5: (Angry) how can they guarantee that to me? They can't! That's dependent upon their political masters... that is simply... well of course... they are close to a political... I have to be very honest in that, they are close to a political colour which is not my own. But okay, that's shouldn't play a role, but of course it does play a role. But you might have noticed that (laughs).

8.64

- *T2: The attitude of my senior civil servant regarding this relationship... the relationship toward [department B]? I don't know... (laughs)... well yeah, he doesn't know much about it. He just says like yeah 'do what you have to do and voila'. I'll take my responsibility and and he might not even know that it's done in that way (...) I can remember situations in which they say like 'yeah perhaps you should ask [department B]', so they've been here for 600 years, and soon they'll disappear, but yeah then... I... It's not because the senior civil servant will disappear, that all of a sudden I'll... no, I'm used to figure things out on my own.*

- *T9: If you trust an organisation or does not trust, that is also related to your own experiences, with those... imagine that the senior civil servant would have a huge distrust, but I have a lot of trust in them and I can motivate that... then I won't be influenced by the attitude of my senior civil servant in that (...)*
  I: Do you think that, in a certain sense, when you look at your co-workers, that you have an impact on that, in them?
  T9: I do think so. But that is something personal I think. I can't just say, because thé head of division is prepared to take an open attitude, that that is simply followed. I don't think so.

- *T6: That's certainly also important, the attitude of my senior civil servant. (...) in that sense, if your direct superior has indications to take up that cooperation with [department B] in a different way, or to build in certain*

restrictions, or to be very open or to assume maximum vulnerability and so on, yeah, that'll change your attitude of your organisation to strong extent. And it is also possible that the personal relationship between people of the [department B] and your senior civil servant, that those also have something to do with it. That is possible, do I have any experience with that? No I have no experience with that, but it is possible, of course.

8.65

- *T2: (Sigh)... unwritten routines... Yes... That's connected to those habits... Euhm, those habits, routines, habits... we always did it like that... yes... It doesn't bother me to be open or vulnerable an so on. Routines and habits, that is a bit the oil, isn't it? It runs, up until the moment that it is renewed for one reason or the other, and then we will go to a formal task description and that will be a consequence of that. It's is described what it has to be and that'll become a habit and those will become certain routines, because that is how it changes.*

- *T5: But should it be requested, then we will do that, because it is requested. (…) Yes that is how it grew and was decided, and okay if they would say like go to the [department B] and explain those numbers and discuss it in detail, yes okay, no problem. No problem at all. So something that is reciprocal and in which they are involved stimulates in part also the connection, yes. But okay, the quality of the data will not be more or less because of it. Because the quality has to be good, and we try to do good (…).*
  I: So that is a recurrent question, and you don't question the question anymore, like is it necessary, should we do that?
  T5: No, no because if they want to provide the umbrella for everything (…) then it is not up to me to question that, right?

- *T6: I've got a relatively positive feeling towards the majority of the organisations with which we cooperate. But it is important that such things grow. And the more you're in contact and there is a certain continuity, I don't know, it says routine but routine is perhaps more on auto-pilot, but that some continuity can grow, yeah that will strengthen you relationship and make that trust increase.*

8.66

- *DT4: This as well, those self-evident habits which have grown... If we are more dependent ourselves, it is questioned sooner, it looked at sooner in that case. Now, there is nobody centrally who takes that on. Perhaps there will be some considerations like well, that system, we should talk about it but there is not really an initiator who says like 'let's have a look at that, or there isn't really anyone to question the system, that is...*
  I: So it is too much of a habit to use that system to be able to question it...
  DT4: Yes, ... to question certain ways of working, whether there isn't another way. Perhaps that happens on different levels but that doesn't permeate here.

8.67

- *DT2: Those unwritten routines have grown of course, but they did not grow in the relationship, they are more in their organisation or in our organisation.*
  I: Yes... With this (routines) I do mainly mean the organisational culture, and with this (habits) the interpersonal relations that have grown between yourself and your contacts.
  DT2: Yes but it is this (routines). So that they have a meeting culture which does not lead anywhere... I mean, that isn't an official routine, it is more like an approach, a way of working.

8.68

- *I: How do you think the personal willingness exists in this relation?*
  T6: It's large! Because I think that it should be toward all organisations of the Flemish administration. You are an employee of the Flemish Government, it is usually about that studies and information you possess, because it is not about your personal, but about the information you possess, which has been generated through public means, those are also subsidies that are given by the Flemish administration, so in that sense it seems normal to me that you will do that, because it contributes to the policy of the Flemish administration.

- *T6: In other circumstances we have seen that in the past, (…) that this is a very smooth relationship, due to which there are more possibilities and more trust because the idea grows like 'we are all contributing towards the same, and we are all contributing to the same positive effect'. (…) And that's not specific to the Flemish administration, but it is an important point of attention. Because everyone always has that tendency, and that is very human, that if you make an effort in your division, in your organisation, in your policy area, that you want to reap the benefits. And you can't always do that, it is not evident, simply because there are many things that go beyond policy areas.*

- *T7: I am thinking about releasing data, which they could to show in the press in ways we don't want, or they could interpret it like we don't want to, that's why I immediately gave the example like, we don't have any bad experiences with that, on the contrary (…) also how you present that to the stakeholders, that is also a form of vulnerability, you have to see that you speak with one voice toward the outside world, as the administration. (…)*
  I: So that vulnerability is also being able to speak with one single voice?

T7: Yes, I think so, it is an expectation, but also a vulnerability. When those voice are very different, you have to make sure that find a solution. The interpretation of our perspectives, if they also fit in that story.

8.69

- *DT2: We have to, all together, we are good friends, all civil servants, for the common good and we have good intentions and we are adult people… well that is bullshit. That doesn't bring you anything, I don't need to have meetings about that. I assume that you set up a meeting to reach a result.*

- *DT5: But it all depends of course on which perspective you take. Whether you speak from the perspective of thé big Flemish administration, or you speak from the perspective of [the respondent's organisation]. And that's all connected to vision, which vision you follow. I didn't choose to be a civil servant. I don't give a shit about that, well, excuse me… I don't care about being a civil servant. I did choose to be servient, or try to be servient towards [the respondent's organisational target audience]. And for me, that's a fundamental difference.*

- *DT6: But I think the entire circus around that (around horizontal monitoring), that it is taking the upper hand… and also the entire system of 'we the Flemish administration' (…) I said I'm not speaking about Flanders, that person is a civil servant, his job is important, and if he has a 'Flemish civil servant – feeling', all the better, but don't start about 'the Flemish administration works like this and this, and you are part of that wonderful machine'.*

8.70

- *T2: Yes, the possible advantages and disadvantages for my organisation… Yes, yes of course I make that consideration. I am an individual, as a person, but I work for an organisation so I will always strive towards making sure my organisation is not damaged (…) I feel in the first place as an ambassador of the organisation for which I work, and as the ambassador I take that PR… so in the consideration of advantages and disadvantages I think they are not giving us any disadvantage, that they will only bring advantages, they are truthful in that respect, I see no signal that they would specifically want to tackle or our organisation.*

- *T4: In this relationship we have only had advantages. (…) Yes, of course you also want something, you engage in a relationship in order to try and get something out of it, or to make sure that the other does something so that it benefits you, or that something happens which facilitates it. But I think that if they would ask us something, which brings us no benefits at that time, and only costs… even that would be possible. Of course, it depends on the possibilities… imagine that they request certain numbers, without us having an advantage but also no disadvantage… that has to be possible I think. So we will certainly give it to them.*
  I: So if there is no advantage for you, but somebody has to, has to work on it for half a day to collect and transfer that…
  T4: (…) it is a bit a, when it is about limited question or about questions which cost a limited effort, you have to be able to give it to them, right. Because trust grows through that, if you give something later, than that is a kind of, well, interplay. You can give trust to them and they can trust in us, and that grows with good experiences and with cooperation (…). So I don't see it as advantages and disadvantages, we don't do that, costs and benefits perhaps if you consider it like that…
  I: To some extent, I hear that the advantages and disadvantages are not that important, but again the values of cooperation and… loyalty, which sometimes require that you accept the disadvantages.

- *T5: That is sometimes interesting, when you are working on a dossier that you can say like okay, what is the cost of Brussels, what is the cost of the province of Antwerp, and so on, and okay (…) what is the total of Brussels and education?*
  I: Ah yes… so regardless of the fact that you exchange data because you have to, you do see certain advantages in working in that way.
  T5: I requested that data once, and I also transferred it to my supervisor, okay for your information, and I'm not saying that we reached major conclusions or anything, but it was interesting to know.

- *T6: You can take a vulnerable position, but if you don't take a vulnerable position, we won't be able to use the services and the know-how that they have. Because that is like your own cocoon, we can do it, perhaps we're not that good at it, but we continue doing it, they don't have to know about it.*

8.71

- *T10: because you added the interests earlier, it is not like I'm going to hold back information or present things different because of the fact that I could be disadvantaged because of it. I'm not going to do that. Well, I'll try to be consequent, if they deal with it like that politically and they say that my position cannot be maintained any longer, well, then that is how it is, that is the choice they make politically (…) I made myself very vulnerable for a long time, and I'm now faced with the disadvantages because of it. But it never held me back to simply make data available in an open fashion.*

- *T6: Yes, of course this is the case, consideration of possible advantages and disadvantages for the organisation.*
  I: You referred to this indirectly a bit earlier, when you were speaking about the investments made here, and the effects, which are found somewhere else.
  T6: Yes, this is related to two elements, in the sense of, if we receive a certain question, well then it is not from the opportunistic perspective like what is the advantage and the disadvantage, but from the operational perspective of 'which efforts do we need to make to provide certain information'. That is not always evident. And sometimes we need to look at whether it is attainable and possible, what is the timing in which we can do this, how can we provide substance to it. (…) It is more from a reflection, it has to be achievable, because we do not have that many people available for it, so we have to see, what is the intensity, what are the equivalent we need to mobilise, is this reasonable and attainable within a preconceived timeframe.

8.72

- *DT1: Will we rather, are we starting from the results right, and from the objectives, right. And if [department A] is the best partner to realise that, we will certainly go to [department A] and indicate our needs, our requirements, our problem and ask them for help, so. (…) of course also the consideration of advantages and disadvantages for my organisation. That's why I just said, wide and open, well if that is necessary, then that is necessary, but you always have to ask yourself in which way you will go to [department A] and what may be the consequences. And that you have to consider the advantages and disadvantages for the organisation, and often that is about the advantages. So expertise, extra workforce they may deliver, in the advantage of your agency.*

- *I: So those are the advantages to keep doing it internally rather than centrally, but do you think there are any advantages to do it centrally?*
  DT4: Yes, to keep exchanging the experience. Every specific thing if you have had the experience, you can share with others. If you are doing that separately you can also do it, but then you have to be more active yourself. If you do that centrally there is a central body and you can give them information. So in order to transfer that expertise, if that is already done your can adopt things faster. So there are certainly arguments to do it centrally.

- *DT5: I think that a horizontal department, it can do very useful things, and can do things I don't have to worry about. But then it should be objectively so that they are doing those things better (…) and they should certainly not do anything we can do better, simply because we are closer to the operation. (…) a horizontal department can bring an incredible amount of added value, on the condition that it offers that added value in the place where it may have that added value, and today, that is not the case. At least not in function of ourselves! Perhaps toward the level which is steering them, that might be possible, it is possible that the minister thinks that is all fantastic, right (…) And that is for me the main reason, a consideration of the possible advantages and disadvantages for my organisation.*
  I: The main reason you say?
  DT5: That is for me the main reason, yes.
  I: Would you tell me some more about that?
  DT5: If you can win something by it, you should never refuse it. I'm not here for myself, I'm here for [the respondent's organisation]. Perhaps that is a statement in itself, I'm not here for the Flemish civil service, I don't know what that is, the Flemish civil service. I don't feel connected with a bus driver (…) and he will probably not feel connected to an IT-responsible in [the respondent's organisation]. So I don't feel connected to the Flemish administration because I don't know what that is. So I mainly try to make sure that people in [the respondent's organisation] are being supported well, with good systems and so on, and if I can get a benefit in function of that from cooperation, without having to look over my shoulder to know what they are actually doing with it, then I'll think 'yes, that's a win'. (…). They could say, "listen, from your context, what can we do for you"? That could bring a lot of benefit, but it just doesn't happen. I've been asking for years to start working on common data centres because that would bring me benefit, they would réally help us with that. It just doesn't happen because it is too difficult and the service provider can't and bla bla bla… I don't care about that, I'm now with an external data centre, that's easier, they were happy we came, right.
- *DT7: Yes, it has advantages to implement the coalition agreement and the targets in it… so does that have an added value, yes… but whether that is added value for us, that is another question, I think they are mainly the engine to implement all those decisions of the government, so that the heads-target (numerical reduction in the number of heads) is achieved because they followed up on it and so on, so I think their added value is especially toward the political level and their minister to follow up on everything, (…). We have our own people, our experts who are pulling those dossiers, so for us that does not provide specific added value (…) we don't have to do with them so much and usually it is not very positive… no, I think that we, personally as an entity don't have a lot of advantages with how [department A] works.*

- *I: And do you know what will happen with it?*
  DT9: No, or yes, we receive a letter like, you have score three or score four. And then we need to provide feedback like why didn't you give us a four, we deserved a four…

- *DT9: If data needs to be transferred, well, that goes through the senior civil servant. I'd say, we are with this many and it is like this, but now it is like 'yes, that one is seconded, we are going to add him there,... and those numbers, for them that is more advantageous, and for us, and if we put it there they might not immediately see it and... that's strategy. Because they know that some cream will be scooped off there. (...)*
I: Yes... could you, because you mentioned a number of interesting things there, could you connect them with some things listed here?
DT9: Yes, here, a consideration of advantages and disadvantages for my organisation. How can we get the best out of this? How can we write everything down so that it makes us look good? That's here, now... that is something we have been doing here for a while.

8.73

- **I: Yes... so even in the frame of what we just discussed, that there are certain negative expectations about [department A], are you still prepared to take an open, vulnerable position.**
DT2: Yes. Of course. It is only when you notice that it is the same old song, that you close down. If you go to the presentation of [new horizontal project led by department A], you think like okay, who knows what this might mean for us. If they do great efforts for that project, we might join in, why not... but if you then notice that they do not have any kind of focus at all and don't know what you are going to do really, then I think, I am wasting my time here. So you always give everyone a chance.

- *DT9: I was just talking about it only yesterday. In the past, we used to work for our client, the schools. That was our main task. Schools, dossiers, plans, visitations, and now it is like we are spending 30 to 40 per cent of our time, (...) in objectives and organisational plan, and audits... It takes so much time, so much time, enormous, enormous amounts of time. That didn't use to exist (...) I think too much administration is going towards the administration. And our reason to be here, to help schools with the little money available, that we can focus on that. If we would have an entire week to work on our dossiers,... an entire week, that would be lovely! But it is like, we are going from management-agreement (beheersovereenkomst) to corporate plan (ondernemingsplan), to long-term corporate plan (langetermijn-ondernemeingsplan), to objectives, then to audits on the objectives, then reporting, intermediary reporting, man man man... we are doing it alright, but I think it can stop now. They don't have to go much further in that, because... the reason why we are doing this work, could suffer from it.*

8.74

- *T2: I don't see any signal in them that they would specifically try to tackle our organisation. (...) I don't think they have an interest in behaving opportunistically towards us. (...) The only thing they can win is that they give work away to us, but the risk is that we won't do it well or that we will do it differently than them... on the other hand, all the templates, they want to make those, so that is a lot of work but it gives them the control, but if you then want to go a bit further, we need to do it. But it is not opportunistic, I don't think so.*

- *T4: Yes, my knowledge, that plays as well of course. My knowledge about the interests they have in behaving opportunistically toward us. Yes, they don't have that. They have no interest to behave opportunistically.*

- *T9: Now I have to see, with the people of the [specific division in department B], you will still block them to protect your own shop. (...) of course, if you are starting with dossier-specific information, or you are going to make that database available to them, in just a short time you'll have lost that work. Well, you have to make sure that you have a reason to exist in your own organisation. And sometimes, that is a consideration, sometimes that has to do with, am I going to be very open here or... be careful with what I say... well, within the relationship we have, I'd say, we are relatively open. But there are some things you won't tell them. You can't be naïvely open, that's what I mean. (...) yes that will determine my willingness to be open... my knowledge about the interests they have to behave opportunistically toward us (...) now I'm not really thinking about [specific division in department B] or [department B], but in general (...) also now with the budget cuts and the budgeting, if they take part of your budget away and they put it in a different policy area, well then you've lost it, but there's also staff behind that... so that goes very far. It's not only about money that's gone, but a measure leaves, the people who worked on that measure, they need to be reallocated or let go... These are exciting times (laughs). So therefore, you are more careful.*

8.75

- *DT2: Ehm, for [department A] other than that, concretely about the data they request and why you have distrust then, is when they ask the question about your investment costs and your operationalisation costs, then you know, that if you give them the unfiltered numbers, it will always be used in the most negative way possible in order to say "we told you so, If you would have been working in our outsourcing-contract, it would have been way cheaper". (...) So then you just become vééééry careful in filling out the different boxes. (...) if you, within the reporting framework they provide for certain KPI's, if you are blindly comparing certain categories that look like each other, and perhaps introduce all kind of weird ratio's that could give rise to interpretations at their side that could put us in a weird light. So you try to translate that to their way of thinking, and if you formulate that*

negatively, then that means their way of thinking as well as their hidden agenda. (...) They do have a hidden agenda, right. They got the task from their minister to prepare an outsourcing contract that has to be available for all entities, that has to cover all needs for all entities, and they try to make it work, so from their perspective that makes perfect sense. It's just that the consequences are not always as usable for the users.

- **DT5**: *It's not,... it still does not mean that they use those findings to do all kinds of things with them on the cumulative level. And only those things which fit their story, because when we provide findings which do not fit their story, then they don't matter. It is not because you take a certain ideological direction, which is clear, that you don't have the obligation to think rationally anymore.*
  I: Now you are referring again to the motives of the...
  DT5: *Absolutely. I am absolutely referring to the motives of the efficiency gains in all systems. Absolutely (...) And there are quite many initiatives in the past years which are not rational, but ideological. And that's not okay. You can't take a decision about systems and ways of working and about structures on the basis of an ideology. You can take a decision about a policy from an ideology. But it is absurd to say 'my ideology is that this supplier...' well, that may also be your ideology, but I think that is a questionable ideology.*

- **I: So that opportunism is there, but it is also normal that it is there...**
  DT6: *I don't think that that's abnormal, that's of all times, and you shouldn't act all surprised... you should just make sure that you play the game fairly. (thinking) you have to play fair, but only to the extent in which you opponent plays it fair. Of course, that's a vicious circle. Well, I also know that, if I think that you're not playing fair then I won't do that either. Yeah that's just not possible. But... now, you know, that's also due to political discussions. Which document has to cut back more than another, that has to do with the strength of your minister as well.*

8.78
- **T10**: *I know that I make myself very vulnerable when I provide information about enforcement. For me, personally I mean. Really my personal position (...) and I have taken a very vulnerable position for a very long time, and now I am facing the disadvantages of that. But that has never stopped me from openly making data available.*

- **I: Is there an element of vulnerability in your interaction?**
  T4: *in the extent to which... that certain information is transferred about certain ministers or about certain cabinets to the [department B] there is a certain vulnerability we take, yes. But without the expectation that it will be abused by the [department B] in fact.*

- **T6**: *If you already feel that the question is a bit sensitive, we will in all circumstances let our cabinet know about exchange of information. (...) If it is sensitive information of course, not the exchange of data that could be almost frequent, that has to be updated and so on, but that is also sensing like 'this is a bit of a sensitive question'.*

- **T7**: *You have to see that you speak with one voice toward the outside world, as the administration. That is also a form of, almost of expectations, but the willingness to, yeah... when you go to the [department B], you are dependent upon their position. (...) You expect that your opinion is taken along when they go to externals, well, that is a bit (...) that is in part an expectation, but also at the same time a vulnerability.*

8.79
- **DT5**: *you don't know what will happen with your data in the end, right.*
  I: So if you'll allow me to go back to a previous card, here, u say, I don't know what happens to our data, are you then talking about previous experiences, for instance that you see that something bad is happening to your data, that there are certain disadvantages...
  DT5: *absolutely... They use data we provide to say how we have to manage or personnel, for instance.*

- **DT6**: *(...) this minister has some distrust towards the system of social housing, so were are heading towards difficult times. That means, are you going to take a vulnerable position? I assume not. Because we are now in an environment, if we take up a vulnerable position, we will be eaten. So we have to organise ourselves as a well-oiled machine, but we can not show any weaknesses. We have to do that well, so that they won't attack us there, and when they ask for extra things, we will see if we still have some time left.*

- **I: So first I'd like to ask, taking a vulnerable position towards [department A], is that something you, in which you can recognise yourself, that you are taking a vulnerable position to some extent?**
  DT7: *Euhm... on the whole as an entity I think that that is simply the case, simply when you provide information, I have the feeling that we are making ourselves vulnerable toward [department A] because we know, yes that is being used to decide on things which will impact us. And yes, in this context that's a negative impact, that is budget cuts, that is reducing function, so... vulnerability I think is an element of the relationship.*

8.80

- **T2**: *because somewhere I do believe a bit in mirroring. If you assume a position of openness and vulnerability and integrity, chances are higher that the other will do the same. If you place yourself behind a wall, then things will go... there is a lot of reciprocal interaction. If one of the two shuts the doors (...) so the trust they show in us. Yes, they trust us, [department B], yes. So because they trust us, I am willing to make myself or my organisation open, vulnerable, and cooperative and take that position.*

- **T4**: *This is also not unimportant, the trust they show in us in this relationship.*

- **T5**: *But okay, there is trust... there is not a lot of contact but there is trust. I don't have much more to add there.*

- **T6**: *So that is to me also very important, that they know that you will provide valid, trustworthy, correct, objective information, and that that trust is present in your partner. That you're taken seriously and experienced, that you are in fact an ally in function to a common objective.*
  I: and if I understand you correctly [department B] does provide that signal.
  T6: *That signal is there, if we get the question is that from a sort of an intuition, like okay, you are partly a partner in providing information, or in searching together. (...)*
  I: do you have the feeling that [horizontal department B] does that more than other organisations in the Flemish administration, giving that trust, supporting that sense of alliance?
  T6: *I have a relatively positive feeling about that for the majority of the organisations we cooperate with. But it is important that something like that can grow. And the more you are in contact and that there is a certain continuity (...) that some continuity can grow, yes, that will also strengthen your relationship and make that trust increase.*

- **T9**: *Yes, then the trust they show in the relationship. It's bidirectional in fact, right, trust in the relationship.*
  I: Yes. How do they show that?
  T9: *Well simply I think also in the way that we don't always need to write it down when there is a problem, simply picking up the telephone that you say like 'is there a problem somewhere', or 'we can't get in touch there, is there somewhere a meeting we don't know about, can we forward the call, can't we forward,...*
  I: So they contact you very openly...
  T9: *Yes, yes. And we are also invited to have a look at the way they work there, on the floor in fact (...).*

8.81

- **DT1**: *I also think the trust they show, right, so the way in which to seek rapprochement... if you ask the question, then it is okay, right, they react on the short term, they ask for an appointment or an intake-conversation, and they expect also from ourselves a certain input, and show trust that it will be okay. (...) If they also take a vulnerable or open position, it does have a certain stimulus for the other party, and also the other way around.*

  I: And is that what they do right now?
  DT1: *I have the feeling that they do, yes. Well, they do share, that what they know,... well I don't have the feeling that they're holding anything back or... no.*

- **DT2**: *The trust they ... no, imagine that they would have a lot of trust in us, that they would come to us with a lot of pleasure, well that would be an extra reason to be willing. So in that sense, that contrast between those two... so it's not really low, but the high, if they have a high trust, it's an extra motivator.*

- **DT6**: *I notice that right now, how many discussions, meetings we need to have with other division about certain processes or parts of a certain process. Yes, then you can see in the one that willingness and in the other you can't. And in the one where there is less willingness, that just doesn't go as smooth.*

8.82

- **T2**: *But their values, for as far as I know the values of [department B], those are the values of the Flemish administration, that is loyalty, openness, integrity, those are the values of a mature organisation which respects itself, so yes okay, I can identify with that. You are not going to bash each others' heads in, you are polite, you take each other into account, self-development, and yeah...*
  I: Do you think this may determine your own willingness to assume an open position?
  T2: *Yes because if those values would be very different from what I can find myself in, then I would not open myself up like that. That is the atmosphere in which we work. Imagine that they're blood thirsty peasants, then I would think pfu, [horizontal department B], I don't know when I'm going to consult them but (sigh) they're not really making me enthusiastic.*

- **T7**: *Second, that is the way in which, that is not personal, that is from the organisation, they way in which they implement that waste- and materials policy, whether they do that according to the perspective we have, or*

according to a perspective we agree with, and that they want to mention that according to the perspective we want to present, or show towards others, that is a form of that risk. (...) But especially, the way in which that person approaches that. This isn't directly distrust, but the approach has to suit you as an organisation. And if the vision of that person about waste policy, materials policy, soil policy, is just a tad different, then it becomes more difficult to get that in our own way at [department B]. (...)

I: *Before we go on to that last dimension there is one thing I'd like to get back at... You said earlier, the contact with that person on the other side has to be in line with our own perspective... and I thought about this aspect right here, the extent to which value identification exists between yourself and your contact in [department B]. Is that something which matters, or would you not put it like it is stated here?*

T7: *Yes, that is perhaps, that is an important one, but those values, that sounds a bit weighty like that... see, you need vision, if there is vision, than that's an important... but you said to indicate the most important one, yes, that would fit perfectly, well... Yes, but that can also be important for the previous dimension (perceived trustworthiness).*

8.83

- **DT2:** *The extent to which I can identify with their values... boh... that might play but that is pretty hypothetical. I would be able to think of an example, but if I notice that somebody is working in an entirely different direction...*
  I: *Imagine, a value like 'we civil servants', 'the Flemish administration', 'we are one single organisation', is that a value with which you may identify?*
  DT2: *No, no, because I notice that that is a value that's nothing but window dressing. In practice that's primarily used to do nothing. So that, no, that is in fact also... those values are important.*

- **DT5:** *... well of course... they are close to a political... I have to be very honest in that, they are close to a political colour which is not my own. But okay, that's shouldn't play a role, but of course it does play a role. But you might have noticed that (laughs). (...) well... boh... in what I just said, this plays a role... so the extent to which I can identify with their values, that is the entire story of why are we here.*

- **DT9:** *The reason why we are doing this work, could suffer from it.*

8.84

- **T4:** *Of course, those expectations that have grown from the previous, that also plays a bit.*

- **T6:** *Yes that is also important to me... the expectation which have grown... because, eh, when you build a certain connection with organisations, here [department B], you know from both sides what you can expect. That means also that you know that if you make yourself vulnerable, that there won't be any abuse, although there will be use. Otherwise, it doesn't bring you anything either (...)*
  I: *Okay, can I just ask you, so your expectations in the relationship, historically, can I assume that they have never abused your vulnerable position in [horizontal department B]?*
  T6: *I can't say I have ever experienced that, no, absolutely not.*

- **T7:** *I am thinking about releasing data, which they could to show in the press in ways we don't want, or they could interpret it like we don't want to, that's why I immediately gave the example like, we don't have any bad experiences with that, on the contrary (...). If you can fall back on previous experiences which are positive, both in cooperation as in results, and so on, yes, that's an argument to say yes, we will continue with that, and it makes you, there is a personal willingness, or from your organisation a willingness has grown to continue working together. (...)*
  I: *Did you ever have a counter-indication in your previous experiences that they ... or that something happened with the data you exchanged, that it appeared in the press, that there... that you, that the risk became a reality?*
  T7: *(thinking) ... No... not in that respect, in the sharing of information... No.*

- **T9:** *When am I ready to assume an open position... if I have good experiences, with the relationship. Can I already add that? (...) If you trust or do not trust an organisation, that also has to do with your own experiences... with those... imagine that the senior civil servant would have a huge distrust, but I have a lot of trust in that and I can motivate that... then I won't let the attitude of my senior civil servant affect me. (...)*
  I: *Did you ever have bad experiences with [department B]?*
  T9: *No not really. I didn't have this much contact with them before... no.*

8.85

- **T2:** *With those other projects I had a very good feeling in terms of openness, when I look at the [project with a third party private sector bureau contracted by department B], I'll take a more crude position. (...) They were so rude, but really really insolent (...) I thought that was too crazy to be true, and then I thought, I take an open, dependent position and so on, but if you then have to work with those people of [name of the corporate identity bureau contracted by department B], they work with [department B] and [department B] has to say like 'that's*

enough', but those people don't care about that.

I: And when you engage in new projects with [department B] or that bureau, do you take those negative experiences along, as baggage?

T2: Absolutely, yes yes. I have a problem with those people. A big problem. (...) Because that cooperation was simply unimaginable. They did not comply to prior arrangements, they were so rude (...) like 'boy you don't have to tell us how to do this because we know better anyway. And were are with [department B] and we have a budget of x million euro's so you don't have to tell us what to do'. I mean yeah....

8.86

- *DT1: hmm, also those expectations, if you have had good experiences with it in the past or bad experiences, that will affect your willingness to make yourself open, right.*

  I: Yes... Could you give me an example of a good and an less good experience in the past regarding that vulnerability?

  DT1: Well a good experience, recently with [a government-wide reform project led by department A],(...) we asked [department A] like 'okay, how should we do this, that transformation, how should we do that', and they came by a couple of times, very good contacts, very cooperative, so only positive experiences in the last three months.

  I: Yes. Can you perhaps, looking back to the moment you completed our survey, give an example of a bad experience you have had?

  DT1: well, it was about [the collection of certain organisational information by department A], in which the reality showed that the numbers were higher than the ones they had extracted (...). And then it is good if you, as an entity, can make some adaptions. I also understand that there is a certain method, and that it needs to be followed by everyone, but sometimes the reality is different than those things, and there are people who slip through the net. (...) So I think there was some frustration back then...

  I: And did they acknowledge that?

  DT1: No, I asked like look, that's not right, can we change that, and the answer was no, we can't. So... (laughs).

- *DT5: When a number of people I know say 'okay, we would discuss that in an informal conversation, but we will not do anything with that', then I think that it will be the case. But it really depends very much upon who that is, and of course, what previous experiences with that person were like.*

- *DT6: Yes, definitely this one... definitely. When you have noticed two or three times that agreements were not kept, ... you don't open up anymore (...) expectations that grew from my previous experiences with the relationship, that is true*

- *DT7: I think, if you expand it to the staff, they are also careful, considering experiences from the past, it's not like we don't want to, but you're afraid to give all kinds of things because they wrong analyses in the past. That is the feeling I think. The feeling for members of the staff and so on.*

8.87

- *DT1: When you have noticed in the past that you confidently do or say things, you stick your neck out, and then it is abused or not, well then next time you will effectively do it less, your behaviour. The willingness may still be there, but you may say one time, but not two times.*

  I: Yes,... you said, abuse...

  DT1: Well, yes, abuse... that certain things are promised which are not completed afterwards, rules that are not followed, or agreements that are not kept. That might also be possible, when it comes to decisions, imagine that on the first of January 2014 you make a decision, start up a trajectory with [department A], that certain steps are taken and in June there is a new Government, which places other emphasis, and which cuts back on certain projects, or just pushes them back... so that is important in the effectively being open and vulnerable in the relationship.

- *DT6: By saying 'yes guys no problem, I've got somebody' (...) I stopped doing that, right, because I always ended up with the short straw. You can only do that in an organisation where everybody thinks like that. I also told that to the senior civil servant, like 'I started doing that, but this, I'm not doing it anymore'. So willingness to make myself vulnerable, yes, in the beginning, but that's over now.*

8.88

- *T2: I get along well with the people of [department B], I think those are people with integrity and they are pleasant to work with (...) sometimes I have to pull and push to get something out of them but as such, they're not bad people. No and we can have a good laugh every now and then... No I've got a good relationship with them (...).*

  I: So it's a pleasant relationship, not a hostile relationship you have with your contacts, but it is also no rich exchange of...

  T2: No no no. It has its limits, we are not going to say like 'ah how is it going with the kids, do you go on holidays',

that... except perhaps the occasional small talk, when it rained for four days or something like 'good thing the weather is nice', (...)

- **T9**: *Now with the relationship manager of [service within department B] I've got a good relationship, I've got the feeling I can trust him.*

- **T4**: *Yes that personal relationship with the contact person, that is certainly again important.*
  I: In a different way or in the same way as how we discussed about it earlier (regarding perceived trustworthiness).
  T4: *In the same way, yes.*

- **T5**: *The contact with [department B] is rather limited, but if it would be more extensive, those bonds would be closer, and it would be, it might be more fun, but that won't change anything about the quality of the answer.*

- **T7**: *We are always talking about trust in an organisation, but an organisation consists of people. Who do all kinds of things, they all have their own approach in a number of cases. And it is really striking how there are serious differences between that in fact. I spoke about those intermediaries earlier, (...) sometimes it is the personal touch that is just a tad different. In openness or in protection of certain things, which we or which I find evident that they are open, but that it is interpreted differently by the counterpart.*
  I: Yes. And you feel that your own approach to the organisation, that it depends a bit on who is the person on the other side of the line?
  T7: *Yes, it is actually almost a peripheral condition, especially when the contacts are not direct, that the channel is sufficiently open. That counterpart (...) that can't be underestimated in cooperation, and what also creates the trust and the willingness to, personally perhaps not as much, but certainly as an organisation, to assume a dependent and open position toward [department B].*

- **T9**: *My personal relationship with the contacts... I think that is highly determinative for an organisation, whether you trust the person as such. You can have a person you distrust without reason to distrust the organisation... and the other way around. Also the openness of the counterpart is important. Both internally in him or her, as in... well, if they, as relationship manager have to act toward other organisation, it is important to have that 'click'.*

8.89

- **DT1**: *Yes, well so I'm also going to put this forward (interpersonal relationship). This is an issue... the more you cooperate, the faster you will pick up the phone and you just call them, of course. (...) but I do notice that there is a difference between me and my colleague. My colleague who came from there, who know people there, about which she also says like 'ah those old crocodiles over there...' and now there are, well, new young people, a fresh wind is blowing, and that appeals so... I think that has something to do with it.*
  I: Do you mean that your colleague is more inclined to be open and vulnerable...
  DT1: *No no, less. He came from there, knows that organisation, knows also who is working there... perhaps he had conflicts in the past with people over there, and then that willingness is smaller... if there are new people, that provides the opportunity to build a relationship, of course.*

- **DT5**: *(...) That's personal. That's personal. There are people to whom I'll never show the back of my tongue... and there are people of which I think we did a number of nice projects together.*
  I: and specifically the people you are in touch with for these kinds of interactions with [horizontal department A]?
  DT5: *Both, both.*
  I: Both positive and negative?
  DT5: *Both positive and negative, absolutely, yes.*

- **DT6**: *(...) Yes, I'll say it again, you can see that, and it shouldn't be allowed, but you can't get rid of that... But the success of a mission or a task, certainly if you can't (...) turn off the human factor, then it will succeed or fail with the human factor. And that has to do with the affinity for somebody, and collegiality, and and... it is a negative expression, but I don't mean it like that: 'give a little, take a little'. You only give something to someone if you know you can get something back. So that's what we'll do.*

- **DT7**: *That is something, if I, if I really trust somebody, and I have a good relationship with them, and if they always process their dossiers well, I'll always be more willing to provide more information.*
  I: Yes, so there that personal relationship is... did it ever happen or can you give an example of that, perhaps?
  DT7: *(...) I followed up those dossiers with [name of counterpart boundary spanner in department A] and he was critical, but I thought that that was justified, and in the end he also take us concerns into account (...) so that it was correct. So I take that along as a positive element in my relationship with [department A], like okay, you can work with that man. And that is how the world works I think. The same goes with [department C] because there*

are a few people who take into account what you say, and with whom you can make good deals, then you'll give more information, that is trust they have managed to compel.

- **DT9**: *I think this is important, if I have a good relationship with my contacts… if I have a good contact, and we do right now, but it is always a different contacts so there is a but … but if you have seen that person once and you've been around the table with them… I think that is important.*
  I: Yes. And that contact of yours, you know them?
  DT9: *I got to know them in the working group we established here, that is how I got to know them.*
  I: And is that always the same person?
  DT9: *Yes, and there are also new ones, so yes,… for me that is important.*
  I: And that relationship is good, there are no…
  DT9: *Yes, that relationship is good,… but he is only doing his job, right.*

8.90

- **DT1**: *Yes. It's like I say, lately I only have had positive experiences with [department A] but that is about personal contacts, while when it's about the data, that goes via email, via senior civil servants, and they just tell me like by then we need this and that.*

- **DT2**: *If it is really, of course, a really bad… but I don't have a really bad relationship with those people over there. It is really with, I'd say with the framework, the culture over there, the direction they are trying to give to IT, … but it's not because I know one of them better and he invites me for a meeting, that I would accept then…*

8.91

- **I: You have just indicated, they are the same people since a number of years with whom I'm in touch. If those people would change, somebody new takes their place, somebody leaves the organisation and is replaced and you have to continue the interaction with that new person… would that change how open and vulnerable you are willing to be?**
  T7:Yes, that is possible, in part. Because at that moment, you don't always know, like I just said, it's a bit of a search, a wait how they deal with processing data, with the cooperation… that is a bit of my observation regarding our department. How different an approach can be, according to the counterpart you have.

- **T6**: *As a head of division, I also emphasise that towards my people, try to build a warm relationship with your contact, so that it is not merely an email exchange but that you also know like what kind of a person is that, what do they expect, what is the level of the communication, in which way does he deal with the information he receives internally, so that is extremely important.*
  I: Your contact in [department B], is that, not just for you but for the entire organisation, is that always the same person or is that in a small team of the same people or…
  T6: No that's not always the same person, that often depends on what kind of question arrives, so that changes now and again. But then it remains important to give have a sort of, relationship is too strong of a term, why is that too strong of a term, because it is not like we contact [department B] every three weeks, but still it is the intention, like try to build a relation with them so that you have a limited number of contacts and that you also know like okay, I can also ask something, and I can receive a clear answer to that, and that increases taking up vulnerability. When those are people you don't know at all, of whom you have never heard, we will be more reserved, and that context will be even more important.

- **DT2**: *I'll interpret it as my initial willingness, because I think, when you already have a relationship, you will not care much about rumours because you have your own perception. I can't imagine that there are people who would completely ignore their own perception and start following rumours.*

9.92

- **T10**: *What I do have a problem with, is if those data are then used in a new sort of relationship of dependency. That I'll be dependent again upon those data. I think that they can be processed, that they can come back to our organisation, that we can reflect about them, that we can take up things in them and that we can start doing something with them, but not if that is considered in the sense of 'and now we will develop a central policy that is then dictated to the entities'. If that is what is meant with dependent, I'll be far more reluctant about it.*

8.93

- **I: okay, can I deduce from this that whenever you get a request by [department B] to share information with them, that you'll always do it without any problems?**
  T5: Uhm, well, they can ask whatever they want, but eventually there's a check with the head of division like are able we do that, are we allowed to do that, do we have the time to do that right now? (…) I mean, they can request (information about) on sensitive matters or yeah, it's just, that has to be checked.
  I: (…) could you give me an example of such a sensitive matter?
  T5: in principle [department B] is… requests by [department B]… well I've never experienced it, so I can't see what [department B] could ask wrong, as a manner of speaking, but it can happen sometimes that journalists

ask something, or that it's on (information) on the level of individual students, or that it is in too much detail, that we have to also consider the law on privacy and so on, in that way.

- *T7: It is the importance of the distinction between formal and informal. Informally you often speak on your own behalf, in your personal name. You have to allow the possibility I think, especially in discussions about the strategy you have to be able to think with a broad scope and so on, decoupled from all strategies and interests, if you can call it like that.*
  I: Yes, ... and when the moment comes to speak on behalf of the organisation, then that formal...
  T7: Then you have to check that, at that moment, and then you have to make sure that you are speaking as an organisation, because those are also political documents. Or, it almost always ends in a political document, or a document that is presented by the administration to the political level, and requires political validation.

8.94

- *T4: Of course you'll see the reflex in the framework of information security, can we transfer this information, so we have a responsible person for information security in our organisation, so that is just something but of course we consider it because information security is not just something only for the person in charge of the process, but it has to resound throughout the organisation.*
  I: and that information security, do you mean... Is that mainly regarding the legal framework, or is that a soft value of security as such?
  T4: hmm well making data available, that might pose a problem of privacy, so it is mainly in that respect (...) we have quite some data available, in the framework of [specific example of environmental/agricultural policy within the respondent organisations' competence] for which it is forbidden by decree to disseminate them (...) perhaps more, but I'm saying it in reference to specific contexts, the absence or presence of formal rules in the relationship, so it'll be a bit more formal.
  I: Yes... So the point in the decree you were referring to, can you give another concrete example?
  T4: But so, yes when I'm talking about those data, those specific data are not a subject of what [department B] does specifically, so they are not requested by [department B]. And if it were that they would be requested, it would be at a very high level of abstraction. The level of Flemish, Flemish indicators, and certainly not on the level of the individual farmer or municipality or such.

8.95

- *T10: It often happens informally yes, so the questions that are made are clear, and then you know what you have to give, but it is to a large extent informal, in the sense that when there are questions regarding the provided data, that the phone is picked up, it is asked, something is quickly jotted down in an email, so it is not formalised in discussion meetings, and I don't think that would be necessary. (...) The only exception is the one I referred to earlier, when I really have to provide data about criminal dossiers and so on, yes, then it needs to be formalised, and I can't get around that, and they will have to respect that.*

8.96

- *I: Okay, so you say, we make ourselves vulnerable toward [department A]... but do you have any choice in doing that, or is that just a given?*
  T4: That's a given, point. It has always been like that and it is not even questioned anymore, it is simply like that. (...)
  I: There's no getting out of it, in some sense?
  T4: Difficult, difficult, because that would mean that you really have to do everything yourself. We could do that, but then you'd have to say that you can deliver exactly the same service they can deliver. And you can't do that on the short term, it's not that evident, so in fact there's no getting out of it (...). That just grew like that, the entire situation, we're not always thinking about it to change certain things or... perhaps they want to think about it but they are not spending much time on it... so it just grew like that or nobody wants to pull the initiative or spend the time on it...

- *I: Of course, do you have a whole lot of choice in whether or not you work with [department A] in their data collection?*
  DT8: Choice, of course you can always say like 'what they are asking here, I'm just going to randomly fill that in'. Of course, that would be a very abnormal attitude, I don't even want to think about doing that... but are you forced... Yes... there I'll also compare it to a large international company, also there all divisions have reports about how all kinds of subdivisions work... That's how I see it in this framework, so you could manipulate it, but it would be weird to do that, wouldn't it? So.

8.97

- *I: The attitude of my senior civil servant, in this case, that is yourself, do you think perhaps that your attitude has a large influence on the position your co-workers take toward [department B]?*
  T10: Ah yes, in that sense it could play a role. I think they do know that I'm open in that relationship toward the [horizontal department B] so that they don't have to wonder about the moment in which there is a direct question towards them, they will know like 'that's coming from [department B], there is no problem in providing those data'.

- *I: okay, can I deduce from this that whenever you get a request by [department B] to share information with them, that you'll always do it without any problems?*

  T5: Uhm, well, they can ask whatever they want, but eventually there's a check with the head of division like are able we do that, are we allowed to do that, do we have the time to do that right now? (…) So in other words, yes, it is possible that we don't have the time for it, it is possible that it is an impossible request, it is possible that we have it but that we are not allowed to communicate it, because it is sensitive information, but I've never come across that, right. Not towards the [department B], what I'm saying now is not just the [department B] but all kinds of organisations that might contact us, it is always like can we do it, are we allowed to do it and do we have the time to do it.

- *T6: You could, because first and for all, you check within your organisation, in the framework with your senior civil servant or you board of directors, or possibly with your own department or your minister, your parent minister, (…) that is in part some loyalty, toward you own organisation and toward your own structure in which you find yourself in the Flemish administration. (…) Yes, sometimes I have the tendency to… well, perhaps with the necessary clarification that could be communicated, but I don't have any problems in not communicating it at that very moment. If again, if the reasons can are in line with that framework and that can be demonstrated. (…) the underlying argumentation is important in that respect, and I think it is especially important toward yourself, and toward you own people, that you can frame that. Why don't we do something? Why are we not going to do it now? But I don't have a problem not doing it. Well, I mean, to follow what is in line with your department, your board of directors, your minister. I have no problem with that, but the explanation is important.*

8.98

- *DT2: Yes, that goal-oriented, our senior civil servant is highly sensitive to that. He also insist that people only participate in working groups or projects if there is something very tangible in it for us. If we are coerced to participate, it's a different story. But then it is logical, from his perspective, that he will ask that us to try and get everything out of it, or to spend as little time as possible on it(…) It depends on the extent to which I have control over that relationship, whether my organisation will try to influence the relationship to a stronger extent. (…) it is also the feeling like, 'if there is nothing in it for our organisation, it will only cost us money, so it is placing the burden at [the respondent's organisation] and the benefits in another organisation. Which might even work for a different minister than ours, than his, so he has no interests in that. Now, that is mainly the senior civil servant. The management, as a group, is less explicit in that respect. But that is logical, he is supposed to set all that out. So in that respect, it is a personal, but it is one in which you are clearly steered by your superior.*

- *DT4: The attitude of my senior civil servant, boh… well yes, that is just, they go along in how we think but it is not really their thing, it is something extra they are following up on, so they don't really do much with it, in that respect that isn't really something…*

- *DT5: We are here again with these (advantages and disadvantages for the organisation) and the extensiveness of how the question is being answered will have a lot to do with that. But the attitude of the senior civil servant is fundamental, to me, for those advantages and disadvantages for the organisation. And if I'm not sure about it, then it will be the subject of a conversation with the boss, but to me, that is thé consideration.*

- *DT6: (Laughs) that (the respondents' refusal to exchange information) is accepted here, not with open arms, no, not at all (laughs), ah no, because it is something they decided, and if one doesn't join in… that is annoying. That is annoying. But yes, I'll organise it myself.*

  I: Yes… and they cannot force you to do it…

  DT6: If the big boss tells me 'you have to do it', then so be it. He is the only one who can do that.

8.99

- *T4: Yes here, but that is rather theoretical, the attitude of the responsible minister regarding our organisation… the leadership of our organisation might interfere, but I don't really know if that would play a role in this case… It probably wouldn't… the question hasn't occurred but we would do that if, in the extreme case it could be that we have to give feedback to the minister, but that hasn't occurred yet, so I don't know if that applies, or if that would be relevant for what [department B] needs.*

- *T6: (…) imagine for instance a policy of a minister which is in full development, and that the data you possess (…) they are still fragmented, a first interpretation and so on, I can imagine that the minister says like 'okay, it's to early to communicate these data, it is too early in the framework of my policy and we have to wait before we communicate about this externally. And then I think you should respect that.*

8.100

- *DT4: The attitude of the minister, yes, he only cares about the cost of the picture, (…)*

- **I: The attitude of the responsible minister, when we look at the minister for your policy area, do you think that plays a role how you, toward [department A],...**
  DT8: it's very early to say anything about that... when I think back about the previous minister, there hasn't been with her, or with her cabinet, ever been any suspicion about numbers we have produced or provided... I can also imagine that a minister or a government as a whole must consider this as a very important source of information to take decisions about their own administrative machinery. So I assume that the collection of this kind of data, that they also want that this is done in a correct way, that what they receive, that that is what they expect. (...) that they can trust the report they see there, with all the right accents in it.

- **I: Does the minister ever admonish you to be more careful in sharing information, or to share more information?**
  DT9: Our minister? No. No. Not as far as I know. They give us work, make comparisons, make this, make that, the things they used to do in the cabinets.

8.101

- **I: I know, just now with these two aspects (salient norms of political and administrative leaders) you argued that, it might be more important when it comes down to actual behaviour of the organisation, so these to are a bit more central than in the previous...**
  T7: Yes, these come forward a bit more, at a certain moment, you have a certain trust and you are going to discuss certain things as well, but effectively, especially in that formal round there is a superior, my senior civil servant, can they find themselves in what is going out, is that in line with the strategy of the organisation itself?

- *T8: The attitude of the responsible minister, that is something in which you partake automatically, when they tell you, you have to take a dependent position, and you have to, then you do that, simply because you have to.*

8.102

- **I: okay, can I deduce from this that whenever you get a request by [department B] to share information with them, that you'll always do it without any problems?**
  T5: Uhm, well, they can ask whatever they want, but eventually there's a check with the head of division like are able we do that, are we allowed to do that, do we have the time to do that right now? (...) So in other words, yes, it is possible that we don't have the time for it, it is possible that it is an impossible request, it is possible that we have it but that we are not allowed to communicate it, because it is sensitive information, but I've never come across that, right. Not towards the [department B], what I'm saying now is not just the [department B] but all kinds of organisations that might contact us, it is always like can we do it, are we allowed to do it and do we have the time to do it.

- *T4: we have quite some data available, in the framework of [specific example of environmental/agricultural policy within the respondent organisations' competence] for which it is forbidden by decree to disseminate them, and furthermore, those data are financially important to us because we are the only ones who possess it, and we can perform a certain investigation with those data that only we can do... now I'm being very transparent and open towards you... (laughs) which gives it a financial value.*
  I: So a bit the market value of that information
  T4: Yes (...)
  I: So, aspects that affect behaviour more than the passive personal willingness...
  T4: Perhaps more that one, yes, I wouldn't really say advantages and disadvantages, but costs and benefits (...)

8.103

- *DT2: Yes, that goal-oriented, our senior civil servant is highly sensitive to that. He also insists that people only participate in working groups or projects if there is something very tangible in it for us. If we are coerced to participate, it's a different story. But then it is logical, from his perspective, that he will ask that us to try and get everything out of it, or to spend as little time as possible on it (...) It depends on the extent to which I have control over that relationship, whether my organisation will try to influence the relationship to a stronger extent. (...) But you can certainly add that yes. For the realisation that is particularly important.*

- *DT5: We are here again with these (advantages and disadvantages for the organisation) and the extensiveness of how the question is being answered will have a lot to do with that. But the attitude of the senior civil servant is fundamental, to me, for those advantages and disadvantages for the organisation. And if I'm not sure about it, then it will be the subject of a conversation with the boss, but to me, that is thé consideration.*

8.105

- **I: Imagine, you would want to assume an open and vulnerable position regarding [department B], and you do it constantly, continuously, would that reflect in your opportunities or your career chances? Is that seen as a positive aspect of your...**
  T2: (blows angrily) is anything like that captured? I have the impression that many things I do here, it's just not captured. It's all for themselves. That is such a thing in [the respondent's organisation], the appreciation of what

I do or what I've done in the past years, is within the organisation, the department, my direct heads of division and so on, is about zero. The cabinet appreciated it a lot, the minister in question, all the advisors, a lot of appreciation. But in my own organisation? Zero! (…) In my evaluation they were all like 'great great great', but if you so what you get out of it, that's nothing. (…)

I: So there aren't really many advantages or disadvantages for you personally in taking up that position towards [department B]?

T2*: No, no… I simply do what I think is necessary for myself and for the organisation, it can't have any disadvantages but… I don't know, I don't think they ever see it here like 'ah [name of the respondent], he did a great job with [department B],*

8.106

- **I: is there one of the things you spoke about earlier, do some of those things change regarding what the organisation effectively does? Does you explanation of these aspects change in that respect?**
  DT2*: Yes, here, those past experiences, they will of course, they get disseminated. So you start to build all kinds of experiences in you relationship, and you share those experiences with people in IT, with your business, so it begins to live in your organisation. And then your organisation will, with those reasons, those are rumours, for them that is second-hand information of course, but for them that is a given, that is context in fact, they will only support you even more to think in the line of those experiences, so that is a sort of self-reinforcing effect. Other than that… no… I can't explain it immediately.*

DOCTORATEN IN DE SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN

EN

DOCTORATEN IN DE SOCIALE EN CULTURELE ANTROPOLOGIE

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